

**World Changing
Through Life Changing**

The Frank Buchman Revolution

T. Willard Hunter

Regina Press
Claremont, California

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Cover design: Mary Stoddard

Editorial services: Alice Chaffee

Typesetting: Peggy Zappen, Ives Community Office

All photographs courtesy Initiatives of Change

Library of Congress

ISBN 1-930053-62-2 // 978-1-930053-62-5

Regina Books

Post Office Box 280

Claremont, California 91711

Tel 909.624.8466

Fax 909.626.1345

Manufactured in the United States of America

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War and Peace

Everybody with a brain knows that the world cannot go on having wars. It's the most anachronistic thing that exists. There is no sense or logic to it whatsoever—that people kill each other by the millions to solve political, social, or economic problems. Yet it still exists.

Sometime in history, hopefully not too far off, somebody is going to put the chemistry together and turn that around so there will not be any more of that sort of thing.

And I think the man who will have a lot to do with that occurring, when it does occur—the chemistry and the cement that will bring it all together—is Frank Buchman.

CHARLES E. BENNETT

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Who Was Frank Buchman?

He remains the best kept secret of the age.

Yet history may prove him to be one of its most revolutionary forces.

He has been evaluated as of the stature of Lenin, Stalin,
Mussolini, Hitler, Roosevelt, and Barth.

He developed proved strategies for changing human nature,
exemplified in Alcoholic Anonymous.

He played a significant role in the French-German reconstruction
after World War II, which led to European Union.

He was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

He insisted—quite sincerely—that he had nothing to do with it.

He was beneath it all a warm human being with his share of
foibles and needs.

His name is Frank Nathan Daniel Buchman.

Chapter 1

The Buchman Idea

If you want change to happen, you start not with the other person or nation, you start with yourself.

The idea highlights the guidance of God and moral standards.

It has been around thousands of years and rediscovered from age to age.

The affirmation is that human wisdom has failed, but God has a plan.

Individuals and nations can find their plan through listening.

Problem behavior can damage one's listening capacity.

The difficulty is caused by sin, which can be discovered through a suggested checklist:

Absolute honesty

Absolute purity

Absolute unselfishness

Absolute love.

Sin is the disease—Christ is the cure—the result is a miracle.

A decision to clean up means restitution to other individuals or other nations.

The release that follows often leads to passing it on.

Fifty-one percent is not necessary; the world can be changed through a change in a few people who run it.

Chapter 2

The Buchman Doctrine

A key to Frank Buchman's influence on the human condition—whether in family, industrial, or international affairs—lay in what I am calling “the Buchman Doctrine.” It was indeed a revolutionary concept and has yet to be tried on an adequate scale. If it ever were, the world indeed would move closer to being remade as a theater of peace.

The Buchman Doctrine may have been delineated in various forms earlier, but I heard it eloquently articulated October 19, 1991, at Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania. The school calls Frank Buchman its most famous alumnus. In dedicating a sculptured bust in his honor in Muhlenberg's Haas College Center, President Jonathan C. Messerli said:

Most people who want some kind of social or political change believe they know what is moral and proceed to impose their convictions on the responsible leaders. Frank Buchman's idea was to find out what the leaders themselves believed was moral and help them live up to that.

This thought would appear obvious. Yet the old arrogant way, so universally accepted, has generated the imperialism of the centuries, assuming our superiority. This stance now produces a war every ten years. I once had the privilege of working closely with Henry A. Kissinger on an intense, around-the-clock weekend. I had the clear impression that Kissinger's success as a diplomat lay in the fact that he never failed to pay close attention to the other person's, and the other nation's, aspirations.

The universally dominant approach—good guys versus bad guys—is not working. The Buchman Doctrine, which has had dramatic results where applied, might yet be the key to world rebirth.

Chapter 3

An Under-Reported Phenomenon

Thomas Carlyle explained history by what has been called “the great man theory.” The history of the world, he declared, “is but the biography of great men.”

Historians can argue whether Frank Buchman was a “great man,” or perhaps an ordinary man who started extraordinary things. But whether great or not, the record needs to be told. I interviewed T. S. Matthews, longtime editor of *Time*, at his home in England to which he had retired. He was said to be the engine of *Time*’s persistent, decades long, opposition to Buchman and his programs. “You think he was a great man, do you?” he asked me.

I said I thought it was not a question of greatness or non-greatness, but that honest journalism required an evaluation of the man’s contribution to human welfare and to history, whatever one’s reservations might be as to style and methods.

One of the clearest statements I have ever heard about the universal frustration with war—accompanied by a glimpse of hope—is to be found in the frontispiece. Charles E. Bennett (1910-2003) was one of the dynamic young veterans, Richard Nixon and Jack Kennedy among them, who were elected members of the U.S. House of Representatives immediately following World War II.

His words bear repeating. Speaking in Allentown, Pennsylvania June 3, 1978, on the eve of Frank Buchman’s one hundredth birthday, Mr. Bennett said:

Everybody with a brain knows that the world cannot go on having wars. It's the most anachronistic thing that exists. There is no sense or logic to it whatsoever—that people kill each other by the millions to solve political, social, or economic problems. Yet it still exists.

Some time in history, hopefully not too far off, somebody is going to put the chemistry together and turn that around so there will not be any more of that sort of thing.

And I think the man who will have a lot to do with that occurring, when it does occur—the chemistry and the cement that will bring it all together—is Frank Buchman.

I think the reader will agree that this is an astounding statement by a prominent man of American affairs, a man who was long intimately and publicly concerned with the issues of war and peace. If there is even a shred of authenticity in his conviction, it must be at least be looked at very seriously indeed.

Who was this man he spoke of? How could it even be possible to attribute to him such a promise of hope?

It is the purpose of this book to try to answer that question. I am an eyewitness.

There are many authorities, historian Martin E. Marty is one, who are high on Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and cool on FB, the person without whom AA would not exist. They like the message but not the messenger. Buchman's work is generally under-reported.

There are a number of reasons for this. He was not the greatest on public relations. He cared a great deal for the press

and its practitioners. But it was always an uncomfortable relationship. He was better at giving out salt than syrup. He was hardly prepossessing in appearance. He himself said he thought his less-than-good looks were given him for a purpose. People should be attracted to the message, he believed, not the man.

A more fundamental reason for standoffishness and opposition is that his was a rigorous challenge to the moral swamp he found everywhere, particularly in the individuals who made it up. Almost alone among public figures he insisted that moral renewal was essential to the saving of civilization. "Until we deal with human nature thoroughly and drastically on a national scale," he said, "nations must still follow their historic road to violence and destruction." People resist the message that their lives need changing. The natural response is to shoot the messenger. Prophets who make moral challenges get dispatched.

Some researchers have found strange the reaction to this thrust. Edward Luttwak, then director of the Geoeconomics Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (DC) and a sometime consultant on military strategy with the U.S. government, has written:

Greatly respected in both Japan and Germany for successfully introducing its moral-responsibility concept of labor-management relations, highly reputed in southern Africa for its bridge-building between blacks and whites, strongly based in Switzerland and significantly present elsewhere, the Moral Re-Armament (MRA) movement, created by an American, Frank Buchman, is ironically almost forgotten in the Anglo-Saxon world where it originated. Doubly ironic is the lingering suspicion with which MRA is viewed in

British and therefore American circles, given its genesis among students at Oxford University in the 1920s.

It is inevitably taken for granted, writes Harold O. J. Brown in *Sensate Culture*, “that anyone who espouses firm ethical principles, praises virtue, or dares to express criticism of anything that classical Judeo-Christian morality condemns will be derided as judgmental, puritanical, and hypocritical.”

The militant secularism of the last decades, Brown says, has made our society suspicious of and hostile “to any movement and every proposal that bears the label of traditional values, especially those of Christianity.”

Yet the book you now hold contains the observations of a rise of a hopeful and proven propulsion. I was there at the revolution.

Chapter 4

Suppose He Had Not Lived?

Frank Capra's classic motion picture, *It's a Wonderful Life*, with which the networks delight us over and over at Christmastime, shows a downcast character, played by James Stewart, who has made lifetime sacrifices for the good of the people of Bedford Falls. He is discouraged over his battle with dark forces and decides to head for the bridge and jump. His guardian angel persuades him first to see a reel that shows what Bedford Falls would have been like if he had not poured out his life for fellow townsmen. It was a shattering experience. It turned the hero around. He was able to have a super happy Christmas with his reunited family.

It would be interesting to speculate what the world would be like today if Frank Nathan Daniel Buchman had not lived. What if?

He made big claims. He said that when he was a younger man, he was riding a bicycle in Oxford, England, when the thought came to him—he believed it was from on high—that he would be used to remake the world. It was such a jolt, he said, that he almost fell off his bicycle. He never wavered from this aim.

As Al Smith would put it, "Let's look at the record." Was Buchman used to remake the world or was he not? In modern parlance, at least he made a difference. It was in fact a rather world remaking kind of difference.

What would the planet look like today without this strange intervention?

For starters, there are those who hold that European Union might well not have come about in the way it has if he had not lived.

We know there would be no Alcoholics Anonymous and the Twelve Steps miracle that has reinvented millions of lives. At least this part of the world has been remade. There would have been no Up With People with its thousands of young persons over four decades inspiring families all over the world numbering hundreds of thousands. Sam Shoemaker's Faith at Work is another such spinoff movement.

Buchman scored enough successes in international teamwork to be decorated by a dozen governments and nominated twice for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Africa? There was noticeable interracial progress through his work on that continent as early as 1928 through the 1950s. He created small streams that, added to others, surely had a part in producing the peaceful South African revolution of 1994.

Hardly into the second decade of his public career, Buchman was the subject of a remarkable evaluation in *The Atlantic*. The writer, a leading voice of the American spiritual community, was Henry P. Van Dusen, who was then Dean of Students and was to become for eighteen years president of Union Theological Seminary in New York.

Before that, the article's author said, he had had fifteen years of fairly intimate contact with Frank Buchman and his work. It was generally accepted that it was this association that originally led Van Dusen into the Christian ministry.

In July and August of 1934 *The Atlantic* carried a two-issue feature by Van Dusen on Buchman and his revolution. (See Appendix F). While not blinking at what he saw as the weaknesses of the man and his movement, Van Dusen called him:

One of the most extraordinary men in a period which may be distinguished in the annals of history as the Begetter of Great Leaders. The great leaders I have in mind are not the Hardings, Coolidges, and Hoovers, but Lenin, Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler, Roosevelt, Barth. It is my conviction that Mr. Buchman really deserves classification with these figures, not only as regards certain very striking parallels in personality and influence, but even as regards stature. With all his shortcomings, which I have been at special pains to point out, I think he is one of the most remarkable men, in an age which is characterized by the emergence of extraordinarily powerful and dominating figures.

It is interesting to note that the writer compares Buchman not to political leaders but to leaders of world-moving ideologies. The implication is that he had hold of something so powerful that it competed with, and even in some places outstripped, the deleterious ideologies of communism and fascism bidding for the world's allegiance.

When Buchman died in August of 1961 at eighty-three, he was front-page news in *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*.

Time magazine had made him their cover story April 20, 1936. In that period he was the subject of a front-running Broadway play. MGM made the movie. In April of that year, he conducted a giant convocation at the British Industries Fair, Birmingham, that attracted the curious from throughout the Commonwealth and thirty-five other countries.

Just before the outbreak of World War II, he presided over mass meetings in Madison Square Garden, Constitution Hall, and the Hollywood Bowl. In Washington he introduced from the platform Senator Harry S. Truman, who read to the prestigious audience a message from President Roosevelt. At the famous Hollywood Bowl July 19, 1939, press accounts reported that 30,000 made it in and 10,000 were turned away. Motion picture mogul Louis B. Mayer asked to speak and did.

You could make a respectable case for the proposition that Buchman at least was indirectly responsible for Henry Ford's historic contract with the United Auto Workers in 1941.

In the 1920s and 1930s his program was known as the Oxford Group—then for fifty years, Moral Re-Armament. It is now Initiatives of Change.

Frank Buchman tried to change Adolf Hitler and to redirect the Nazi juggernaut. He was pilloried for his attempts. But he never gave up. After the war he threw himself into the fight for French-German reconciliation. His results were pivotal in postwar history according to a study by a prestigious Washington think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Mahatma Gandhi was reported as saying in May 1940 that Buchman's work "was the most important thing coming out of the West today."

Cardinal Franz König, Archbishop of Vienna and the Vatican's chief Iron Curtain representative during the Cold War, said that Buchman "was a turning-point in the history of the modern world through his ideas."

Howard Butt, Texas grocer and philanthropist, said to me in 1978, "If there is a renaissance in our time, it probably will be traced to this source."

At the base of all this we must, I believe, take Frank Buchman at his word as to the source-cause of what he was able to accomplish. He himself believed he could not accept credit for it. He claimed he did not found a movement—only discovered it.

Philippe Mottu, the Swiss statesman who was a leader in establishing the world conference center at Caux, Switzerland, put it this way:

In the last year of his life, Frank Buchman was visited at Caux by an eminent statesman who, after recalling some of Buchman's achievements, added: "You must be very proud of all that." Buchman replied, "I don't feel proud of it because I had no part in it. God does everything. I simply obey and do as He tells me." The statesman replied, "I can't accept that. You have done some very great things yourself." Buchman answered, "I have done nothing. . . . Many years ago I gave up trying to organize things according to my own ideas. I started listening to God and letting Him have His own way in everything."

Chapter 5

Alcoholics Anonymous

The Buchman derivative opening enormous hope for the future is Alcoholics Anonymous. Its initiators found sobriety through Buchman's work and codified his life-changing principles into the well-known Twelve Steps. M. Scott Peck, in his best selling *Further Along The Road Less Traveled*, wrote that this initiative held enormous promise. Peck wrote:

The greatest positive event of the twentieth century occurred in Akron, Ohio, on June 10, 1935, when Bill W. and Dr. Bob convened the first AA meeting. . . I think of addiction as the sacred disease. When my AA friends and I get together, we often come to conclude that, very probably, God deliberately created the disorder of alcoholism in order to create alcoholics, in order that these alcoholics might create AA, and thereby spearhead the community movement, which is going to be the salvation not only of alcoholics and addicts, but of us all.

Martin E. Marty, one of the nation's foremost church historians, avers that the two greatest American inventions have been the ice cream cone and AA.

Novelist Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. has written:

America's most nurturing contribution to the culture of this planet so far is Alcoholics Anonymous.

Michael Heatherton, the Betty Ford Center's administrator in the 1990s, said AA gave birth to the modern self-help treatment industry. He said he believed AA is a "divinely inspired organization. The twelve steps are absolutely brilliant. I don't believe any human being was smart enough to lay all that out."

Mel B. of Toledo, Ohio, premier AA writer, contributor to the authorized biography of Bill W., *Pass It On*, and author of *New Wine* (MN: Hazelden, 1991), prepared this statement for AA World Services:

Alcoholics Anonymous, in its pioneering time, received generous assistance, guidance, and support from many institutions and individuals. Probably no gift surpassed the principles and practices of the Oxford Group, which was a major source for the material of AA's Twelve Steps. Everyone in Twelve Step programs owes a debt of gratitude to Frank Buchman for his singular efforts in laying the foundation for this in the Oxford Group.¹ Buchman was neither an alcoholic nor a close AA supporter in his lifetime, but his work—albeit for the larger world-changing purpose that guided him—had the effect of passing on to the fellowship some of the basic principles of recovery.

¹The Oxford Group was the name of Buchman's program of world changing through life changing, 1928-38. The "Oxford" term was coined in South Africa by railroad personnel carrying a group of Oxford University students who were making an impact on racial divisions. In 1938 the name was changed to Moral Re-Armament (MRA), later becoming Initiatives of Change.

Active globally, AA is said to be the most successful alcoholics rehabilitation program in history. In any sizeable city in the world one can find it listed in the telephone book and available around the clock.

The movement had its origins in the early thirties when Rowland Hazard, of a prominent Rhode Island industrial family, sought a cure for his alcoholism at the Jung clinic in Switzerland. After a year of still no recovery, he was told by C. G. Jung himself that there was nothing further he could do and that Hazard's only hope was a spiritual conversion. Hazard found this in the Oxford Group. It proved to be his salvation. He then passed the experience along to Ebby Thatcher, who in turn took it to Bill Wilson, a New York stockbroker. The latter and an Akron doctor, Bob Smith, who was also changed through the Oxford Group, formed Alcoholics Anonymous. For the date of its beginning they picked June 10, 1935, the day of Dr. Bob's last drink.

For a while these people were the devoted "alcohol squad of the Oxford Group." But the alcoholics more and more showed a penchant for confining the Buchman approach to alcoholics only. Frank on the other hand thought alcoholism was only part of what was wrong with the world. "We also have drunken nations on our hands," he said.²

²Garth Lean claims in *On the Tail of a Comet* (p. 152) that there was an "agreement worked out in those years with the Oxford Group in Akron." He says Jim Newton told him that T. Henry Williams, rubber engineer and Oxford Group leader, had said to AA co-founders Bill Wilson and Bob Smith, "You look after drunken men. We'll try to look after a drunken world."

If Newton said that, he was certainly mistaken. He heard the "drunken nations" phrase from me. And I heard it direct from Buchman. T. Henry would never talk like that, and Frank would never sanction any such "deal." Buchman

The *Saturday Evening Post* of March 1, 1941, carried an article “Alcoholics Anonymous,” the first national publicity for AA. It enormously boosted AA’s numbers. It also established in the public mind its origins in the Oxford Group.

Then too, Bill W. and his friends became increasingly insistent on anonymity, a principle which clashed with Buchman’s program of making available publicly the changes in people’s directions, what the advertising profession would call testimonials, as a means of attracting others. Also Bill W. according to his wife Lois, was not interested in “saving the world—he just wanted to save drunks.” The result in 1937 was a sad, though friendly, split which took place in New York. The division in Akron did not occur until 1939. The rubber capital group stayed with the team longer, partly because their weekly meetings were held in the home of the Oxford Group’s leading Akron couple, T. Henry and Clarace Williams.³ Also the Akron AA contingent appeared to give more emphasis to the spiritual element. Some of their clubs and their stationery long proclaimed the four standards espoused by the progenitor group.

AA literature carries photos of the Williams house.⁴ T. Henry had invented tire molds for the major rubber companies

made the comment, “But we also have drunken nations on our hands,” in protest against the alcoholics branching off with his ideas on what he considered to be a limited program. “Not maximum,” he said.

³I once attended an MRA meeting in the Williams home in Akron. Before it got going, I said, “T. Henry, you know something about Alcoholics Anonymous, don’t you?” “Sure do,” he answered. “It started right here.” He pointed to a spot on his livingroom carpet where Dr. Bob Smith on his knees had made his surrender. (See Hunter’s booklet *It Started Right There*).

⁴*Alcoholics Anonymous Come of Age* (New York: AA World Services, 1973), pp. 114-15.

and became a heavy contributor to the parent movement's conference center at Mackinac Island.

During this period, the Rev. Samuel M. Shoemaker (1893-1963), a Buchman lieutenant, was the leading spiritual mentor of Alcoholics Anonymous. It was around Shoemaker's Calvary Church at Fourth Avenue and 21st Street that the New York Oxford Group gathered and nurtured the alcoholics. Lois Wilson, Bill's widow, told me that she and Bill attended Oxford Group meetings in New York twice a week for two and a half years. It was there that Bill heard many stories from many types of people on the specifics of how they were changed. Sam was Bill's friend and guide during the period when Wilson produced the famous Twelve Steps, the program of action which reflects Buchman's life-changing methods.

Co-founder Bill Wilson said at the twentieth anniversary convention of AA, 1955, in Saint Louis:

The early AA got its ideas of self-examination, acknowledgment of character defects, restitution for harm done, and working with others, straight from the Oxford Group and directly from Sam Shoemaker and from nowhere else.

In 1961 Wilson wrote:

Now that Frank Buchman is gone, and I realize more than ever what we owe to him, I wish I had sought him out in recent years to tell him of our appreciation.*

*Letter to a friend, cited in *Pass It On*, official Wilson biography, p. 387.

Chapter 6

European Union

At the end of the summer of 1945, Buchman conducted at Mackinac Island what he called the Third World Assembly for Moral-Re-Armament. (The first was at Interlaken, Switzerland, in 1938; the second, at Monterey, California, in 1939.) Most of the sessions were held at Anne Cottage. But Frank gave it the dignity of a packed assembly hall. Central to the assembly were two Swiss, Robert Hahnloser and Philippe Mottu, who were eager to build a Mackinac in Europe. Among the European delegation also were English, French, and Dutch.

From there Buchman took the Swiss delegates to Los Angeles. At Christmastime he asked them to return to Europe and organize a conference for the following summer.

Before Buchman made his postwar return to Europe in the spring of 1946, he gathered his full-time force for a farewell to America and a preparation for Europe. The meeting was held in San Dimas, California, under a spreading live oak tree in back of the home of H. Jerry Voorhis, the area's U.S. Representative 1937-47. Before Jerry went to Congress, the family (his father was a prosperous automobile executive) had helped him establish a school for poor boys in the San Dimas hills. Jerry and his wife, Alice, continued to make the headmaster's home their California residence during their tenure in Washington. Although Voorhis was a prominent Democrat, Republican Harry Damerel, big time citrus grower and processor, was a strong Voorhis backer. Damerel also took leadership on various MRA projects and persuaded the Voorhis family that they could get help keeping the place in shape by inviting the Hunters to

“house sit” the residence in the spring of 1946, which we did. This was before Jerry came back to defend unsuccessfully his seat against the unknown young navy veteran from Whittier, Richard Nixon.

In April 1946, Frank Buchman, meeting with his force under the live oak tree, was deadly serious about the days ahead. His vision was nothing less than the basic reconstruction of Europe.

A substantial number of those who met with him that day were just out of the military uniforms of a half dozen countries. It was a moving meeting. Many were going back home for the first time in seven years.

The rock-solid base from which all their efforts to rebuild Europe would have to spring, Frank insisted, was this:

We are in a global effort to win the world to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Then the great truths of the Gospel will once more become great and Jesus will be King. There is your ideology. The message in its entirety is the only last hope that will save the world. God's chance is a revolution under the Cross of Christ that will transform the world. The only hope. Our only answer. Go forth with that message united and you will save the world.

Hahnloser and Mottu had acquired the derelict Caux Palace, 3,000 feet above Montreux, on the northeast shore of Lake Geneva, renaming the onetime luxury hotel “Mountain House” after Mackinac’s “Island House.” Mountain House is two football fields long and in some places eight mountainside-stories high. Subsequently other inns and pensions were acquired at Caux. It became the largest hotel operation in Europe.

A Congressional committee that was to help pave the way for the postwar European reconstruction proposal known as the Marshall Plan visited the Caux conference center in September 1947.¹

The Congressional leaders that visited Caux in the fall of 1947 were known as the Smith-Mundt Committee, a joint body appointed by the Republican-controlled Eightieth Congress.

The group visited twenty-two countries in two months to investigate the effectiveness of the U.S. Information Service. They were however conscious that their conclusions might, in their words, affect the “aid to Europe proposals of Secretary Marshall,” then under consideration.

The chairmen were Senator H. Alexander Smith of New Jersey and Representative Karl E. Mundt of South Dakota. Senator Smith was a friend of Frank Buchman. As Secretary of Princeton University in the 1920s he had made a favorable report on the Oxford Group following a campus controversy. Smith also was the father of the sisters who married Sam Shoemaker and H. Kenaston Twitchell, a Princeton graduate and lifelong Buchman associate.

Congressman Mundt had been a student of my father’s at Carleton College and had married Mary Moses, a college

¹The seventeen billion dollar aid proposal known in the U.S. as “the Marshall Plan” and in Europe as “Marshall Aid,” was first proposed by then Secretary of State George C. Marshall in an address at Harvard University June 5, 1947. Although President Truman was the basic initiator, he believed that Marshall’s name should be on it rather than his own. The Congress adopted the measure April 2, 1948, and the President signed it the next day. The first director was Studebaker president Paul G. Hoffman, who besides demonstrating business skills was noted for his oft-repeated comment, “My friends tell me, ‘Now remember Paul, when you get to Washington, a billion here and a billion there begins to run into money.’”

classmate who came from Northfield. Mary Louise and I on occasion were visitors in their apartment near Capitol Hill. Karl had been a speech professor and active in the International Platform Association.

A dynamo on the committee was Congressman Walter H. Judd. Coming out of isolationist Minnesota, he was to be influential in persuading fellow Representatives, particularly those from the Middle West, to back the Marshall Plan. While the committee was still in Germany, Buchman colleague John Roots found Judd in the lobby of a Berlin hotel one morning at 5:00 o'clock working up notes. The committee's official report bears marks of his style.²

Following the group's return to Washington, I ran into Dr. Judd after church. He said, "We had a wonderful time at Caux."

Mundt, who was soon to move from the House to the Senate, reported to his South Dakota constituents from Copenhagen in September 1947:

Our committee paid a visit to Caux, Switzerland and spent a day and a night with the Moral Re-Armament conference, which in some ways comprised the brightest star for the future we have witnessed in all Europe.

Caux was the place where, instigated by Buchman, postwar German leaders were first welcomed back into the family of

²Judd and Harry Truman had barnstormed the country, a Republican Congressman and a Democratic Senator, on behalf of America's international responsibilities. Every time the two appeared on this trip, Truman jocularly referred to his colleague as a "windbag." It was a backhanded recognition of the Congressman's platform eloquence, but not particularly appreciated by Dr. Judd.

nations. I was fortunate to be present in 1948. A German delegation was attending, headed by Konrad Adenauer, then president of the assembly which was writing the new German constitution. Senator Harry Cain, R-WA, and I had dinner with "Der Alte" and his interpreter at a table for four. We had taken a group of Americans to Caux. Besides Senator Cain, the delegation included former Senator Rush D. Holt, D-WV, at that time the youngest man ever elected to the U.S. Senate, and his father-in-law, the mayor of Gridley, Illinois (Rush Holt Jr., later was elected to Congress from Princeton, New Jersey). Other delegates included a former governor of Virginia, Miami Representative George A. Smathers, D-FL, and leaders of the road-building industry. The caliber of this delegation paved the way for another the following spring.

In May 1949 the United States House of Representatives voted to send five of their members to Caux, to join parliamentarians from other countries, as official delegates from the United States. Their commission was to confer with government and economic leaders of other free-world nations and plan for the ideological basis of postwar reconstruction. They were to travel by government transportation.

The plan was set up by a half dozen of the most powerful members of the House. They included House Majority Leader John W. McCormack, D-MA; Minority Leader Joseph Martin, R-MA; Edward E. Cox, D-GA; James W. Wadsworth, R-NY; the Reverend Charles Eaton, R-NJ; and Richard Richards, D-SC. The only problem was that none of these men would agree to go, and there was no plan to select knowledgeable delegates. Prince Preston, D-GA, had backed the project and they made him chairman. George A. Dondero, R-MI, who had been rather close to us, became the senior Republican on the delegation. The other three had minimal orientation, giving rise to more

than one story that the project was a lark. The additional members were Daniel J. Flood, D-PA; Donald O'Toole, D-NY; and Earle Wilson, R-IN. Before Flood would accept McCormack's appointment to the committee, as a card-carrying Catholic, he phoned his bishop in Pennsylvania to check on MRA. The bishop gave a green light and Flood boarded the plane.

British journalist Tom Driberg tried to claim that the decision of the House was put over when few were present.³ Quite the contrary. As an habitu  of the House galleries in those days, I had seldom seen as many members present, except for a presidential address. There was another important agenda item that had brought them all in. This action was the peak of American official recognition of MRA. Buchman had grown accustomed to the politically powerful making individual endorsements. But here was an official House vote in the United States Congress, accompanied by a financial appropriation, and providing an Air Force plane.

There were minor rumblings about "church and state." McCormack's response was, "The separation of church and state was never meant to separate people from their God."

France and Germany

Late one night in 1960, Buchman's telephone rang. A United Press International (UPI) reporter wanted Frank's comments on a statement made that afternoon by a spokesman of the German Foreign Office in an Atlanta press conference. The diplomat, Hasso von Etdorf, had been asked by the reporters, "What is the most significant political development in Europe since

³Tom Driberg, *The Mystery of Moral Re-Armament*, p. 148.

World War II?” Von Etzdorf, Deputy Under Secretary of State at the German Foreign Office, former ambassador to Canada and later to become Ambassador to the United Kingdom, replied, “The new accord and understanding between Germany and France, which I believe is permanent. For this the work of Moral Re-Armament is largely responsible.”⁴

Throughout his life, Frank Buchman’s daily query was, “Where does God want us to concentrate forces so as to affect the entire globe?” True, he believed this life changing was to go on with the person next to him or with the person who brought him his breakfast. But he was not content to deal only with those who came in “over the transom.” He believed Christians were to be strategists and tacticians. His “key-person” strategy was often criticized. But he never deviated from it.⁵

Before World War II, Buchman spent a decade trying to win Hitler over to the way of MRA. After World War II he believed the key to peace in the North Atlantic community was to be found in what happened between France and Germany. And the key to France and Germany might well be located somewhere within those rugged Christian warriors who led the two former enemy nation-states into the reconstruction years, Robert Schuman and Konrad Adenauer. It must be noted, however, that Buchman never attempted to rely wholly on himself or his team. He was a sick man, and he never would have found

⁴Peter Howard, *Frank Buchman’s Secret* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1961), p. 69.

⁵This was John R. Mott’s theme also, and Buchman began embracing it at Penn State where in 1909 Frank wrote his friend Henry Wright at Yale, “We are after the key men and we are getting them.” See George Stewart, Jr., *Life of Henry B. Wright* (New York: Association Press, 1925), p. 73.

Schuman or Adenauer on his own. One must simply say the coincidences in the developing relationship among the three men is too remarkable to reject out of hand the Buchman claim that all he did was due to the guidance of God.

The *New York Herald Tribune* of June 4, 1951, carried the headline, "Moral Re-Armament is Credited for Role in Schuman Plan Talks." The story by Dorothy Brandon reported that Konrad Adenauer had announced:

Recent months have brought the conclusion of long negotiations of international agreements. I believe Moral Re-Armament has played an invisible but effective part, bridging differences of opinion between the negotiating parties, and has kept before us the objective of peaceful agreement in our search for the common good.

Some theologians who pride themselves on their action orientation have criticized MRA for not sufficiently wrestling with societal structures and remaining too satisfied with individual improvement.⁶

It may, therefore, be useful to examine the spiritual climate involved in the French-German accord. Before doing so, it is important to register that no claim is made that non-MRA forces were not at work. There is no disposition, for example, to discount in the slightest degree the creative economic genius of Jean Monnet (1888-1978). He was the supreme architect of postwar Europe. It was he who initiated comprehensive

⁶John C. Bennett, *Social Salvation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), pp. 53-59. See also, Reinhold Niebuhr, "Buchmanism Under Scrutiny," *The Observer*, (London), February 20, 1955.

economic planning in France and Western Europe. He became the first president of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community, known as the Schuman Plan.

It is only to aver that brilliant schemes before have foundered because of failure in the human element. It is also to maintain that neglecting to record known facts is a disservice to history.

In the spring of 1948 Robert Schuman, then prime minister of France, met a Lille industrialist, Louis Boucquey, on a train. Boucquey told Schuman that a remarkable change of heart was taking place in industrial circles in northern France. Most of this change was the result of a new attitude taken by Robert Tilge, the secretary of the Employers' Federation. This change of attitude began when Tilge attended an assembly at Caux in the fall of 1947. Schuman was so much interested that he asked Boucquey to arrange for Frank Buchman to meet him during his next stay in France. Buchman and Schuman met for the first time in Paris in August 1948.⁷

One speaker I heard, at a plenary session at Caux during the time the United States congressmen were there on their official mission in 1949, was one of the top members of France's employers' association. He told of how a change of heart within himself and some of his colleagues had reoriented his attitude toward Germany. This in turn made him more positive about economic cooperation. Emotional blocks to the negotiation

⁷See Philippe Mottu, *The Story of Caux* (London: Grosvenor Books, 1970) p. 113. Morris Martin says the two men first met in October 1949. There were a number of other meetings, including dinner at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco in September 1951. I recall being in the Palace lobby when Frank was waiting for Schuman. It was during the ceremonies of the Japanese peace treaty signing. "You made peace with Japan," the Frenchman said to the American, "two years before we signed it." See Frank Buchman, "All the Moral Fences Are Down" (published speech, April 1961).

process had been removed. He became one of the key builders of the Schuman Plan.

In October 1949 Buchman and Schuman had a private dinner together in Paris. The French foreign minister was tired of thirty years in politics and was seriously considering retirement to an academic life of reflection and writing. The American had always had the kind of manner which encouraged others to open up with what was really on their minds. The Frenchman laid out his dilemma. Buchman looked straight at him and asked, "What in your heart, Mr. Schuman, do you think you should do?" It was a typical FB response—don't give advice; try to find out the basic convictions of the other person. It was another example of the "Buchman Doctrine" at work.

Schuman, "with a slightly rueful smile," according to an eyewitness, replied, "Yes, you are right, I know already. I know I must stay and fight the political battle, but I shrink from the one great step I see ahead of me."⁸ He then moved quickly into the German issue. Having been brought up as a German in Lorraine and having served in the German army in World War I, Schuman had always regarded himself as especially prepared. "I understand Germany and I love France. I have long felt I have a special duty to bring them together." He was afraid, however, that both would resent such moves.

What Schuman needed was an international force, above the debilitating nationalisms, that would fortify and undergird his best impulses, a network of influence at all levels of society in both countries. This is exactly what he found in the MRA organism.

⁸Morris Martin, "The Man Behind the Schuman Plan," *New World News*, October-December, 1963, p. 19.

At the dinner table Schuman frankly asked for help. "I do not know the men of the new Germany," he said. Buchman said he could assist. Most of the top leadership of West Germany had been to the conference center at Caux, Switzerland in the previous two years, and they had become his personal friends. That evening he gave Schuman a dozen names of people he personally knew, none of whom Schuman had met. They included some who later rose to leadership, like Heinrich Lübke of North Rhine-Westphalia and Konrad Adenauer himself. A few weeks later, Schuman, as Foreign Minister, visited West Germany and met some of them.

The next spring, 1950, Schuman agreed to write the foreword to the French edition of Buchman's speeches, *Remaking the World*.⁹ This exercise was probably an important link in the chain leading to the Schuman Plan. The publication date was May 26. Therefore the foreword must have been drafted in April or early May 1950.

Moral Re-Armament, Schuman wrote,

. . . does not claim to have invented a new system of morals. For the Christian, the moral teaching of Christianity is enough. . . What we do need, and what is quite new, is a school where, by a process of mutual teaching, we can work out our practical behavior toward others . . . where Christian principles . . . succeed in overcoming the prejudices and enmities which separate classes, races, and nations.

⁹See the English translation in Frank Buchman, *Remaking the World* (London: Blandford Press, 1961), p. 346.

On May 9, 1950—about the same time that he had written the foreword for this book—Schuman sent a confidential proposal to Adenauer dealing with coal and steel. In his recommendation to the German leader he wrote:

The elimination of the age-old opposition of France and Germany and a pooling of resources and production will make war between the two countries not merely unthinkable but actually impossible.¹⁰

The proposal was communicated by special courier to Bonn. The messenger hardly waited twenty minutes for Adenauer's answer. He returned to Paris with a history-making acceptance. The Schuman Plan was under way. Within months, Schuman sent a French Senator to the Ruhr to confer in Germany the French Legion of Honor on Frank Buchman. Note that this ceremony took place on German soil, honoring the American for his services to France.

In the meantime the MRA catalyst was steadily at work at every level between the two countries, particularly between workers' and employers' groups on both sides of the border.

Particularly effective was a French women's socialist leader, Irène Laure, who at Caux shared with hundreds of German workers how she had lost her hatred of their people. Then, up and down Germany, their country, she went. Her sincere apologies got to the Germans. A new ideology began to take hold in the Ruhr, an area essential to the success of a coal and steel agreement. "In the last three years the number of Communists on the works councils of the Ruhr had dropped

¹⁰Morris Martin, "The Man Behind the Schuman Plan," p. 20.

from 72 percent to 25 percent,” said Hubert Stein, a member of the executive committee of the German National Union of Mine Workers in June 1951, adding, “The main credit must go to MRA.”¹¹

A stream of industrial delegations each summer from Germany, Italy, France and Britain attended the Caux conferences, with especially broad representation from France and Germany. They were not all at the top. They had solid, broad-based support behind them. The agreements went ahead. The Chairman of the Coal and Steel High Authority (Schuman Plan) stated in 1953, “This organization has sprung in large measure from the ideas and philosophy of Moral Re-Armament.”¹²

Center for Strategic and International Studies

All of this has been confirmed in an objective study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington DC. In 1994 the Center published a report on the subject.¹³ Two chapters document solutions effected by the Buchman program.

¹¹Basil Entwistle and John McCook Roots, *Moral Re-Armament: What Is It?* (Los Angeles: Pace Publications, 1967), p. 22.

¹²Morris Martin, “The Man Behind the Schuman Plan,” p. 20. See also, Theophil Spoerri, *Dynamic Out of Silence*, pp. 165-68. Spoerri states, “In his long scholarly work on the [Schuman] Plan, *Des ententes de maitres de forges au plan Schuman*, Professor Rieben, Professor of Sociology at Lausanne University, explicitly confirms Buchman’s role in the meeting between Adenauer and Schuman and in the understanding they reached,” pp. 167-68.

¹³Johnston and Sampson. *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, Center for Strategic and International Studies (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

On a broad front the book reports how various kinds of religious influences have made a difference in such areas as the French-German connection, Nicaragua, Nigeria, East Germany, the Philippines, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and inter-faith relations.

Chapter 4, "Franco-German Reconciliation: the Overlooked Role of the Moral Re-Armament Movement," was written by Edward Luttwak, a member of the Religion and Conflict Resolution Project, CSIS. At the time of the study he was director of the Geoeconomics Project and former holder of the Center's Chair in Strategy. He had taught at Johns Hopkins and Georgetown Universities, and served as consultant to the U.S. government on military strategy.

Luttwak gives eighteen pages of closely reasoned copy, in fairly small print, followed by three pages of source notes. The piece is divided into subtopics including: "The Contemporary Context," "Why Moral Re-Armament?" "Moral Re-Armament's Methods," "Conferences: MRA's Group-Dynamics," "Participants," "Parallel Diplomacy," and "Conclusion: Potential, Possible, and Proven Results."

A summary of this report appeared in the *New York Times*, July 9, 1994, under the by-line of Peter Steinfels.

Chapter 7

Harry S. Truman

The *New York Herald Tribune* of April 12, 1943, carried an *Associated Press* dispatch with the headline:

M.R.A. Praised By Truman as 'Vital Service'
Senator Says It Has Aided War Industry;
Others in Congress Also Indorse It

WASHINGTON, April 11 (AP)---

The Moral Re-Armament movement was indorsed today by Senator Harry S. Truman, Democrat of Missouri, as a "vital national service."

In addition to joining with other legislators and public figures in a foreword to a Moral Re-Armament pamphlet, *The Fight to Serve*, Senator Truman called a press conference to urge support for the movement, which he explained stemmed from the Oxford Group, initiated by Frank Buchman.

The Missouri senator emphasized he was speaking for himself, not as chairman of the War Investigating Committee he heads.

"But," he added, "I have noticed that the chief difficulty in our war industrial program is usually the human factor. Suspensions, rivalries, apathy, greed lie behind most of our bottlenecks. These problems, to which the Moral Re-Armament program is finding an effective solution, are the

most urgent of any in our whole production picture.

“What we now need is a fighting faith which will last twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week and fifty-two weeks a year. We need to create a permanent incentive in the heart of every man in office and workshop. This can only come by installing personal qualities of patriotism and self-sacrifice based on moral and spiritual principles.

“This is where the Moral Re-Armament group comes in. Where others have stood back and criticized, they have rolled up their sleeves and gone to work. They have already achieved remarkable results in bringing teamwork into industry, on the principle not of ‘who’s right’ but of ‘what’s right’.”

Senator Truman, a member of the Baptist Church since he was seventeen, recalled that as early as 1941 he had seen MRA men in action in west coast airplane plants. “Since then I’ve met groups of them wherever I’ve gone,” he added.

He estimated that 100 members of the House and Senate are sympathetic towards the movement.

On May 5, 1944, two months before he was nominated to serve as vice-president in Roosevelt’s fourth term, Senator Truman (D-MO), joined with Representative James W. Wadsworth (R-NY), to sponsor the Washington premiere of *The Forgotten Factor*, the industrial teamwork play, at the National Theater. The audience included 300 members of Congress, 70

generals and admirals (I saw Eisenhower's note regretting he would be out of town), and leaders of labor and industry. An army officer in the audience that evening said, "If a bomb dropped on this place tonight, America's war effort would be put out of commission."

Truman and Wadsworth had traveled together to Philadelphia in late 1943 to speak at a *Forgotten Factor* showing sponsored by the shipyard unions and management groups, including H. Birchard Taylor, vice president of Cramp Shipbuilding Company, and William Schaffer, president of the 17,000 member CIO union at Cramp.

For the last four years of his second term as United States Senator, Harry Truman was the point man for Buchman's work in the nation's capital.

I met Truman personally only once. We were preparing for the Truman-Wadsworth sponsored showing of *The Forgotten Factor*. John Roots had some details to go over. For a stand-up conversation in the senator's office John took me along, plus Cece Broadhurst, Canadian singing cowboy, whose birthday May 8 coincided with the senator's. "Since Mr. Truman doesn't have time to write a song for me, I decided to write one for him," Cece said. It was late in the day and all the staff had left. Cece got out his guitar, began strumming, and started with these lines:

Oh Senator Truman once gathered a few men
To form a big committee
To investigate production rate
In each industrial city.
Can't help but admire the senator's fire,
So one day I decided
To make a move to quite improve
The patriotic things that I did.

The song of course brought a wreath of smiles. "That fellow's got it," Truman grinned.

I was impressed in the few minutes I was with Truman how quickly he made decisions. It was always "yes" or "no" right now. He did not say, "Let me think about that," or "I'll get back to you." He may have taken longer deciding to use the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but I expect he came to a conclusion without a lot of debate.¹

I have in my scrapbook invitations from Mrs. Truman to the Hunters on two different occasions to attend tea at the White House, which, of course, we accepted! One day in the spring of 1948 my wife Mary Louise called the Executive Mansion, got straight through and invited the Trumans' daughter, Margaret, for tea at our house on Newark Street in Cleveland Park. She accepted, came out in a White House limousine, and visited with us in our living room for almost an hour. During some of the time our Tom, aged two, crawled nearby on the floor. We talked about her recent concert tour as a soprano soloist (she thought critics were frustrated performers), and about some of her father's problems with General Douglas MacArthur.

Margaret and I kept up an intermittent correspondence over the years. It started when I was in the army, and I suspected that her writing was as much due to a commitment to pay attention to people in uniform as anything else. I saw her in a newsreel greeting crowds with her father and wrote that such a life must be hard. She replied it wasn't that hard. When I toured the USS battleship *Missouri*, anchored at Pearl Harbor on the fiftieth

¹A popular book by Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 2005), contends that decisions made quickly on a hunch may be better than ones that have been researched at length.

anniversary of the attack, a sailor showed us what they called the “Truman Galley.” He said the then president had eaten with the seamen on the way across the Pacific. I told Margaret this, and she wrote back that “those guys must be crazy.” Her father never crossed the Pacific on that ship, she said.

Truman himself wrote to Josephus Daniels, American Ambassador to Mexico, in 1940,

I have been associated with Dr. Buchman and his Moral Re-Armament program and I think highly of him.

Truman wrote to Buchman July 30, 1941:

It takes everything to make a team pull together, and I think you yourself are doing yeoman service in that direction.

On October 10, 1940, in his own hand, Mr. Truman scrawled across the bottom of a letter that his secretary, Vic Messall, had sent him from Washington to Independence, regarding an MRA matter,

Send in the information we have and say we approved the movement. HST

All of this and much more is to be found in the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, Independence, Missouri. During my visit there on August 9, 1988, Benedict K. Zobrist, the library’s director, queried me for the better part of an hour in an oral history interview. The result is an eighteen-page monograph.²

²See Appendix E.

Arthur Strong, ace British photo-journalist, in a behemoth 13" x 15" illustrated coffee-table book, *Preview of a New World: How Frank Buchman Helped His Country Move from Isolation to World Responsibility* (Sweden 1994) fills a ten-page appendix with quotations from the Truman-Buchman files he found in Independence.

One biographer, Richard Lawrence Miller, *Harry S. Truman, The Rise to Power* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), devotes several pages to Truman's relation to Buchman's work. Miller is solidly negative about it. But he says Truman's interest in the movement was "intense." He also thought Truman lied to firebrand George Seldes when the old curmudgeon, who made up a lot of the "muck" he was credited with "raking," jumped Truman about MRA. The Senator replied to Seldes August 15, 1944, (a month after he was nominated for the vice presidency):

The Moral Re-Armament on the West Coast, and also in Detroit and Philadelphia, did some excellent work in creating a friendly feeling between employers and employees. In fact I think a general strike was avoided in Detroit and in an airplane factory on the West Coast.

My interest in the organization was to get the work done. I don't know anything about the controversy in connection with it, and care less.

At the outset of this letter he wrote:

I am not personally acquainted with Dr. Buchman, and I don't think I ever saw him in my life.

Miller's charge of lying may be a little harsh. One can't remember everything, and it had been five years since Buchman introduced Truman at the latter's first MRA meeting, the one in Constitution Hall, packed out with top drawer official Washington, where he delivered from the platform a message from President Roosevelt.

In Margaret Truman's biography of her mother, *Bess W. Truman* (New York: Macmillan, 1986), p. 213, after citing her father's courage in making anti-isolationist speeches in Missouri in 1939, she wrote:

Dad topped this one by giving a speech sponsored by Moral Re-Armament (MRA) calling on Americans to resist the amoral dictatorships of the left and right. The MRA people told him they were going to distribute 3 million printed copies of the address.

The prestigious Gridiron Club of Washington, DC, comprising the top journalists in the Capitol, is best known for its annual dinner featuring skits by members and remarks by the President.

At the Gridiron dinner December 18, 1948, President Truman said he made it a practice every day to "seek guidance."

Back to the Miller biography, *Rise to Power*—the author's description of Truman's interest as "intense" jibes with my experience. I recall sitting in the Senate gallery in April 1944 (already there was talk of drafting him for the vice presidency) and looking down to see Truman at his desk on the Senate floor, piled high with invitations to a National Theatre production of the play, *The Forgotten Factor*, which he and Representative James Wadsworth were sponsoring that May. Truman was

signing each invitation in his own hand, with an ear cocked to Senate action near him that might need his attention. He was signing hundreds of those invitations.

How well the Truman-Buchman connection was understood in the political community is illustrated by an interesting vignette from the 1944 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, where Truman was nominated for vice president. The evening after adjournment I was cruising an upper floor of the Conrad Hilton Hotel. A door opened and out stepped Jack Kelly. He was a top bricklayer-contractor, a former Olympic rowing champion, and the father of a teenager who was to become Princess Grace of Monaco. He was also head of the Democratic Party in Pennsylvania. In 1943 at Philadelphia's Academy of Music he had been one of the hosts for the labor-management-sponsored showing of *The Forgotten Factor*. He called the drama "a two-handkerchief play."

At the Conrad Hilton I was surprised that Jack Kelly recognized me, and even more surprised when, referring to the nomination of Truman that day, he congratulated me on "putting your man over." The next day I saw him loading the trunk of his car in the parking lot, and he again congratulated me on our victory at the convention. Of course we had nothing to do with it. But, as they say, one can be grateful for the rumor.

David McCullough, America's premier historio-biographer, does not mention this connection. A master of hyperbole ("the greatest whatever since Jefferson"), McCullough has in his books and dramatic TV commentaries on "The American Experience" turned millions of Americans into curbside historians. When my wife and I took a cruise through the Panama Canal, we found his biography of the waterway, *Path Between the Seas*, both delightful and extremely informative on what we were seeing. His classic

biography, *Truman*, is one of the marvels of the age and rightfully a super bestseller.

I have written Mr. McCullough to ask whether someone he trusted asked him not to mention the association of Truman and Buchman. On March 23, 2005, he replied from his home in Martha's Vineyard:

Even in a biography as long as mine of Harry Truman, it's necessary to leave some things out. Sometimes the choices are not easy. I chose to leave out Frank Buchman and the Moral Re-Armament program.

There is a personal footnote I have to add here. There is no historic proof of my hunch. There is no way the author's research could have come across it. But I feel it must be said. It has to do with McCullough's vignette, page 542, revealing a basic element in Truman's diplomacy. It was of enormous importance at the time it happened, and is the kind of thing that could promise great hope for the solution of the world's ancient hatreds.

In 1947 during the hundredth anniversary of America's war against Mexico, which incidentally was opposed by many including Abraham Lincoln, Harry Truman made a three-day visit to Mexico, the first ever by an American president. The whole expedition was his idea. At one point during the visit, without notice and in spite of the cautious stance of advisors accompanying him, the president did an extraordinary thing. He laid a wreath at the monument of the Boy Heroes of Chapultepec. This cenotaph memorializes the heroism of a small cadre of young cadets who gave their lives in the struggle against the invaders from the north. The event has been an emotional focus of national pride. It became Mexico's Alamo.

In his book McCullough describes Truman's move this way:

The next morning he announced suddenly that he wished to make an unscheduled stop at Mexico City's historic Chapultepec Castle, where with one simple, unheralded gesture, he did more to improve Mexican-American relations than had any president in a century. Within hours, as the word spread, he had become a hero. The long motorcade pulled into the shade of an ancient grove of trees. Truman stepped out of his black Lincoln and walked to a stone monument bearing the names of *Los Ninos Heroes*. . . . As Truman approached, a contingent of blue uniformed Mexican cadets stood at attention. As he placed a floral wreath at the foot of the monument, several of the cadets wept silently. After bowing his head for a few minutes, Truman returned to the line of cars, where the Mexican chauffeurs were already shaking hands with their American passengers.

The story created an immediate sensation in the city, filling the papers with eight-column, banner headlines. "Rendering Homage to the Heroes of '47, Truman Heals an Old National Wound Forever," read one. "Friendship Began Today," said another. A cab driver told an American reporter, "To think that the most powerful man in the world would come and apologize." A prominent Mexican engineer was quoted: "One hundred years of misunderstanding and bitterness wiped out by one man in one minute."

The doughty World War I artilleryman, who now had to be supremely careful over the international impact of everything he said or did, may or may not have intended his move to be seen as an apology. But however others may wish to interpret his motives, there is compelling reason to believe that this event never would have taken place had it not been for the teamwork ideas of the man from Pennsylvania that had been so compelling during the Senate years of the man from Missouri.

Chapter 8

Adolf Hitler

Frank Buchman tried to make an impact on the life and direction of Adolf Hitler. He worked very hard to achieve such. He invested enormous time and energy. It was a major Buchman focus in the late 1930s.

The effort was widely misunderstood. It became his number one public relations problem and has remained so to this day.

But the burnishing of his own image was never a high priority for him. He was willing to let the chips fall.

If he had succeeded, history would have given mighty vindication.

He saw the great danger in the Nazi juggernaut. He also saw the enormous potential if it were steered in positive directions.

He believed Hitler and his associates were, like himself, children of God. He believed passionately that, in his words, "the outstretched arms of Jesus Christ" were just as much for the German leadership as they were for the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, the busdriver, the thief on the cross, or any one else.

It was a colossal gamble. Yet his approach had in the past brought new life to many very difficult types. He felt it was worth going for it.

Suppose he had succeeded. Could we have saved the monumental tragedy of World War II?

In the Buchman strategy, a subtle purpose was perceptible. If the German people could be convinced that the West would repent for the vindictive Treaty of Versailles, which followed World War I, and change its ways in respect to Germany, it might have substantial effects:

- (1) It could take wind out of Hitler's sails. Much of Der Fuehrer's strength stemmed from Germany's sense of inferiority and resentment, plus the bad conscience about Germany that many in the West held.
- (2) A demonstrable change in democratic leaders just might produce a shaking effect in Adolf Hitler himself.

In 1934 Frank had invested time in Berlin trying to interview Hitler. He sent in a written request for a personal conference. Then he and Sherwood (Sherry) Day took a room across from the Reich Chancellery and waited two weeks. Silence. Having failed in his one-on-one approach, his next avenue was through the press. Political candidates will sometimes "send a message" to opponents or proponents through the media. Buchman resorted to just such a strategy to send a message to Hitler.

He held the second world assembly for Moral Re-Armament in September 1938 at the Swiss mountain resort center at Interlaken. People spoke of the clouds hanging on the Jungfrau the way war clouds were hanging over Europe. "Interlaken, the Answer to Versailles" ran the theme banner.

Der Fuehrer was stepping up his allegations of the iniquities of the World War I peace treaty. The humiliation of Versailles, he was belligerently telling the world, must be ended.

It was Buchman's last and boldest bid for the attention of Adolf Hitler and the German leadership.

Buchman's strategy at Interlaken was to demonstrate that a significant body of Western influence understood the hurt which the German people felt and wished to redress the wrongs. Intimations have sometimes been made that Neville Chamberlain's trip to Munich the same month indicated some link with Interlaken. None has been demonstrated. Millions were, of course, hoping that the British prime minister's "peace

in our time” had indeed arrived, and that Hitler could be believed as having made his “last territorial demand.” Both hopes were soon dashed.

Buchman’s aim was not appeasement but genuine change on both sides.

In the 1970’s I took a course at Harvard in Calvinism. One day the professor told us the story of a group that called on Calvin, asking his support of their plan to overthrow the king. He declined, saying his aim was to convert the king. Francis of Assisi joined the Fifth Crusade to try to convert the Muslims. In the middle of a battle, he decided to go straight to the sultan to make peace. The sultan was charmed by Francis and his preaching and said, “I would convert to your religion, which is a beautiful one—but both of us would be murdered.”

There is a somewhat related modern story. It has more to do with nation changing than life changing. It has been told by President Ronald Reagan about a summit conference with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Geneva in 1985. Frustrated by the slow progress they were making on arms control, Reagan said to Gorbachev something like: “We don’t mistrust each other because of all these weapons. We have all these weapons because we mistrust each other.”

The president then suggested that just the two of them walk down and sit on a bench by Lake Geneva, without advisers, agenda, and the baggage of public posturing. “You tell me what you think your people really need,” Reagan said, “and I will tell you what I think my people really need.”

The resulting conversation may have done more to end the Cold War than all the debt-exploding hardware the U.S. built during that period. True, neither leader tried to convert the other, but it is an example of personal understanding being better than the threat of violence.

This is a far cry from Munich-style appeasement. It has everything to do with mutual honesty.

The ordinary smug American in the 1930s would say, “I don’t need what you are talking about. I’m OK. Why don’t you go and change Hitler?” Yet when Buchman tried, and told the press that a change in a dictator would mean a change in the dictator’s nation, he was ridiculed. The fact that the statement was true, as the Emperor Constantine in the fifth century and Queen Ka’ahumanu in the nineteenth century proved, was always bypassed. To try to change a human being who had reached power was seen to be contemptible. Violence was preferred. Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s strategy of “Christian” murder, an update of the Puritan’s regicide, proved more acceptable.

So Buchman failed. Hitler brought genocide to a race, ruin to his nation, and dislocation to the world. We still suffer from Buchman’s failure.

Yet what if he had succeeded? Suppose those millions of lives and billions in treasure had been saved. Suppose the Austrian orator’s charisma had been turned from hate to love and fulfilled Winston Churchill’s hope that Hitler might:

. . . go down in history as the man who restored honor and peace of mind to the great Germanic nation and brought it back serene, helpful, and strong, to the forefront of the European family circle.¹

¹Winston Churchill, “Hitler and His Choice” an essay written in 1935 and reprinted in 1937 in Churchill’s collection of brief biographies, *Great Contemporaries* (London: Collins, n.d.), p. 261.

Buchman gambled everything on precisely this dream. He came short. Yet, is it not better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all?

Such a concept is difficult for the Western mind to comprehend. Most would be inclined to agree with Bonhoeffer, who concluded in effect that all you can do with a disoriented man is to shoot him, and by so doing save other lives. This reaction explains some of the vicious attacks made on Buchman for his attempts to change Hitler. John Bennett of Union Theological Seminary told me that some of his friends felt that Frank was “insufficiently critical of Hitler”—as if being critical in some way would improve the situation.

In reality, what the American was doing was taking seriously his Master’s commandment:

You have heard that it has been said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say unto you, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.”²

No single activity in his long and active life caused Frank Buchman more image problems than the Hitler effort.

Naiveté was a favorite charge, softness on Hitler. New York theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, who resigned from the *Christian Century* magazine because of its anti-World War II position, was highly critical of Buchman, calling him “naive.” Bonhoeffer said that anyone who tried to change Hitler simply did not understand the situation.

²Matthew 5:43-44.

Buchman's actual position in regard to the Nazi leaders was the same as to everyone he met—from janitors to kings. They were individual, precious human souls, created and cared for by a loving Creator. They all needed a carrot and a stick. In the late thirties, when anti-Nazi feeling was mounting in the United States, I attended a meeting in Gramercy Park, New York, where Frank asked how many felt “prickly” when they thought of the German nation? He then asked how many believed the outstretched arms of Jesus Christ were also for the German leadership?

At issue were two roads to peace: (1) destruction of the enemy; and, (2) redemption of the enemy. The first was enthusiastically adopted by the North Atlantic community. It succeeded.

The road of redemption was almost universally rejected. It failed.

Cliveden Set

In candor, it must be added that Buchman was somewhat intrigued by what the National Socialists were trying to do in Germany. He was not alone in his interest. David Lloyd George and Winston Churchill were among the Western leaders who saw hopeful possibilities in the apparent German renaissance. Indeed, the feeling was widespread, reflected in the oft-quoted commendation about Mussolini, “he made the trains run on time.” Nicholas Murray Butler, a Nobel Laureate, Columbia University's president, and recipient of thirty-four honorary degrees, told his students that totalitarian regimes brought forth “men of far greater intelligence, far stronger character, and far

more courage than the system of elections.”³

At more than one social gathering in London during that period, Buchman was heard trying to point out the positive aspects of the new German regime. Of Swiss-German background himself, he also took pains at his great Oxford houseparties of the mid-thirties to help people understand the Germans. Frank never met Hitler. He did meet Heinrich Himmler and in a spirit of building bridges, actually offered to introduce him to an acquaintance in England. This tilt caused one of Buchman's early associates, Nick Wade, father of British tennis star Virginia Wade, to drop off. Some of this defensiveness of the German regime gave rise to accusations that the American belonged to the so-called “Cliveden set,” an element of London society alleged to be Nazi sympathizers counseling appeasement. “Cliveden” was the name of the estate where Lady Astor held court as social arbiter of the day. Some of these sympathetic discussions were supposed to have taken place there. Buchman was never part of any such “set.” But the implication provided titillating copy for the gossip columns, and it was a made-to-order issue for opponents of the movement.

In 1936, Frank Buchman was on a roll. That decade saw his greatest visibility. In the early thirties he had dramatically penetrated some of the power and media centers of Scandinavia, especially Norway and Denmark. Carl Hambro, the Norwegian prime minister who had introduced him and his idea to Norway and to a significant number of League of Nations leaders, said in a radio interview with the American newscaster Lowell Thomas,

³William Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1974), p. 57.

“Here is a new hope for a more permanent solution to international crises.”

In June 1936 crowds of people from across the United States and Canada flocked to a ten-day conclave with him in the Massachusetts Berkshires. One of them was Bill Wilson, who having found sobriety through Buchman’s programs, went on, with Bob Smith to found Alcoholics Anonymous. In Stockbridge June 4, 1936, Buchman spoke to 5,000 who were present, a talk which was broadcast across the Atlantic.

Two weeks later, near the time of the American national political conventions that year, he delivered a major address on June 19, 1936, this one broadcast from Philadelphia.

A month later back in Great Britain on July 26, he addressed 25,000 people gathered around his idea at the British Industries Fair building in Birmingham, England.

On August 9, he delivered another transatlantic broadcast, this time from London, entitled “A Revolution to Cure a Revolution.” It was carried by CBS.

Keep in mind that all transatlantic travel at that time was by surface ocean liner taking five days each way. By late August he was back in New York. With all that summer’s successes under his belt, he might be forgiven for a surge of self-confidence. It might have made him less careful than he might have been about what he said to the press.

On August 24 the widely traveled American returned to the United States.

World Telegram Interview

A number of New York reporters had conducted the standard shipside interviews with him and other celebrities. But

the editors of the *New York World Telegram* wanted something more. On the following day, August 25, they sent twenty-six-year-old William A. H. Birnie, one of their half-dozen top investigative feature writers, to interview Buchman. Birnie had originally been signed on as the paper's police reporter. Later he was to be placed in charge of the entertainment section.

He had been graduated from Williams College in 1931 and had then spent two years on a fellowship studying in Germany at the Universities of Munich and Bonn. Upon his return he had worked on the *Berkshire Eagle*, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, before joining the staff of the *World Telegram*. He had had some contact with the Oxford Group in the Berkshires.

Earlier in 1936, Buchman had made news with comments to the effect that if the dictators would change, their countries would change. It was this political philosophy that Birnie's editors wanted followed up. Buchman granted the interview. It was held in a drawing room of the parish house of New York's Calvary Episcopal Church. Eight or nine of Buchman's associates were present. Birnie jotted key words on folded papers on his knee. The interview lasted an hour and ten minutes. This headline hit the streets August 26, 1936:

“Hitler or Any Fascist Leader Controlled by God
Could Cure All Ills of World, Buchman Believes”

Excerpts from the text follow:

To Dr. Frank Nathan Daniel Buchman, vigorous, outspoken, 58-year-old leader of the revivalist Oxford Group, the Fascist dictatorships of Europe suggest infinite possibilities for remaking the world and putting it under “God Control.”

“I thank heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler,

who built a front line of defense against the anti-Christ of Communism," he said today in his book-lined office in the annex to Calvary Church, Fourth Ave. and 21st St.

"My barber in London told me Hitler saved all Europe from Communism. That's how he felt. Of course, I don't condone everything the Nazis do. Anti-Semitism? Bad, naturally. I suppose Hitler sees a Karl Marx in every Jew."

"But think what it would mean to the world if Hitler surrendered to the control of God. Or Mussolini, or any dictator? Through such a man God could control a nation overnight and solve every last, bewildering problem."

Dr. Buchman, who is directing an Oxford houseparty tonight at the Lenox, Massachusetts, estate of Mrs. Harriet Pullman Schermerhorn, returned from Europe aboard the Queen Mary after attending Oxford meetings in England and the Olympic games in Berlin.

A small, portly man, who doesn't smoke or drink and listens quietly to "God's plans" for a half hour or so every day, usually before breakfast, Dr. Buchman talked easily about world affairs while eight or nine Oxfordites—good-looking young fellows in tweeds—sat on the floor and listened.

"The world needs the dictatorship of the living spirit of God," he said and smiled, adjusting his rimless glasses and smoothing the gray hair on the back of his head. "I like to put it this way. God is a perpetual broadcasting station and all you need to do is tune in. What we need is a supernatural

network of live wires across the world to every last man, in every last place, in every last situation.

“The world won’t listen to God, but God has a plan for every person, for every nation. Human ingenuity is not enough. That is why the ‘isms’ are pitted against each other and blood falls.

“Human problems aren’t economic. They’re moral, and they can’t be solved by immoral measures.

“Then in a God-controlled nation, capital and labor would discuss their problems peacefully and reach God-controlled solutions. Yes, business would be owned by individuals, not by the State, but the owners would be God-controlled.”

The Oxford Group has no official membership lists, no centralized organization, but Dr. Buchman estimated that “literally millions” listened in to his recent world broadcast from the meeting in England attended by 15,000 persons.

Finances?

“God runs them,” he smiled. “Don’t you say every day, ‘Give us this day our daily bread?’ And don’t you receive?”

The group is built on the simple thesis that there is a divine plan for the world and that human beings, with faith and devotion, can receive God-given guidance in a “quiet time” of communion. Most Oxfordites write down their guidance and then check it against the “four absolutes”—absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, absolute love.

“Those are Christ’s standards,” Dr. Buchman explained. “We believe that human nature itself can be changed by them. We believe in answering revolution by more revolution—but revolution within the individual. And through the individual, revolution in the nation, and through the nation, revolution in the world. It’s as simple as that—Christian simplicity. And it’s fun, too. We call each other by our first names and our meetings are always informal.

“I held meetings at the Republican and Democratic conventions. What Washington needs is God-control. Landon talks about divine guidance. Why doesn’t he apply it? And the finest thing Roosevelt ever said was this: ‘I doubt if there exists any problem, political or economic, which would not melt before the fire of a spiritual awakening.’

“Oxford is not a one-way ticket to heaven, although that’s a splendid thing and lots of people need it. It’s a national ticket, too. That’s the ticket we should vote in this coming election—God’s ticket.”

Dr. Buchman is unmarried, a graduate of Muhlenberg College, which awarded him a doctorate of divinity in 1926. He said he was “changed”—Oxfordites use the word to mean the complete surrender to God-control—by a gradual process.

“I was in England and I began to realize I was a sinner and there was an abyss between Christ and me,” he said. “I was resenting my lost power

and I was confessing others' sins when the real problem was mine. Then I went to church.

“A vision of the Cross. Of Christ on the Cross. An actual vision. I was changed then, but I've been changing ever since. A little even today, I suppose.”⁴

The headline writer was not all that careful with his summary. Buchman did not say a changed fascist dictator “could cure all the ills of the world.” He was quite clear that it would take a good deal more than that. But a change in the leader of any nation would shake things up. He would say the same about Franklin Roosevelt, Stanley Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain, Winston Churchill, Edouard Daladier, Edvard Benes or any other influential personality. He believed that leaders of every country needed a whole new direction, and he gave his life to help them.

The most damaging segment of the interview opens the second paragraph: “I thank heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler, who built a frontline of defense against the anti-Christ of Communism.” George Seldes and others have made this into “thank God for. . .” This may be a quibble, but “thanking heaven” is not necessarily gratitude to Deity. It was a passing comment like “thank heaven it didn't rain today.”

Garrett Stearly was present at the interview. “I was amazed when the story came out,” he said. “It was so out of key with the actual interview. . . . [Frank] said Germany needed a new Christian spirit, yet one had to face the fact that Hitler had been a bulwark against Communism there—and you could at least

⁴William A. H. Birnie, *New York World Telegram*, August 26, 1936.

thank heaven for that. It was a throwaway line. No eulogy of Hitler at all.”⁵

It so happened that just the week before, the Catholic Church in Germany had made a similar statement about the regime’s accomplishments in resisting Bolshevism. Presumably Frank was aware of this.⁶

Postscript

Mr. Birnie later became a senior editor of the *Reader’s Digest*, with an office in Chappaqua, New York. I talked to him there in May 1974, nearly twenty-eight years after the *World Telegram* interview. He said he had always been proud of his interviewee for standing by the feature as printed. Buchman could easily have used the familiar ploy of claiming that his remarks were misinterpreted, lifted out of context, or misquoted. Indeed, Birnie expected him to do exactly that. He did not.

Birnie recalled:

I have always said that I admired him that he never accused me of distortion. I wouldn’t have been surprised if he had. . .

I didn’t regard him as a phony. I regarded him as a man who was operating successfully in the religious field, a successful operator. I did not feel that I had been at the Second Coming, by any means. But again, I didn’t feel that I was talking with a charlatan.

⁵Lean, p. 240.

⁶*New York Times*, August 8, 1936.

Birnie agreed that the general climate of public opinion in the United States was not nearly so harsh about Hitler in the mid-thirties. It was true, Birnie thought, that at the time of the interview in 1936, attitudes were somewhat more wait-and-see than they were in the forties. Not everybody in public life would like to be quoted during or after the war what they said about Hitler before the war. Birnie added, "My memory of my talk with Buchman is that he wasn't endorsing or condemning Hitler. It was that with a totalitarian set-up, you were able to reach the key people easier than you were in a diffuse democracy."

Over the years, Buchman's lieutenants spent enormous energy explaining away the *World Telegram* interview. It was always the movement's major public relations problem. The team's answers would range from, "Out of sixty reporters at the dock, this was the only one to print such a remark" to, "He never said it." The fact is this was not a shipside interview. Those took place the day before. The *World Telegram* interview was an exclusive one and it was held in Buchman's study. As to whether the remarks were actually made, Buchman himself had numerous opportunities to repudiate the interview. He never did. Indeed, I heard him tell a hundred people in the Island House at Mackinac Island, Michigan, in 1947, "I'm glad I said it."⁷

At the same time, as Birnie confirmed later, Buchman was a strategist and tactician. He knew that the process might have more immediate results in a dictatorship. If a dictator was leading his country down the wrong road with all the engines of

⁷On occasion Buchman would duck without denying. In India he told a questioner that a newspaper reporter who circulated the pro-Hitler charge was "the cleverest rascal in the world." *Hindustan Times Weekly*, December 28, 1952.

communication and production at his command, then a change in that dictator into helpful and peaceful channels would be a shaking accomplishment for that country and for world peace and prosperity.

True, the logical argument can be made that dictators seem inevitably to be war-mongers. If the dictator should change his ways, his country would no longer be a dictatorship. But that was exactly Buchman's point.

Birnie's opening sentence says that to Buchman the Fascist dictatorships of Europe suggested infinite possibilities for remaking the world and putting it under "God control." Surely there can be no argument that there were "infinite possibilities," however one may disbelieve that they were *realistic* possibilities.

Why

This interview deserves a careful analysis. Of all his communications with the press, this one most critically affected his public persona. Its fallout has done great mischief, and will doubtless affect Buchman's place in history.

My own view of why Frank later said he was glad he had said it is two-fold:

- (1) He believed he was guided by God during this interview, as in most things. He was not about to repudiate what God had guided him to say, even though the report was used to club his work. There is no question that on a human or worldly basis, he and his movement would have been more successful in numbers and influence if that interview had never been printed or if he had subsequently repudiated it. It bothered the leadership of AA. It is a major reason why the Up With People spinoff leaders denied connection to its Buchman roots. To the

young members of the stage casts, the questions raised were regarded as too much baggage to carry.

- (2) Buchman's aim in that interview, as always, was to reach people and to change them. His purpose was to try once again to reach Adolf Hitler. Most experienced teachers would say that to provide new motivation for a bully, one must first of all find something positive to say about that person. One builds on strength before leading somebody to redirection, let alone repentance. So Buchman found something positive to say about Hitler. He hit on something held to be important in both Germany and the United States at that time, the containment of communism. In the same interview he criticized the Nazi persecution of the Jews. But criticism of Hitler was not news. That was universally acceptable. The appreciation of anything Hitler did was unacceptable and made big news.

My transcript of the Chappaqua conversation shows that it concluded with this exchange:

TWH: Frank Buchman spoke German (Pennsylvania Deutsch). He was always much interested in Germany. That's one reason why he had this thing somehow to get a hold of Hitler and redirect that movement. If he had won on that, it would have been tremendous.

WB: That's true, and that's what he meant. But of course at that time it was capable of great misunderstanding.

TWH: Oh, yes. It was a big gamble, and it didn't work. Frank Buchman tried to change Adolf Hitler and failed. But he was not about to go back on his attempt.

Rudolf Hess

On May 10, 1941, the number-three Nazi, Rudolf Hess, who was deputy Fuehrer and head of the party, parachuted over Scotland, landing on the 157,000 acre estate of the Duke of Hamilton.⁸ William Hillman, European editor of *Collier's* magazine, "announced with confidence" that Hess was a follower of Buchman and that his motive was to make contact with the Oxford Group for the purpose of negotiating a peace.⁹ This was not a sensationalized tabloid tidbit. Hillman was known to have excellent contacts in the State Department. Also, Hamilton, thirty-eight, the premier Duke of Scotland, had been linked in the press with the same German-sympathy elements to which some had attempted to tie Buchman.

Frank reviewed the article with his team. In teacher fashion, he sought expressions of the significance of this event. Theories poured forth. None of them qualified as his "school solution." When all had finished, he gave his reaction by way of a down-home story. A report was going around town that a well-known single lady of uncertain age was getting married. The talk was so persistent that her friends decided to ask her, "Was it true?" "No," she sighed with a smile, "but thank God for the rumor."

There was no known connection between the Hess flight and MRA. However, one of the most knowledgeable foreign correspondents in the nation thought there was. Such an assertion was in the public prints. It meant that Frank Buchman and his movement were being taken seriously. Sophisticated voices at the power centers sounded as though they regarded

⁸*Newsweek*, May 26, 1941, pp. 26-27.

⁹"Is Rudolf Hess a Buchmanite?" *Christian Century*, June 4, 1941, p. 741.

him as a formidable factor in world policy, a for-real part of the international mix, affecting war and peace. Frank Buchman was out for nothing less than remaking the world. If those in the know thought that there was more evidence that he was accomplishing this, it was possible the facts might catch up.

German Interest

A major factor which made the German nation always intriguing to Buchman was that he himself was of German origins and spoke the language. He always believed he was especially endowed for serving the German people. They delighted in his Pennsylvania version of their language, resulting from 200 years of separation. He labored for them to find their true destiny whether under dictatorship or democratic regimes.¹⁰

No one was ever able to pin an appeasement charge on Buchman and make it stick. On the contrary, he was widely commended during World War II for strengthening the free world, particularly America's "arsenal of democracy." He contributed heightened morale in the war production centers and provided broad-based ideological training.

What the Nazis Thought of Buchman

Over on the opposite side, the Nazi regime took a vehement anti-Buchman position—on ideological grounds. A 126-page Gestapo report, *Die Oxfordgruppenbewegung*, was published in Germany in 1942 by the Headquarters of the Reich Security

¹⁰In a world broadcast from Caux, Switzerland, June 4, 1949, Buchman said, "Everyone feels Moral Re-Armament has the answer for Germany, but not everyone realizes that a reborn Germany would have the answer for them. The fate of Germany is the fate of Europe." See Buchman, *Remaking the World*, pp. 173-74.

Department. Discovered during the German retreat from France, the contents of the report were described by the Associated Press foreign correspondent, DeWitt Mackenzie, in a dispatch for his syndicated column datelined London, December 19, 1945. Excerpts from the Gestapo report as released by the AP follow:

The [Oxford Group] encourage their members to place themselves fully beneath the Christian Cross, and to oppose the cross of the Swastika with the Cross of Christ, as the former seeks to destroy the Cross of Christ . . . The Oxford Group supplies the Christian religious garment for world democratic aims . . . The group and the democracies supplement each other and render each other's work fruitful . . . Seldom has any movement of religious rebirth succeeded as the group has in establishing itself in such a relatively short time in almost all the countries of the world . . . Under the slogan of Moral Re-Armament the group has become the pacemaker of Anglo-American diplomacy.

If Buchman was pro-Nazi, the Nazis somehow never got the word.

Chapter 9

Labor

The origins of the serious impact of Moral Re-Armament on the American labor movement began in the spring of 1940 at a labor-management conference at Brookdale, California. Especially outstanding at this gathering were a number of steel-worker's leaders, particularly John Riffe, who at the time was responsible for organizing big steel mills such as Bethlehem's steel plants in Lackawanna, New York, and San Francisco, California. Riffe was to go on to become the last executive vice president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and a key figure in the peaceable merger of the AFL and CIO.

The interest of many of these men and their families was solidified later in 1940 at a summer-long assembly on the southern shore of Lake Tahoe.

The conflicts of the thirties, exemplified in events like Walter Reuther's "battle of the overpass" at the River Rouge Ford plant and John L. Lewis's militant United Mineworkers mobilizing the waking masses through the Congress of Industrial Organizations—all had the nation on edge. Overseas, would American industry be able to answer the challenge? "Give us the tools, and we will finish the job," pleaded Winston Churchill. But strike-bound plants would furnish few tools.

Buchman's lifelong strategy formulation was generally grouped around these elements: (1) What are people worried about? (2) What needs to be done? (3) Will a dramatic change in individuals meet the worries? (4) Who are the difficult ones that if changed would make a difference?

In mammoth war plants racked with conflict, an outbreak of teamwork could electrify a nation. He would lay siege to militant labor leaders and hard-nosed tycoons. An invitation was arranged to come to the two big national labor conventions of 1940—the CIO in Atlantic City, and the AFL in New Orleans. Buchman gathered his forces and boarded a transcontinental train.

John L. Lewis and the CIO

John L. Lewis, the lion-maned, Shakespeare-quoting president of the United Mine Workers, had in 1937 formed, within the American Federation of Labor (AFL), the Committee on Industrial Organization (CIO). He was now, in the fall of 1940, opening this “Committee’s” third annual convention. His purpose in forming the CIO was to organize the mass of unorganized, unskilled workers in the heavy industries—particularly steel, auto, and rubber—heretofore bypassed by what he called the self-satisfied barons of the old labor hierarchy which was dominated by skilled craftsmen. He was quite open in his contempt for their leader, the president of the AFL. “I have examined the mind of William Green,” Lewis intoned to his devoted followers at Atlantic City, “and I find nothing there.”

The Atlantic City convention opened in unusual uproar, even for the brawling new labor baby. The two big questions were: Would Lewis take the CIO out of the AFL? And would he resign as its head? By this time Lewis and FDR were enemies and Lewis backed Roosevelt’s 1940 opponent, the Republican Wendell Willkie. He said that if the latter were defeated, he, Lewis, would take it as a vote of no confidence by the workers of the country, and he would resign from leading the CIO. The

Committee on Industrial Organization became the Congress of Industrial Organizations, preserving the CIO acronym.

Wilkie lost and Lewis kept his word. He resigned. Another mineworker, Philip Murray, head of the steelworkers organizing drive, was handed the reins of the CIO.

In a speech at another convention, John Murphy of the United Pulp and Sulphite Workers was to say, "John Lewis used to call William Green and Philip Murray 'sons of the United Mineworkers.' He still calls them 'sons of . . .' but not of 'the United Mineworkers'."

It was an education for our team to watch this drama from the balcony. Later, led by allies among the delegates, we corralled many of them in a nearby hotel ballroom for evening presentations of the teamwork drama, *You Can Defend America*.

John L. Lewis was never a great one on teamwork. He ran his own show and delighted in baiting the White House. His war with Roosevelt, and later on Truman, was non-stop. When the latter was asked whether he would appoint the miners' leader as the United States Commissioner of Mines, he responded, "For your information, I wouldn't appoint John L. Lewis dog catcher."

Reporters asked the miners' chieftain for his comment. "Mr. Truman is quite right," Lewis responded, "it would never do to have more brains in the Dog department than in the State department."

Teamwork in Industry

The idea of teamwork, however, did catch on with others. Led by steel workers organizer John Riffe, the early 1940 Brookdale cadre enlisted the enthusiasm of many of their colleagues behind the proposition that MRA was a useful device for cleaning up and unifying the unions for greater effectiveness

in their struggle. They began to see also that they got farther with management with the new approach.

There was no “softening” toward management involved, as some opponents warned. Riffe led a number of mostly successful strikes, as at the Lackawanna steel plant at Buffalo. But the contests tended to be above-board. There seemed to be more trust in an adversary’s word. Confidence was higher on both sides. There was less bloodshed.¹

Riffe, as a member of the negotiating committee, and steadily rising in the confidence of Philip Murray, was a key factor in ending the fifty-two day national steel strike in 1952.²

Whomever William Green of the AFL and Philip Murray of the CIO were “sons of,” they both backed MRA, not only with public endorsements but with facilitating encouragement within the labor movement. Murray brought the revue *You Can Defend America* to Cleveland for a full-dress, front-and-center evening presentation to the first constitutional convention of the United Steelworkers of America in 1942. At the close, he told the convention, “This has the inspirational value to create that spirit, that kind of unity, for which America is looking.”³

¹An exception came in 1948 when goons beat up John Riffe during a southern organizing drive, leaving him for dead.

²For the behind-the-scenes story of the roles played by Rose Riffe, John’s wife, and Frank Buchman, see William Grogan, *John Riffe of the Steelworkers* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1959), pp. 74ff. In mid-July Buchman told a few of us in his room at Mackinac Island, “I’ve been thinking of what we could do about the steel strike, but my guidance is that if we are faithful to John Riffe and his family, then we’ll be entrusted with the larger issues.”

³Grogan, *John Riffe*, p. 58.

Labor was not unanimous in its support. George Meany and Walter Reuther backed a 1953 report filed with, but not adopted by, the Executive Board of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in Stockholm.⁴ The problem tended to be a fear of someone invading their turf. This reaction apparently originated in that element of organized labor which regarded its mission as entirely material. They resisted help from those who aimed to improve the material through re-ordering the spiritual. That sounded like promises of pie-in-the-sky which just might dampen militancy.⁵

John Steelman, President Truman's labor negotiator, said he was helped by the Buchman ideas to achieve his considerable successes in major settlements. He said he found that in most disputes each party had a position they would accept, one beyond which they would not go. These were different from the positions they announced publicly. Steelman's aim was to find out confidentially what each side's true position was. These

⁴Gould Lincoln, "Moral Re-Armament Withstands Red Attack—Moves to Get U.S. Labor to Condemn Organization Fail," *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), November 28, 1953. See also, letter to *New York Times*, November 13, 1953, signed by Admiral Richard E. Byrd; John B. Hayward, New York; and Joseph Scott, Los Angeles.

⁵I ran into traces of this view among revolutionary black leaders in Africa, where I spent ten months in 1953-54. One firebrand shouted, "MRA is a cooling chamber to take the fight out of us." On the other hand, revolutionaries who decided to apply the idea to themselves and their struggles, like Godwin Lewanika of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and William Nkomo, African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, believed it made them more, rather than less, effective. "I can do more for my people than before," Lewanika told a meeting of top officials from both races in Lusaka in December 1953, "because now I fight with clean hands."

often were quite close, and he could then get them to close the narrow gap.

Steelman welcomed help from us during the Truman years. Those of us stationed in Washington took turns driving him every day from his residence at the Kennedy-Warren apartments on Connecticut Avenue to the White House.

Out on the West Coast Paul Cornelius, a meatpacker whose southeast Los Angeles plant was subsequently acquired by the Farmer John Company, brought a fresh concept into Buchman's battle for reconciliation between warring factions of all kinds. Paul had shown some of us a drawer in his office where he kept a gun before he caught the new spirit. Frank had made friends with the Dangberg brothers of Minden, located in Nevada's Carson Valley, whose feud with each other was threatening the future of their 30,000 acre ranch. Cornelius, who bought beef from the Dangbergs, had found a formula that worked in the Southern California and Arizona packing houses with competitors and workers. It was this: "Not who's right but what's right."

Paul carried the principle with him to Lake Tahoe in the fall of 1940 when the Dangbergs were being brought together there for the first time. Buchman was host to the two families. The family feud began to thaw over a duck dinner. The huge ranch was saved. Over the next decades "Not who's right but what's right" was to help settle many a conflict where the MRA presence was invited in. The Cornelius idea became a watchword in the battle for labor-management teamwork.⁶

⁶After the thrust that saved the Dangberg ranch, and the main body left by train for the national labor conventions, we left a follow-up squad in Nevada, which included Don Birdsall, George Marjoribanks, Denise Hyde, Elizabeth Morris, and

Henry Ford Turns Around

Henry Ford has been called anti-Semitic and anti-labor. George Seldes, the self-anointed muckraker, condemned Buchman for even acknowledging Ford's interest in his work. The idea that the man could change was apparently not included in the Seldes purview. There is no denying that the automaker, along with millions of others including senior members of my own Midwestern family, people who came out of the culture of the Ford era, at one time did indeed hold prejudices about race and views about labor unions that are unacceptable today. Yet two facts must be noted:

Mr. Ford apologized for the racial articles he allowed his public relations assistant, William J. Cameron, to publish in his *Dearborn Independent*.

And he astounded the world with his about-face on labor. On June 20, 1941, he agreed to everything the auto workers (UAW-CIO) wanted. Ford gave up the complete control he had wielded for thirty-eight years. From being the outstanding foe of the CIO, Ford went to the other extreme by giving the union the most favorable contract in automobile history. Every

others. They were on their own and sometimes were not sure about the next meal. Driving down the road one morning they came upon a truck accident which had spilled pies all over the road. Whether a higher power had caused the accident they were not sure, but they were grateful that day that something said, "Let 'em eat pie." People in nearby Yerington opened their hearts to the group and showed a warm understanding of what they were up to. They came to know the editor of the *Mason Valley News*, whose proud masthead bore the tidings:

The Only Newspaper in the World
That Gives a Damn About Yerington

The editor explained it was a tri-weekly paper. They got it out one week and tried to get it out the next.

employee was now required to join the union. Dues were to be paid directly to the union treasury via payroll checkoff. Wages were to match the highest paid at General Motors and Chrysler. The press called it the biggest sensation in the history of labor relations.

Even members of his own inner team were dumbfounded. For six weeks afterwards Mr. Ford would not talk about it. Finally he told Charles Sorenson, his production wizard and confidante, what happened. Here's what "Iron Charlie" recalled in his book *My Forty Years With Ford* (Norton, 1956).

"I don't want to go on this way," Ford said. "Charlie, let me explain what did happen. Remember the night I left you and Edsel [Ford's son] in your office? I went right home and told Mrs. Ford about the talk I had with you and that I had instructed you to close the plant and I would not sign the contract.

"Mrs. Ford was horrified. She said she could not understand my doing anything like that. If that was done, there would be riots and bloodshed, and she had seen enough of that. And if I did that, she would leave me. She did not want to be around here and see me responsible for such trouble.

"She became frantic about it. She insisted that I sign what she termed a peace agreement. If I did not, she was through.

"What could I do? I'm sure she was right. The whole thing was not worth the trouble it would make. I felt her vision and judgment were better than mine. I'm glad that I did see it her way. Don't ever discredit the power of a woman."

Those were his final words on the subject. Henry Ford was never the same after that.

How could this have happened? Among the answers to that question, it is true that in this period, Jim and Ellie Newton, full-time Buchman operatives who were rather intimate friends of

the Fords, frequently saw Clara, and over tea at Fairlane reported to her some of the “peace agreements” that had been reached in other Detroit industries.⁷ The peace between Ford and the CIO may fairly be attributed to the Buchman successes in labor-management relations.⁸

An Idea Takes Wings

There were other remarkable developments, particularly in industry, that made the postwar period the Pennsylvanian’s second great “peak.” The thirties saw his greatest public visibility; the fifties, his most effective behind-the-scenes accomplishments.

On March 25, 1951 the *Miami Sunday Herald* sent these jolting front page headlines throughout Florida:

“NATIONAL AIRLINES, PILOTS’ UNION,
SETTLE GRIEVANCES.”

Herald staff writer Bert Collier wrote the front page story which began:

⁷Jim Newton’s friendship with the Fords went back to the days when they and the Thomas Edisons had winter homes next door to each other in Fort Myers, Florida. In later years, when Jim visited Detroit, Ford would meet him personally with his limousine at the Michigan Central train station, take him to breakfast and to the opening exercises of the Mary and Martha school in Greenfield Village. (see James Newton, *Uncommon Friends*, New York: Harcourt, 1987).

⁸Warner Clark reports that the Fords put up Annie Jaeger, “mother” of the MRA labor thrust, then dying of cancer, at the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. Warner and friends during this time had a number of extended conversations with Clara that included news of the labor-management improvements in the Michigan auto industry.

Settlement of differences between National Airlines and its pilots, which threatened a disastrous strike, was announced Saturday. In a unique joint statement, George T. Baker, NAL president, and W. T. Babbitt regional vice-president of the Air Line Pilots Association, credited the solution to the principles of Moral Re-Armament.

It was widely agreed that the settlement saved National Airlines from extinction. It was no secret that the Civil Aeronautics Board was close to shutting down National and dividing its routes among other carriers. The continued conflicts between pilots and management were becoming a national safety hazard. The pilots regarded Baker as a pirate, and other things less printable. His about-face change made the industry gasp, caused a complete alteration to the pilots' stance. It led Babbitt to wire Frank Buchman,

Until I get more information, I shall refer to MRA as a wonder drug that makes human beings out of people.⁹

D. W. Rentzel, Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board, called the outbreak of peace a "pleasant shock to the aviation industry. . . a little short of miraculous."¹⁰

⁹"Slim" Babbitt included the "wonder drug" evaluation in an explanatory letter to all National pilots and to the membership of the Air Line Stewards and Stewardesses' Association in Eastern, Delta, and National Airlines.

¹⁰*An Idea Takes Wings* (Miami: Moral Re-Armament, 1951), p. 30. A documentary motion picture was made with the same title. Rentzel appeared in the film.

The first time Baker and Babbitt had met, and changed from enemies to friends, was in Washington, DC, during a world MRA conference. It was there they reached a settlement.¹¹ That conference was held at the Shoreham Hotel for ten days over New Year's in 1951. National and other airlines were represented, along with delegates from many countries.

Buchman was in the chair when W. A. Patterson, President of United Airlines, announced to the assembly that a pilots' strike in his company had been averted. He said a new era had begun at United by applying the approach to the pilot-management relations: "not who's right but what's right." When he had finished, Buchman, from the chair, turned to Patterson and asked, "If it had taken place, how much would that strike have cost your company?" Patterson replied, "I expect it would have cost around \$15 million."

Dorothy Brandon, the previously mentioned feature writer for the *New York Herald Tribune*, an astute reporter who was present, wrote up Patterson's story and his estimate of the cost saved. Next morning it was front page news in New York and Washington, DC.

For some reason, although it was a public meeting with reporters obviously present, Patterson was upset with the publicity. Perhaps he felt the news would make it difficult for

¹¹The human catalyst for this miracle was Lawrence L. Alldritt, a Miami businessman. He was the one who first won the confidence of both sides and convinced them that reconciliation was possible. His step-by-step description of the entire sequence, replete with uncanny extra-sensory perception—which he called the guidance of God—is recorded in an oral history interview with TWH in Alldritt's home in Tampa, January 1973. Larry was changed in the thirties through reading Victor C. Kitchen's *I Was a Pagan* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1934) and meeting Buchman on one of his early Miami visits.

him within his company. At any rate he was thenceforth soured on MRA. Afterwards, Frank told his inner circle he believed he had made a mistake asking Patterson that question. It was a rare acknowledgment of the possibility of error.¹²

¹²Buchman biographers like Peter Howard, Garth Lean, and Bunny Austin take pains to quote Frank as asking for “corrective” for himself. But the references are usually designed to prove the man’s humility, not to demonstrate he was hardly ever corrected by himself or others. An exception is Frank’s apology to H. W. (Bunny) Austin for blocking certain travel plans, recorded in Austin’s *Frank Buchman As I Knew Him* (London: Grosvenor Books, 1975), p. 173. Oliver Corderoy, a British MRA operative, had a reputation for confronting Frank. To a French waiter Frank would point to himself playfully and say, “mauvais garçon.” Irène Laure, according to Lean, was at times “firm” with Frank.

Chapter 10

Samuel Moor Shoemaker

Sam Shoemaker (1893-1963) was one of the greatest of the instrumental agencies that gave the Buchman revolution much of its world jolt. As a result of Sam's transformation under Frank's influence, he became the nation's leading practitioner and writer in the field of one-on-one, personal evangelism acknowledged by people like Norman Vincent Peale and Billy Graham. Bill Wilson called him a co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous.

As a Princeton student Shoemaker was sent in 1917 to China to start a branch of the YMCA and to teach in the Princeton-in-China program. There, at a point of deep discouragement, he met Frank Buchman. He said that as a result of this meeting his life was turned around. There he learned of the four absolutes: honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love. He decided to let go of self and let God guide his life.

In the 1920s, he was invited to give all his time to the Buchman program, then known as the Oxford Group, but decided instead that his calling was to parish ministry.

As an Episcopal priest he had but two parishes in his career, New York and Pittsburg, both named "Calvary." Out of these came his person-developing Faith at Work, his industrial teamwork-building Pittsburg Experiment, and his church-renewing Anglican Fellowship of Prayer. The last was carried on by his wife Helen. All may fairly be said to be Buchman derivatives.¹

¹See David W. Miller, *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

Calvary Church in New York became in the twenties and thirties the national headquarters of the Oxford Group. It was there that Bill and Lois Wilson attended Oxford Group meetings twice a week for two and a half years, and where Bill and Sam worked out the Twelve Steps. These steps codified the Buchman life-changing program.

Sam wrote over thirty books, at least half of which were circulating before the Twelve Steps appeared in 1939.

As time went on, Shoemaker believed that Buchman, in applying the ideas of change in human nature to global problems, was de-emphasizing the personal life-changing that provided the building blocks for the new society. In 1940 Sam and his wife Helen made a trip to Lake Tahoe, where Frank's team had gathered, to try for reconciliation. But the next spring he wrote a publicized letter (*New York Times* April 21, 1941) saying he had withdrawn and had asked the Group to remove its presence from the Calvary Church parish house. It had been the Group's national headquarters for fifteen years.

Although I regarded the Shoemakers as good friends, the way you do when working closely together in a common cause, I never saw or talked to Sam for the rest of his life.

At the same time I thought he was onto something important. World changing through life changing needed both world changing and life changing. Sam's personal emphasis need Buchman's big picture. The two men very much needed each other. It was a divorce that did not need to happen.

It takes two to tango. I tried to get Frank to apologize to Sam. But in view of the dynamics, this was asking a lot. Before he died, however, Frank admitted that he had allowed himself to be "organizing a movement" when he should have been concentrating more on "changed lives." But that was pretty late.

Having said all this, however, it must be affirmed that the two men together made an enormous impact on the twentieth century.

Chapter 11

The Tail of a Comet

The Spinoffs

It was in the 1930s also that the Buchman movement began to spawn spinoffs. They would make a book by themselves. Alcoholics Anonymous is the most famous.

A prominent New England churchman, at the top of the structure of a mainline denomination in his state, the equivalent of a bishop, wondered out loud to me one day how much the whole encounter-sensitivity movement owed to Buchman and his sharing groups. Werner Erhard's est carried identifiable similarities—notably group “sharing” (using the same word) and restitution for past wrongs.

Brother Roger Schutz, who founded the Taizé community in Burgundy in 1940, was part of the Geneva Oxford Group in the thirties and said that Buchman was a “great light.”

Sam Shoemaker became a derivative himself in 1941 when he broke with Frank and carried the principles into other avenues.

Tournier

Paul Tournier, the Swiss psychiatrist/author, who wrote eighteen personal-growth books that sold two million copies, identified himself with the OG/MRA in Switzerland 1933-42. He and Emil Brunner were fellow associates in that group and both showed the influence. Tournier wrote that he severed his relationship with the group for a time, taking the Shoemaker position. “Trops politique,” he told an American visitor. Later he

came back and addressed the world conference at Caux. To the Buchman centennial in 1978 he wrote, "Frank Buchman is the man who influenced most my life."

In 1965, one of Tournier's early books, *The Meaning of Persons*, was published by Harper in the United States. It had appeared in Switzerland a dozen years earlier. This was the dedication:

TO DR. FRANK N. D. BUCHMAN
*whose teaching has had
a profound influence
on my personal life
and has obliged me
to reflect upon the true
meaning of my vocation,
I dedicate this book.*

In the foreword of the American edition Dr. Tournier wrote:

My first few years' experience in the practice of the medicine of the person, the account of which is set down in this book, was in large measure the fruit of the spiritual evolution which I had undergone as a result of my contact with the movement known as the Oxford Group. I was already a Christian before this, but my contact with the Group had helped me to apply my faith to my practical, personal, family, and professional life. Anyone who knows the movement will have no difficulty in recognizing its imprint in this book.

It is probably because of this particular origin that the English translation is only now appearing, since an English publisher informed me some years

ago that he was prepared to publish it on the condition that I withdraw the dedication to Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman, the founder of the movement. I refused, of course; one does not deny one's friends, especially those who have been God's instruments in one's life. . .

I have retained all my gratitude to Dr. Buchman and his early collaborators. In particular, I have continued the practice of written meditation which they taught me, that attentive listening to what God is saying to us "in our ear" as Calvin said, in order to conduct our personal lives in accordance with his purpose. This attitude of being open to divine inspiration and of practical obedience belongs, of course, to the whole Christian tradition. Illuminated by the Bible, it is within the reach of every man, and consequently of every doctor desirous of experiencing it in his personal life and in his work.

Up With People

One of the most dynamic and far-reaching spinoffs has been the musical stage thrust for the development of youth—the Up With People phenomenon.

It began at Mackinac Island, where a conference center had been established in 1942 by Buchman associates in collaboration with park officials of the state of Michigan. The Moral Re-Armament activity there had been called a "Willow Run in the War of Ideas" (a reference to the Ford bomber plant in Ypsilanti, Michigan) and was seen in the 1940s as helpful in bringing teamwork to the war industries of southern Michigan. After the

war there had been gatherings of statesmen from around the world.¹

Twenty years later a kind of restiveness set in. According to the early literature, J. Blanton Belk and Donald P. Birdsall were eager to produce a program that would appeal more to the nation's youth. Peter Howard, Buchman's successor-leader, had made a speaking tour of American colleges, and a plan developed to invite student leaders to Mackinac Island.

There a group of musical stand-outs, the Colwell brothers—Steve, Paul, and Ralph—and Herb Allen began to put together some fresh new songs about the value of hard work, clean living, and faith for the future of America and the world. Belk, Birdsall, the Colwells, and Allen were all full-time operatives with MRA. Most of the organization's buildings were sold to finance the new thrust. The movement also created a new magazine, *Pace*.

Before this development, the three Colwell brothers had for ten years been on world assignments on all continents with renewal programs, much of the time, as they said recently, traveling with Frank Buchman. They spent the entire year 1960 in the Belgian Congo, during the upheavals accompanying the independence break with Belgium. They helped hold things together partly by means of a daily national radio broadcast with their friendly, unifying, upbeat songs, many in local dialects. In the Congo they worked closely with Dr. William T. Close, another MRA supporter from the U.S., who later became disenchanted.

Close, until his death in 2008, was a senior physician in rural Wyoming, a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

¹See Chapter 25, "Power Centers."

Because in his youth his father was manager of the American Hospital in Paris, the son became fluent in French, a great asset in the Belgian Congo. He happened to be a part of the MRA task force with the Colwells in the Congo in 1960. When violence broke out that year, he showed considerable courage by plunging in to volunteer his New York-trained surgical services when almost all other doctors fled the country. He became the only surgeon at the fifteen-hundred-bed Kinshasa General Hospital for an entire year. He was also made the chief doctor of the army and the personal physician to President General Joseph Mobutu. He spent sixteen years in the Congo, 1960-76. Close, father of actor Glenn Close, compellingly wrote his graphic story in two books, *A Doctor's Life* and *Beyond the Storm*.²

Back in the United States in the mid-sixties, the Belk-Colwell Brothers-Allen group developed a hootenanny stage show first called *Sing Out, America*. This evolved into the *Up With People* program and stage show of the same name, a direct response to the growing anti-establishment themes of the *Down With, Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out* type of messages with which kids began generally to be bombarded.

After Frank Buchman's death in 1961, many of the full-time American personnel separated and entered into various other kinds of employment. A solid cadre stayed and formed the nucleus of the youthful stage casts known as *Up With People*. The American portfolio of Peter Howard's leadership had passed to J. Blanton Belk at Howard's death in 1965.³

²Wyoming: Meadowlark Springs Productions, 2001 and 2007.

³*Up With People* separated from Moral Re-Armament in 1967. Also see, Donald Janson, "Moral Re-Armament Cuts U.S. Operations," *New York Times*, August 10, 1970.

A series of state-wide “Sing Outs” in America sprang up with considerable promise, but for various reasons were shut down by their national headquarters.

The central organization of Up With People developed up to five casts that toured the globe. It is estimated that twenty million people worldwide were directly impacted. The casts engaged in three million hours of community service. They stayed not in hotels, but in homes involving 450,000 host families. Some 3,600 communities in thirty-eight countries were visited. There are now over 20,000 alumni in seventy-nine countries.

Unlike Alcoholics Anonymous, Up With People preferred to downplay its Buchman origins, although in a new book, which tells the story of Up With People, there are acknowledgments.⁴

The successor drive to MRA which has picked up on the Buchman tradition, known as the Initiatives of Change, is doing significant intercultural and interracial work world wide, particularly in building trust where there was very little before. Action task forces are at work around the world. The conference center at Caux, Switzerland, high above the southeast shore of Lake Geneva, each summer still attracts thousands of civic, industrial, labor, and political leaders from nearly every country. In 2008-09 the presidency of Initiatives of Change passed to Rajmohan Gandhi, former senator from India, and biographer of his grandfather, Mahatma Gandhi.

⁴Frank McGee, *A Song for the World* (Santa Barbara: Many Roads Publishing, 2007). The author is my brother-in-law. The book was launched, with signings and a concert by the principals in the Pasadena Playhouse, on February 10, 2007.

Chapter 12

The Movement

It is said that John Wesley did not intend to create a separate movement. Same is true of Martin Luther, George Fox and others. Their aim was apparently to purify the Christian structures already in place.

The same cannot be said of Frank Buchman. "Have a personalized program," he would say. "Do not try to personalize a program."

His life-changing initiatives attracted adherents. Many of them simply gave up what they were doing and threw their lot in with him. Some, including myself, were enlisted.

Others offered themselves.

There were never any forms to fill out or paper work to be agreed to except to shoot the works. It was a 24/7 commitment. As John Wood put it, "If you live on a no-eat, no-sleep basis, everything you get is velvet."

It was like what Thomas Edison said to a job applicant who asked about wages and hours, "We don't pay anything," he said, "and we work all the time."

There were sometimes around a thousand full-time workers advancing the program.

In the early days, the big strength was what was called the "local teams."

Cohesion of the movement was provided by newsletters, traveling task forces, and assemblies. This was extended later by annual conferences at the world centers at Mackinac Island, Michigan and Caux, Switzerland.

In the 1920s those that gathered around Buchman were called the First Century Christian Fellowship. Later they became “the Groups.” In South Africa a contingent of them from Oxford was tagged “The Oxford Group,” a name that lasted ten years. (This is till the legal name in Great Britain.) In 1938 the name became for forty years “Moral Re-Armament.” It is now “Initiatives of Change.”

Buchman’s methods are outlined in Chapters 18 and 19.

It must be remembered that my personal experience with the movement is limited to its thrust in the twentieth century, before it became Initiatives of Change.

The Cause of the World's State is Moral

The cause of the world's state is not economic; the cause is moral. It is there where the evil lies. It is the want of religion which we ought to possess. If I may use a phrase which is common in a great movement which is taking place at this moment in this country and elsewhere, what you want are God-guided personalities, which make God-guided nationalities, to make a new world. All other ideas of economic adjustment are too small really to touch the center of the evil.

THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY

Speaking in the British House of Lords March 20, 1936

Chapter 13

The Personal and the Social

To Frank Buchman all problems were basically spiritual. He went to his grave in the faith that true social change depended on spiritual change, and that at the same time, individual change must issue in social change. Individual human beings, reoriented, were the building blocks of the new society. His objective was, indeed, world changing through life changing.¹

In a seminal speech in Visby, Sweden, in 1938, he said, "The danger is that some of you want to stop [with personal change]. I am interested in how to save a crumbling civilization."

Others echo this thrust. The late John Bennett, onetime president of Union Theological Seminary in New York, discussed with me his book *Social Salvation* in which he argued for the necessity of both. Popular writer Marcus Borg speaks of the importance of personal transformation as well as societal transformation. I said to him, however, that the social aspect may be more susceptible of enlisting people. It might prove easier to march on City Hall than to give up an adulterous relationship.

Van Dusen wrote,

No serious person can believe that a spiritual awakening alone can save the world. But a growing number are convinced that without a spiritual awakening, nothing else can.

¹For stories of firsthand testimonials by lively American personalities see Appendix B - "A Hollywood Couple" and Appendix C - "Confessions of a Congressman."

The tragedy today is that so few see life changing, or the moral and spiritual dimension in government and industry as important. Human smarts, it is believed, will pull us through.

Buchman held that human wisdom has failed, but that God has a plan. His aim was to persuade people to listen for pertinent direction.

Like all mass communicators, Buchman was keen on the “ribbon thought”—the briefer and the punchier the better, so that “he who runs may read.” His economic philosophy was contained in two maxims:

There’s enough for everyone’s need, but not for everyone’s greed.

If everyone cares enough and everyone shares enough, everyone will have enough.

He liked the jingle of Bernard Hallward, the Montreal newsprint entrepreneur:

It’s not an institution,
It’s not a point of view,
It starts a revolution
By starting one in you.

For the hundredth anniversary of Frank’s birth Richard Steiner in the Allentown *Morning Call*, June 3, 1978, listed some sayings that Buchman used frequently:

- You can plan a new world on paper, but you must build it out of people.
- Peace is not the absence of war, but the presence of God.
- Human wisdom has failed, but God has a plan.

- People will choose to be governed by God, or they condemn themselves to be ruled by tyrants.
- God gave us two ears and one mouth. Why don't we listen twice as much as we talk?
- Our aim is not to get people into a movement, but movement into people.
- Sin is the disease. Christ is the cure. The result is a miracle.
- If you want to see the world different, the place to start is with yourself and your own nation.
- We can disagree without being disagreeable.
- When I point my finger at my neighbor, there are three more pointing back at me.²

Individual Change Must Lead to Social Change

Frank Buchman was problem-oriented—or perhaps problem-solving oriented. He was drawn to conflict. If he could get both sides to commit themselves to putting their own houses in order, to focus on correcting their own faults, rather than denouncing the other side's, the best would work out for both. Social change without individual change, in his view, was materialistic and crippling of human values. On the other hand, individual change without social change too often became grounded in self-improvement and personal pride.

²Not all were original. For more sayings, see Appendix D.

Societal Ethics

Personal morality was certainly the bedrock starting point for the Buchman ethical system. He was out to change the world by changing the people in it. "You can't make a good omelette out of bad eggs," he said. Almost any system would work if unselfish people were running it. The finest system could not last long with selfish people in charge.³ "To expect to change the world by changing the people in it may be an act of faith," said one British statesman of the thirties, "but to expect to change the world without changing the people in it is an act of lunacy." Through the years, symbolic of MRA's move from the houseparty to the world assembly, concentration was increasingly on problems of industrial and racial strife and issues of peace and war. At one point Buchman said, "It may be that the real sin is inferior thinking."

Prophets of social Christianity accused Buchman of avoiding the struggle for societal change. They said that personal sins and social sins are different breeds of cat, that the principalities and powers of social evil cannot be reached by the transformation of individuals. In my view this was a misjudgment based on a misunderstanding of Buchman's theology, message, and

³This issue was addressed theologically in the mid-seventies by the Hartford Appeal and the Boston Affirmations. For lively comment on both, see "Responses" in the *Andover Newton Quarterly*, Newton Centre, MA, March 16, 1976, especially one by Roger Hazelton, p. 257 who wrote: "... for men and women of the present, the old tired antithesis between self and society has become sterile and futile. Structures shape persons, but persons change structures... The consciousness-raisers and the issue-oriented activists could not... need each other more... in the long run a both/and perspective will better serve... ." See also, Robert G. Middleton, "The Bosford Declaration", *The Christian Century*, August 18-25, 1976, p. 704.

performance. The objective was always to achieve a complete transformation of social structures. The difference between Buchman and his social critics was that he believed the building blocks for the new world order were people with character. Many social activists stopped with denouncing wrongdoers. The theory seemed to be that if you called an evil person bad names, you somehow had helped build a better world.

Thus, according to this line of thinking, Buchman was off base in failing to condemn Hitler. Billy Graham was later criticized for not publicly censuring Richard Nixon. John Paul II was excoriated for not denouncing Kurt Waldheim. Forgotten was an ancient truth: "Hate the sin and love the sinner." If you are in the business of redemption, it is neither seemly nor effective to be railing in public at someone for whose redemption you are praying.

The Buchman Doctrine

The Buchman way to world peace was not to support or oppose this or that treaty or trade agreement. It was to deal with the key individuals responsible. He believed that if he could help their motivation, encourage their best instincts, *they* would find the treaties and agreements through *their* expertise, now remotivated. His role in a national steel strike was faithfulness to the family of a key labor leader who then found a way to break the bottleneck at the negotiating table.

Buchman's program for societal change may in the long run prove more socially prophetic than those who pride themselves on social prophecy. True, he was not one for negative "down withs". "People who have no answer protest," was one slogan I heard from a Group activist in the thirties.

But Buchman was everlastingly positive. He was not about to countenance negatives. His insistent progression was often emblazoned on big banners like:

NEW MEN-NEW NATIONS-A NEW WORLD.

(In his day, of course, “men” was a generic word covering both sexes.)

His key words were “Christian revolution” and “a new social order.” There is strong evidence to support the proposition that this is indeed what happened wherever his program really got going. But it was always a progression, not a frontal assault, a Christian subversion from within. “One man changed. A million changed. That is the program of the Oxford Group,” he said.

Buchman was a thoroughgoing pragmatist, a mystical pragmatist to be sure, but a pragmatist all the same. The only theological propositions he was interested in were those that would modify behavior. He simply could not be bothered with ideas or concepts that did not produce change in individuals.

In one sense Buchman did not care what a person believed, except for atheism, as long as he listened to God, aimed at adherence to moral standards, and thought his work was a good thing. The movement has always been quite sincere in asking people to believe more intensely in whatever religious convictions they already have and to be more faithful in whatever religious duties their own traditions urged.⁴ “It enhances all primary loyalties,” Frank asserted.

⁴“MRA is not strange new doctrine. It begins for anyone by living without compromise the best he already knows,” Entwistle and Roots, *Moral Re-Armament: What Is It?* (Los Angeles: Pace Publications, 1967), p. 16. See also Clark, *The Oxford Group*, p. 246. “The ‘challenge’ of the Oxford Group. . . . is simply a recognition as the final authority of the moral imperative of the deepest intuition a person possesses.”

“It makes you better what you already are,” we used to say. And it is quite true. Protestants and Catholics by the thousands have gone back to their own disciplines with renewed vigor, with rote material from childhood now bursting into life. In South America, Roman officials were impressed with the numbers of lapsed Catholics returning to the fold under this influence.

Buchman’s comment would have been that it was not for him to judge between religious backgrounds. In his orbit both Christians and Buddhists experienced a change of heart. A Burmese editor returned from a conference in Switzerland and wrote an editorial in a Rangoon daily saying, “At Caux hundreds of Christians live together like Buddhist gentlemen.”

Frank was totally committed to the religion of his own Christian heritage. His announced aim was to help usher in “the greatest revolution of all time whereby the Cross of Christ will transform the world.” But if his Confucian friends or Muslim friends or Communist friends did not see it this way right off, he was resolved that theoretical differences would not separate him from those who could help redirect global affairs.

To someone who wanted to argue ideas, he might say, “Fine, but when did you last steal?”

This was the question he once put to the Tolon Na, a Muslim who was five times president of the Northern Territories Council, Ghana. This challenge changed his life. The Tolon Na described it this way:

I retired to my room and lay on my bed and prayed to Allah to take me into His loving care, repenting for all the evils I had done since childhood. At last, relief came when I decided to write down the number of times that I had stolen since my infancy. I relaxed in body and mind. I made a note to return all textbooks that I had

brought home from the schools in which I had taught. I also noted all the persons to whom I owed apologies for wrongs I had done them. There were several other restitutions also.

Since then I decided to live this way of life; to accept the rule of God in my heart in all that I do or say at home and abroad; to forget myself and go all out to remake men and nations.

He was never asked to change religions.

Other Muslims have told Frank he was helping them live out Koran principles they had let slide.

It was another illustration of what I have called the Buchman Doctrine.

Nnamdi Azikiwe, powerful Nigerian leader, who had found a new direction at the Caux center, had then pulled together factions in his own country, and thus played a key role in his country's independence, becoming the first Governor General of Nigeria. He wrote to me at Christmas time in 1974, "We are still working out our problems in Nigeria on 'not who's right but what's right.'"

Free Will

Buchman is to be classified, if such a wide-ranging and variegated personality can be classified, as an Arminian rather than a Calvinist.⁵ He believed a person can choose. Like most

⁵Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) was a Dutch Reformed theologian who held that divine sovereignty allowed for human freedom. This view strongly influenced John Wesley and the Methodist tradition.

evangelists since Charles Grandison Finney, he believed that anyone—and that meant anyone in the entire world—could make a decision and enter at once into the new life. He would not discount the possibility of God guiding a person into the orbit where the decision could be made. Indeed he spoke a good deal about God having a plan for everyone's life. But he felt it his responsibility to "Woo, Win, Warn"—and to help the other person to decide with his or her free will.

It must, however, be reiterated that the question of freedom of the will was the kind of concern that never occupied a tiny fraction of Buchman's time or attention. Theological issues he would leave to the professors. He would get on with the pragmatism of changing the character of people and nations. "All the angels have big feet," ran a ditty he liked. It was not his concern how many of them could stand on the head of a pin.

He assumed there is an afterlife. Usually his sympathy messages contained the sentiment, "thou wilt meet me there." He worked for "salvation" in this life, and left the next life to follow on from that.

The Bible was for him authoritative, and his bedside copy was worn almost to the point of disintegration. He lived the concept of Trinity and counted on Christ to transform him and others, and on the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide. As to grace, he was thoroughly Lutheran and accepted that solutions were given without effort on our part.

Sin was big with Frank Buchman. He believed that sin was the fatal factor that stood in the way. Sin was anything that stood between a person and another person—or between that person and God. Such a barrier was removed not only by surrender, but equally importantly, by restitution, making "amends" (AA steps 8 and 9) to those individuals the person

had harmed in some way. He believed that sin was at the root of a person's difficulties or any of the world's problems. In this conviction he was in agreement with one of his most articulate opponents, Reinhold Niebuhr.

It was this exciting personal life changing that captivated Gabriel Marcel, the Catholic existentialist French philosopher. Some of his theological colleagues were perplexed. Marcel was so intrigued that he gathered together representative stories of a cross section of types of people experiencing the new life and published them in 1959 under the title *Un Changement d'Espérance*.⁶ In his foreword, he called the movement "a fresh renaissance." Writing in *Le Figaro*, Paris, he said, "It is a hope. Perhaps it is even *the* hope."⁷

"All His Geese are Swans"

A frequent criticism of MRA was that claims were exaggerated. Senators and Representatives who queried their Library of Congress for facts on the movement received a thoughtful summary, with this comment:

The accomplishments of the Movement . . . are difficult to evaluate or even enumerate, they have been so magnified by friends and minimized by enemies.⁸

⁶Gabriel Marcel (ed.), *Fresh Hope for the World* (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1960).

⁷*Le Figaro*, January 28, 1956.

⁸Harold E. Snide (ed.), *Moral Re-Armament: A Brief Account of Its History and Accomplishments*, U.S. Library of Congress, Legislative Reference Service, August 3, 1951.

Doubtless some of the statements made by public figures were only statements. It did not cost a great deal to make a statement, except when MRA's stock was low.

Sam Shoemaker noted, "All Frank's geese are swans. It is partly his intense enthusiasm and belief in us which keeps us functioning!"⁹ Buchman was everlastingly Mr. Positive Thinking and Mr. Possibility Thinking rolled into one. Everything needed to be "maximum." The glass was always half full. He always believed the next person he met was capable of turning the world upside down by the end of the week. As in Tim Gallwey's approach to tennis, he *thought* the ball to where it should be.¹⁰

⁹Harold Begbie, *More Twice-Born Men* (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1923), p. 147.

¹⁰W. Timothy Gallwey, *The Inner Game of Tennis* (New York: Random House, 1974), was at one time a full-time operative with Buchman and a member of the staff of Mackinac College, founded by MRA in 1967.

Chapter 14

Sex and Money

Frequently Frank quoted these lines:

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound;
Make and keep me pure within.¹

The last line, he said, contains “the greatest six words in the English language.”

Traditional Christianity has been criticized for focusing too heavily on sexual morality as the key to the Christian life. Contrariwise, much of modern Christianity seems to have glossed it over. In the early days, Buchman believed it was not being dealt with sufficiently. In those quaint, pre-permissive times, he reacted against the Victorian conspiracy of silence. He said that if you did not deal with a person’s attitudes on sex and money (which today include credit cards), you failed the person on the two central issues in most lives. His clinical experience in many personal interviews convinced him that college students were locked into emotional repression through lack of candor. For many, his openness encouraged them to talk of things never shared. It came as enormous relief, and often led to an experience of God.

There is no denying that sex was big on Buchman’s agenda. It was a good deal bigger in his younger years than in his later, which may have a gerontological rationale. He would agree with

¹Charles Wesley, “Jesus, Lover of My Soul,” *Pilgrim Hymnal*.

the Pope that sex is to be confined to marriage. Contraception was through personal discipline. "God control is the answer to birth control." The act itself was designed for procreation. At the same time he encouraged wives of straying husbands to meet the competition with greater seductiveness.

In India a reporter asked Frank how his birth control beliefs could help their overpopulated country. He identified himself with the Mahatma's widely known abstinence convictions. "My views are the same as Gandhi's," he said.

He believed life changing sessions worked better if counselor and counselee were of the same gender. "Men's work for men and women's work for women," he advised. This was another of his principles adhered to by AA. I heard a sponsor say in a Twelve Step session, "We have enough problems without getting tangled up in that one."

Sly fun has been poked at Buchman's sensitivity to masturbation, which Freud called "the primary addiction." However upright some of his followers may have been on the subject, Buchman himself inclined toward a light approach. He believed many things dropped off if a person had a big enough mission. A younger associate came to him in his room at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington and shamefacedly owned up to the indulgence. Frank asked, "How old are you?" "Twenty-five," the fellow replied. "Oh," Frank said, "I stopped doing that when I was twenty-six. So you have a year to go."

Buchman's fresh approach to sex on campus earned him some titillating opposition in the magazines, but it also brought genuine release and new creativity to a broad group of college students in the twenties and thirties. His development of the subject is more appropriately judged by the climate of the early twentieth century than by that of later sophistication.

As to homosexuality, Buchman took pains with his team on how to identify gays and how to help them. He treated undisciplined homosexuality the same as undisciplined heterosexuality, both as indulgences which could be redirected. The point was that the creative propensity that either kind represented could be released from self-gratification to another plane of constructive, life-giving activity.

Rumors about Frank's own orientation have been hinted in opposition articles.² Sherry Day traveled side by side with Frank for twenty years. They often shared a room. At times when quarters were cramped, they shared the same bed. Sherry told me there was never anything.

Garth Lean was the author of the most definitive Buchman biography yet. When I interviewed him at his home in Boar's Hill, Oxford, he said people asked him why he did not refer to this subject in his book. His answer was that he tracked down all relevant sources and interviewed everyone who was thought to have knowledge. He never found anyone with first-hand evidence. So he felt it best to leave it out.

Jim Newton's reaction when he heard the rumor was: "B--- s---. Even if it's true, it's b--- s---." Jim hits on a good point. What difference does it make? Theologian James Luther Adams, in our conversation at his summer home in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, quoted a colleague who said the apostle Paul may have been oriented that way but look what he accomplished.

Similar speculation has been made about various Biblical luminaries. A book has been written claiming such a life style for

²An example is *Time*, August 18, 1961, p. 59, as the climax of thirty-five years of opposition.

Abraham Lincoln. The New Testament scholar Hans Dieter Betz told his colleague Frederick Sontag that sex stories have been circulated about every significant Christian leader from the beginning, including Jesus, as the early literature shows.³ Whether or not the suggestions have a basis in fact, it is possible a case can be made that some of the most powerful and creative personalities in history have had this predilection. It is sometimes said that the greatest saints were the most highly sexed. It is also possible that as times change, such implications may become less slanderous. Opponents will have to think up something else to achieve a similar sting.

But even in the twenties and thirties, it was a canard that ending sex hang-ups meant more to Buchman than using this avenue to helping a person to be free and effective in tackling the world.⁴ By 1928 he was already leading in South Africa a team of these young people—freed up on personal issues, changed in colleges—now working as a task force on race relations. Sexual freedom through sexual honesty, discipline, and sublimation was basically part of the instrumentation process for assaulting world issues.

³Frederick Sontag, "Heresy and the Moon Movement," lecture, Claremont, California: United Church of Christ, February 13, 1977. Also Hans Dieter Betz letter to TWH, February 21, 1977.

⁴Illustrative of how widespread was this notion of sex as the movement's chief concern was my conversation with Charles Reynolds Brown, Dean of the Yale Divinity School. After he had preached at Harvard one Sunday in 1937, I asked his opinion of the Oxford Group. He replied, "I don't believe the average business man is thinking that much about sex all the time."

Chapter 15

The Man and His Origins

Those who are looking for a definitive biography should see Garth Lean's *On the Tail of a Comet* (Denver: Helmers & Howard, 1988).

Essential to understanding Frank Buchman is that he was first, last, and always Pennsylvania German. "Pennsylvania Dutch" the people and their style are called. To the English settlers in Pennsylvania, "Deutsch" sounded like "Dutch." Frank's mother tongue was Pennsylvania German. In his boyhood surroundings English was rarely heard.¹ He looked Pennsylvania German. His religion was Pennsylvania German. His frugality and sagacity were Pennsylvania German. His tastes were Pennsylvania German. His humor was Pennsylvania German. His lifestyle was Pennsylvania German.

His family emigrated from Saint Gallen, Switzerland, in 1740 to the bountiful valleys of eastern Pennsylvania. He was born on June 4, 1878, at Pennsburg. Could anyone start life more Pennsylvania German than in a place called Penn's Burg? His parents were a typically Pennsylvania Deutsch couple. His father was Franklin, also called Frank. His mother was Sarah, from the prudent and provident Greenwalt family of the Kistler Valley.

Father Frank was a hostler and a hustler. He was a horse-man, a hotel operator, liquor distributor, and saloon keeper—prosperous enough to finance his son's education, trips to

¹Until World War II nobody in Allentown, Pennsylvania, could get a job as a waitress or a busdriver who could not speak "Deutsch."

Minnesota, and travel to Europe. Noted for his two spirited black horses, the father backed them with appropriate wagers. He was also into the soft drink business of sarsaparilla.

Young Frank was born June 4, 1878, in a bedroom upstairs over his father's general store in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, 744 Main Street. The site is marked by a bronze plaque provided by Joel McCrea, the motion picture actor. On October 19, 1991, the State of Pennsylvania erected an official historical marker at the site.

Frank received his early education at Pennsburg's Perkiomen School, founded and nurtured by the Schwenkfelder Church. A strong influence on Frank at the time was a young Schwenkfelder pastor who was principal of the School, Oscar Schultz Kriebel. The two kept up a correspondence for life.

Perkiomen, now a prestigious secondary prep school, has named its guest rooms "The Frank Buchman Suite."

Allentown

In 1894, the family moved to Allentown, twenty-five miles north of Pennsburg, approximately 100 miles from New York, and 50 miles from Philadelphia. The senior Buchman opened a saloon at 533 Hamilton Street. Within a stone's throw of the courthouse, his Wirt Haus (pronounced "Wat's House") soon became a popular political and social nerve center. Its genial host settled his family in a Victorian three-story row house at 117 North 11th Street.

The family move now made it possible for the young man to have a year at the bigger city's high school before going on to Muhlenberg, the German Lutheran college in Allentown. At Muhlenberg Buchman received the Bachelor of Arts in 1899,

the honorary Doctor of Divinity in 1926, and the Alumni Achievement Award in 1957.²

His mother, Sarah, was the religious one of the family. She spoke in pious language even in ordinary conversation. Sarah was known for her cooking. Also for visions and intuition. Frank believed he had a psychic relationship with his mother. A later generation might call it extrasensory perception (ESP). In 1925 he was traveling in India when his mother died. "At the moment of death," he said, "the railway carriage suddenly seemed to light up, as bright as day."

Sarah's brother, Aaron Greenwalt, emigrated to Anoka, Minnesota, where he became the first to respond to President Lincoln's call for volunteers for the Union armies. Aaron fell at Gettysburg. "My uncle died for the Negroes," Frank would say.

His father Franklin was known as a hard worker, but a clear picture of what he was really like hardly comes through the record. Late in life, speaking on invitation at the family church in Pennsburg, the son was as usual expansive about his mother and her qualities. But when asked about his father, he would only comment, "Well papa was papa, that's about all you can say."

It is said that Frank's faith came from his mother and his expansive genius for hospitality from his father.

He often used Allentown memories to illustrate his principles. To stress the importance of being clear cut, he would tell about the not-too-bright boy who came door to door selling apple butter and cottage cheese. His wares were in separate buckets, but he used one paddle to dispense both. By the time he

²Another honorary degree, the Doctor of Laws was awarded him by Oglethorpe University in Atlanta in 1939.

reached the end of the block, Frank grinned, it was impossible to tell which was the cottage cheese and which the apple butter.

At the Lutheran Mount Airy Seminary in Philadelphia, one of his classmates accused him of social climbing, a charge that was to be leveled against him all his life. In reaction, the young graduate threw himself into the slums of Philadelphia, establishing a hospice for underprivileged boys. A run-in with the trustees brought about his resignation. They wanted him to cut expenses by reducing the food budget for the boys. His bitter resentment affected his health. To recover, he embarked on a European trip. It was 1908. He had visited Europe five years earlier in 1903 at age twenty-five.³

A Day in Pennsylvania

The Buchman heritage, as mentioned earlier, was highlighted by the people of Pennsylvania on October 19, 1991, particularly in the birthplace, Pennsburg, and boyhood surroundings in Allentown, the third largest city in the state. Highlights of the day were the unveiling of an official Commonwealth of Pennsylvania historical marker at the birthplace in Pennsburg, 144 Main Street, and the dedication of a Buchman bust at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Frank's alma mater.⁴

Governor Milton J. Shapp had declared June 4, 1978 to be "Frank Buchman Day" throughout the state.

³Philippe Mottu, *The Story of Caux*, contains a report that Buchman had tea with a friend that August at the Caux Palace, which, forty-three years later, was to become his world conference headquarters.

⁴For the full story of these events, including the speeches delivered, see *A Day in Pennsylvania* (DC: Grosvenor Books USA, 1991).

The Pennsburg-Allentown day brought to a conclusion a 14 year celebration of the centennial of the man's birth, beginning in 1977-78.

The Turn-Around

Back in 1908, buffeted about by his run-in with the trustees, Frank's health was shaken. His doctor prescribed a therapy trip. He decided to attend the 1908 World Evangelism Conference meetings, that had been held every year since 1875 in England's Lake District at Keswick, near the Scottish border. Clearly he was seeking spiritual relief from his inner conflicts. The convention meetings left him cold. But on a Sunday afternoon he attended a service in the tiny Methodist church on Tithebarn Street that changed his life. The preacher was a woman evangelist, Jessie Penn-Lewis. She may have had Salvation Army connections. Her theme was the "Cross of Christ." In later life, upon meeting Salvation Army people, Frank would say, "It was a Salvationist that changed me!" His experience is described in detail by author A. J. Russell in *For Sinners Only* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932), pp. 43-44.

This is how the experience is described by Mel B., an AA writer in an article "An Alcoholic's Debt to Frank Buchman."

He carried his resentment to many countries before arriving in Keswick, England, in July, 1908. He hoped to hear a famous minister at the annual Keswick Convention of religious people who still convene under the slogan: "All One in Christ Jesus."

The famous minister wasn't there, but on Sunday afternoon he wandered into a stone

chapel where a woman evangelist, Jessie Penn-Lewis, was addressing an audience of seventeen persons. She was speaking about the Cross of Christ, and her message reached into Buchman's heart and changed his life. "I had entered the little church with a divided will, nursing pride, selfishness, ill-will, which prevented me from functioning as a Christian minister should," he would say later. "The woman's simple talk personalized the Cross for me that day, and suddenly I had a poignant vision of the Crucified."

The experience shook Buchman to the core as he saw the abyss that stood between him and the Master. The result was a sudden personal transformation that swept away his false pride and resentment. He would later say that a strong current of life poured into him and he had a great sense of a spiritual shaking-up. He left the chapel a changed man.

His next step was to return to his rooming house and write letters of amends to the trustees in Philadelphia. He apologized to them for the ill-will he had been feeling, and thus released his anger. He also witnessed to another young man at the boarding house and led him to a conversion experience that he would still confirm fourteen years later.

Almost from the beginning, Buchman has a message that helped a number of alcoholics recover. One of his early achievements at Penn State was winning the campus bootlegger.

Buchman was thirty years old.

The Keswick experience is the key to the rest of his life and work. It deserves special attention for these reasons:

1. It is the recurring type of experience that has launched every major Christian movement since the Apostle Paul. Similar turn-about is recorded in the lives of Saint Francis, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Charles Wesley, William Booth, George Fox, John Bunyan, Charles Finney, Dwight Moody, Bill Wilson, and others who have provided new directions for broad numbers of individuals and effected widespread social change.
2. It has the authentic ring of other intense transitions as documented in William James's classic study *Varieties of Religious Experience*, originally published in 1902.
3. It contains the basic elements of all of Buchman's subsequent work with people, groups, and nations for the next half century:
 - a. A spiritual experience that transforms the individual beyond anything it is possible for one to do for oneself;
 - b. Prompt restitution for the personal wrongs revealed by the experience; and,
 - c. Immediate chain reaction, multiplier effect through sharing the experience with others.

The Laboratory Years

Back in the United States, Buchman felt his calling was to work with students. He asked John R. Mott, world YMCA leader, for a tough assignment. One of the trustees of Pennsylvania State College, Vance McCormick, Chairman of

the Democratic National Committee, knew about Frank's capacities and hoped he could do something for the school. Mott signed him on. Buchman went to work at Penn State January 1, 1909, for \$100 a month plus room. He stayed until 1915. He always called this period his laboratory years, working out the principles he was to apply on a global scale.⁵

⁵Before he left Penn State, 1,200 out of the 1,500 students were meeting with him for Bible study. For Buchman's own fuller account of the Penn State experience, see his *Remaking the World*, pp. 330ff; also, Peter Howard's *Frank Buchman's Secret* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1961), p. 22ff; and, Walter Houston Clark, *The Oxford Group: History and Its Significance* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1951), pp. 40-45.

In 1989 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of MRA's founding and the 80th of Buchman's career there, Penn State University Library Archives rolled out a Buchman exhibit. A university press release stated, "Buchman doubled the size of YMCA membership, publicized the club with theater productions, and steered his chapter through an exhausting schedule of activities." Professor F. L. Pattee noted, "Sooner or later there appeared on campus every religious leader in the nation to study Buchman's methods."

John R. Mott said Buchman's work at the college was "the most thorough" he had ever seen. Mott persuaded Buchman, after Penn State, to proceed to Asia and help Sherwood Eddy prepare for an evangelistic campaign. Mott had become Student Secretary of the International YMCA in 1888, creating the World Student Christian Federation in 1895. By World War I he was General Secretary of the American YMCA, with the objective of evangelizing the world. His primary aim, he said, was not to enlist large numbers, but rather "to get the ablest, strongest men, those who in any walk of life would be leaders." He quoted Henry Drummond, Dwight Moody's evangelism associate, "If you fish for eels, you catch eels; if you fish for salmon, you catch salmon."

An unpublished comment on Buchman's Penn State years comes from a colleague of the time, the late M. Willard Lampe. Dr. Lampe, who later founded the School of Religion at the University of Iowa in 1928 (the first at a state university), was in charge of student Christian work at the University of Pennsylvania when Buchman had the same assignment at Penn State. I am a nephew of Lampe and he wrote me under date of November 21, 1961 as follows: "Frank's death and the worldwide testimonies to the significance of his life have naturally caused me again

He certainly was influenced by Mott's aim to "evangelize the world in this generation." The key to Buchman's life and methods during these years was Henry B. Wright. The Yale professor was probably the most influential single individual in Frank's entire life, outside his mother. From Wright, Buchman learned of Robert E. Speer's four absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love.⁶ Wright and Buchman were almost of an age, although Wright (1877-1923) lived hardly more than half as long, dying at forty-six of tuberculosis. Wright taught classics at Yale and developed an undergraduate Christian work of widespread influence. Some say they still feel it in New Haven. Buchman also learned from Wright how to conduct a meeting, follow up individuals with intensive care, and pursue one-to-one life changing through warm personal friendship. Together they were planning to bring out a book on

to review his career from my close contact with him at Penn State to the eminence he attained as a moral and spiritual leader. How clearly I remember that at Penn State, during the week I spent as a member of a team of helpers, I warmly approved of his "life-changing" purpose and objective, while only half approving, if at all, of his theology, evangelistic methodology and nomenclature. It was at a time of my life when I rejected much of the theology and Biblical interpretations of my father and yet yearned to live a useful Christian life. I was really prepared for Frank's later simplification of his theology, strongly God-centered. The worldwide appeal of Frank's developed "ideology," as I see it, lies in its simple and vital theocentric character, combined with fundamental moral imperatives. As such, it elicits my complete acceptance. In fact it lies at the basis of the interfaith work in which I have been engaged."

⁶Henry B. Wright, *The Will of God and a Man's Life Work* (New York: Association Press, 1924), pp. 169ff. For Wright's source, see Robert E. Speer, *The Principles of Jesus*, Chapter 6, "Jesus and the Standards" (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1902), pp. 33-66.

personal evangelism, a project prevented by Wright's death.⁷

Hartford

In the summer of 1915 at Mott's recommendation Buchman went to India with Sherwood Eddy.⁸ The following spring he went to China to prepare for Eddy's arrival, who in fact was unable to come just then. At Lahore, Buchman met Howard Walter, who was temporarily at Hartford Theological Seminary in Connecticut. Walter persuaded staff and faculty to invite Buchman to a visiting lectureship at Hartford in September 1916, which continued until 1922. On occasion Frank would commute from Hartford to New Haven for Henry Wright's Yale lectures on "The Will of God and a Man's Life Work."

The Hartford position was a part-time appointment, leaving Buchman free for half of each year to travel. It included an expense allowance. Some of the faculty thought it was favored treatment. It was during this time that he became acquainted in Asia with Mahatma Gandhi in India; Viscount Shibusawa, the founder of modern industrial Japan; and Sun Yat-sen, father of the Chinese revolution of 1911.

In the fall of 1916 Buchman began to gather a group that included Sherry Day and Howard Walter for a return to China in June 1917. The venture was financed by Harry Blackstone of

⁷H. A. Walter, *Soul Surgery: Some Thoughts on Incisive Personal Work* (Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 6.

⁸In the 1930s I heard Eddy speak in the Carleton College chapel, comparing the American (freedom) and Russian (order) systems and what each could learn from the other. In the 1970s during my interviews for this book, I had a pleasant visit with Mrs. Eddy in her home in Jacksonville, Illinois, introduced by our mutual friend, Gordon E. Michalson.

Los Angeles. Sherwood Eddy was still delayed, so Buchman developed his own team (it included Dr. Harry Luce, father of a co-founder of *Time*), for an evangelistic mission to the Chinese. The itinerary also included Japan and Korea.⁹ A young Princetonian, Van Dusen Rickert, traveled with him as secretary.

It was in January 1918, at a conference that Buchman directed in Kuling in central China, that the “houseparty” strategy was first developed. In that month Samuel Moor Shoemaker, a Princeton graduate student in Peking, was changed through Frank’s influence. Shoemaker was to become Buchman’s chief American host for the next twenty-three years.¹⁰

At Kuling, Buchman for the first time emerged as a leader in his own right. No longer was he a helper of the Sherwood Eddys, the John R. Motts, the Henry Wrights, and the Billy Sundays.¹¹ He sailed for home in 1919 when his father became ill, returning to Hartford. When the elder Buchman died, the son obtained leave. In 1920 he went to Cambridge University in England, where he became a guest scholar.

In 1922 Buchman resigned his Hartford position. It was not the happy success story of the Penn State years.

For one thing, Buchman’s intuitive nature chafed at the formalities of organized pedagogy. Talking *about* life changing, if

⁹For help with the chronology of this section, I am indebted to the late Morris H. Martin, letter of March 20, 1977.

¹⁰See Chapter 10.

¹¹Buchman conducted personal workers’ groups throughout New York City in 1917 during a month’s preaching by the Rev. William A. Sunday. See Walter, *Soul Surgery*, p. 13.

it did not issue in changed lives, was to him pretty sterile stuff. He subscribed to the claim, "Christianity is not taught but caught." A classroom, for him, was not the optimum milieu for the necessary chemistry.

At this point Frank felt God calling him to something else. It happened one night on a train to the Washington disarmament conference of 1921-22. The thought came, "Resign, resign, resign." His guidance often came like that, in threes. He had been invited to the disarmament parley as an informal observer by a British general. The invitation came in a postcard which bore a human face and the legend, "God gave a person two ears and one mouth. Why don't we listen twice as much as we talk?" It became one of Buchman's most frequently reiterated quotations, underlining the importance of a daily quiet time and two-way prayer.

For the next forty years Buchman worked without salary, being sustained by contributions. The Washington disarmament conference is significant not only for a new direction in Buchman's life and for an effective aphoristic weapon for his work, but also as a symbol of his subsequent thrust into world affairs. It represents a distinctive Buchman contribution to world evangelism, namely, that personal change must issue in political and social change.

Buchman said in the summer of 1934 that his aim was . . .

. . . a Christian revolution, whose concern is vital Christianity. Its aim is a new social order under the dictatorship of the Spirit of God, making for better relationships for unselfish cooperation, for cleaner politics, for the elimination of political, industrial, and racial antagonism.

The Oxford Group

Buchman attributed his introduction to the British universities to two Anglican bishops in the Far East who were worried about their sons at Cambridge.¹² From Cambridge, Oxford students invited Buchman over to meet with them. The most productive of the Oxford meetings took place in the rooms of the late Captain Loudon Hamilton at Christ Church College. He was a powerfully built Scottish veteran of World War I and a central figure in Oxford's Beef & Beer Club. Hamilton was captivated and threw in his lot with Buchman. He became a sometime traveling companion and always a trusted lieutenant for the rest of his life. The tall Scot, with the clipped moustache and twinkling eyes, died in 1976 at the age of eighty-three. He was sometimes known in the team as "In Whose Rooms" Hamilton, because of the way he was introduced. Buchman counted on him as his warmup man at meetings because of his skill at telling hilarious stories.

Meanwhile, in Oxford a growing number of students were moving in chain reaction into new experiences. Garth Lean writes of Oxford in the early thirties:

Each day, at half past one, anything from eighty to a hundred undergraduates and a few dons met for three-quarters of an hour in the Old Library at Saint Mary's. The aim of our meetings was to carry the experiment of faith further in our own lives and out into the world.

¹²Harold Begbie, *More Twice-Born Men* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1923), p. 36.

Among the many faculty members who attended these meetings were:

L. W. Grensted, Chaplain at Oriel College and Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion at the University of Oxford;

B. H. Streeter, Provost of Queen's College and author of *The God Who Speaks*;¹³

Alan Thornhill, Fellow of Hertford College; and

Julian P. Thornton-Duesbery, who became Master of St. Peter's College.

Each has written published works on the philosophy and workings of the Buchman movement.¹⁴

The work spread throughout the university. Because Oxford students were taking the Buchman ideas back to their home countries, the movement became known as the "Oxford Group," a term first used in South Africa. Opponents, including A. P. Herbert, who represented the university in Parliament, were unsuccessful in their legal attempts to prevent use of the Oxford name.

Buchman's target was always the whole of any country where he worked, as in China in 1916 and 1917. But the first time he tackled a nation with a team was in South Africa in 1928 and 1929. Typically, they approached the nation's toughest problem,

¹³B. H. Streeter, *The God Who Speaks* (London: Macmillan Co., 1936). First delivered as the *Warburton Lectures*, 1933-35. An abridgment by Roger Hicks was published by Grosvenor Books, London, 1971, under the same title.

¹⁴L. W. Grensted, *The Person Christ* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1933); Alan Thornhill, *The Significance of the Life of Frank Buchman* (Los Angeles: College of the Good Road, 1950); J. P. Thornton-Duesbery, *The Open Secret of MRA* (London: Blandford Press, 1964).

race relations. The Hon. Jan H. Hofmeyr, deputy prime minister under Field Marshal Smuts, cabled the British House of Commons:

Buchman's visit to South Africa started a major and continuing influence for racial reconciliation through the whole country, between white and black, Afrikaner and British, on which the future of democratic institutions in South Africa may largely depend.

Moving on to the 1930s, these people were to constitute what in many ways was Frank Buchman's most visible decade. It was the era when his work received the widest number of followers and the most column-inches in the world's press.

The Americas

Buchman and his longtime associate Sherry Day toured South America. Frank was told that in most countries each cabinet official had a Communist agent assigned to him. He thought Christians should have a strategy of such boldness.

Always throughout the thirties, the base was Oxford. Each summer there was an international houseparty in one of the colleges. The university's "long vacation" made space available.

The next national foray took place in Canada in 1932-34. The venture came out of the guidance of young Eleanor Forde, the first woman to enlist with Buchman full-time.¹⁵ A major assembly was held at Banff. Prime Minister R. B. Bennett said at that time,

¹⁵"Ellie" later married James D. Newton. See Newton *Uncommon Friends*.

The influence of your work has penetrated every town and hamlet in our country. You have made the task of government easier.¹⁶

International Strategy

Throughout this period, Buchman was working steadily with a strategy for international statesmanship, laying the groundwork for his global program. This plan of action had a three-pronged thrust:

- (1) to make effective the League of Nations peacekeeping machinery;
- (2) to change the leadership of the free world; and
- (3) to turn the Nazi drive into constructive channels.

As always, the Buchman plan was not built around organizations or activist initiatives, but rather around specific people. He moved with the men and women he was given. His key to the League of Nations was his good friend the Honorable Carl J. Hambro, President of the Norwegian Parliament, and who, as it turned out, was the last president of the League.

In truth, Buchman never put much store by the League. He was particularly acid about those—especially British—who were sentimentally “in love” with the League of Nations. To him there was a smell of death about it. But he also knew it could become a great force if revived. In addition, he saw in it an avenue of influence in the member countries. Foreign ministers and heads of state attending meetings in Geneva more than once invited Buchman teams to their countries. Hambro, for example, brought them to Norway.

¹⁶Theophil Spoerri, *Dynamic Out of Silence: Frank Buchman's Relevance Today* (London: Grosvenor Books, 1976), p. 84.

Courage

Most extraordinary was the astounding courage of the man. Recently I ran across a 1939 newspaper photograph. It was taken in Hollywood at a crowded luncheon gathering.¹⁷ Frank is standing at the center of the unraised head table. Seated at his left is Louis B. Mayer, the most powerful man in Hollywood, each year listed in America's top ten income earners, and an enormous influence on the world. Next to Mayer is George Eastman, construction supplier and former president of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. Next is Jeanette McDonald, the top box office actress of the day. Beside her is James Roosevelt, eldest son of the President of the United States. Across the table is Rufus von KleinSmid, for a generation the CEO of the University of Southern California, looking every inch like Hollywood's idea of a university president. These were but a fraction of the 250 glittering guests.

Behind Buchman, ready to give their message, are eleven kilted Scots, who had arrived by boat from Glasgow to brighten the giant May-July rallies in Madison Square Garden, Constitution Hall, and the Hollywood Bowl. Frank's face is a study. He stands there, not as an invited speaker at some service club. He stands there as though he owned the place, the one who is in charge of the entire event. The glamorous world of make-believe is at his feet. Powerful people are hanging on his every word. He stands there in his light, double-breasted suit, a white handkerchief squared above his pocket, looking down the table to his left. Every fiber breathes confidence, security, courage, calmness, and control.

¹⁷*Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 1939.

This courage is attributed by Van Dusen to,

... his unshakable certitude in his own "leading."
Never for a fleeting instant or in any possible
circumstances is he unsure in speech or action . .
. Such certainty is possible because Mr. Buchman
knows his every thought and action to be
immediately determined by the Divine Mind.¹⁸

Politics

Cleve Hicks, rollicking youth leader, once shared his guidance that Buchman should run for president. Frank said that this kind of thing was not his business. He and all of us believed our job was to change the politicians, not to *be* the politicians. He responded to the words of the Netherlands foreign minister, Dr. J. A. E. Patijn:

The Oxford Group has nothing to do with politics. Still, it has everything to do with politics. For it is a revolution in all politics, because God directs not only the platforms, but the politicians.

There are many who say the principalities and powers of this world, including America's military-industrial complex, cannot be shifted by means of a life-changing program. They would say the engines of faith are useful in toning up individuals and nurturing their raised consciousness, but that social and political action is necessary to protect the individual from injustice and exploitation. But why not both? Buchman welcomed solutions

¹⁸Henry P. Van Dusen, "Apostle to the Twentieth Century," *Atlantic*, July 1934, pp. 8-9.

no matter from what quarter. He applauded the 1954 Supreme Court desegregation decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, saying, "A great thing has happened in our country this past year." But his approach was not to write letters, march, or protest. His way was quietly to desegregate an Atlanta theater where his current play was showing, or boldly to put black and white leaders on the same Cape Town City Hall platform for the first time. Desegregation, for him, meant to desegregate, not petition someone else to.

Human nature is usually the culprit. In any conflict, that was ever his objective.

"Until we deal with human nature thoroughly and drastically on a national scale," he said, "nations will still follow their historic road to violence and destruction."

Only a Shaft from the Divine

By the spells of science and the runes of psychology the
world will not be changed.

Forums and lectures, caucuses of earnest women,
editorials of angry men —

Tons of newsprint cannot be distilled to purify the
bloodstream of one selfish man.

The pronouncements of pundits, the labyrinthine logic.

The whereas of the preamble, all your therefores pass
over him.

Laws of Congress, and billions piled on billions leave him
the same — resentful, afraid, unreconstructed.

Only a shaft from the Divine, a golden arrow of Reality
can reach him — and the fire of Pentecost.

If you do not know it now, you will know it later.

But the best is now,

Always now.

VAN DUSEN RICKERT
Washington, DC teacher
Early secretary in Asia to Frank Buchman

Chapter 16

Winning People

Charming illustrations of how busy people were attracted and changed—in the world of politics and entertainment—may be found in Appendices B and C. Oscar-winning songwriter and composer Johnny Green and his wife of forty-two years, Bonnie, a Hollywood “Glamazon,” tell how through honesty and caring they handled extra-marital affairs. Congressman Charles E. Bennett of Florida reveals how the guidance of God not only remade him personally but also provided inspiration for Capitol Hill issues like arms control and congressional ethics.¹

Frank Buchman took seriously the Great Commission, “Go into all the world. . .”² He personally covered most of the globe and shared the good news with millions. In 1939 he aimed, within six months, to have a hundred million people listening to God. As with Wesley, the world was his parish. He would agree with D. T. Niles’ definition: “Evangelism is one beggar telling another where to find food.”

The hallmark of Buchman’s evangelism (a word he would never use) was its freshness. He brought new language and new methods. The hotel houseparty was one of his innovations. He arrested the imagination of sophisticated generations from speakeasy to breadline and from the roaring twenties and the depressed thirties, through war and postwar. His way was not the elevated appeal calling for people to come forward. It was rather to gather informally without speeches, encouraging those who

¹See Appendices B & C.

²Mark 16:15.

had made their move to share the things he figured probably also were problems for the newcomers. Mass evangelism was not his way. “Don’t apply eye medicine out of a second story window,” he said. The real point of a public meeting was to pave the way for private talks.

Key Persons

One of the aspects of Buchman’s evangelism in the early days that gave rise to some notoriety, both for and against, was his “key person” strategy. It started at Penn State. It had been pioneered by world YMCA leader, John R. Mott. Frank followed it for life. The aim of his college work was to reach (a) the prestigious or influential, such as the football captain, and (b) the difficult, such as the bootlegger. The changes in both shook the campus. Doubtless, many more were influenced than if there were no plan or pattern to the life changing.

In New York in the twenties, when asked why he did not spend his time in the slums with the down and out, he replied that he did that—but care was also needed for the “up and out.” Some of the criticism was reminiscent of Jesus being disapproved of for wining and dining with the rich and powerful. A reverse snobbishness may be seen. The right side of the tracks for the world was the wrong side of the tracks for the evangelist. They said Buchman had formed a “Salvation Army in spats.” A carefully documented sociological study of the work came out under the snide title *Drawing Room Conversion*.³ The implication was that inducing turnabouts in people’s lives was proper on skid row but was somehow indecent on Park Avenue.

³Allan W. Eister, *Drawing Room Conversion* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1950).

Some suspected that his attention to the well-to-do was connected with his fund-raising expertise. He once said when asked about his finances (he probably said it only once, which was enough) that he depended on God and “God is a millionaire.” He thought he was using up-to-date language to describe what most believers concede, that God, the creator of the world’s resources, is bountiful. But his critics accused him of allying God with upper socioeconomic echelons. It was another genie that never returned to the bottle. It snaked right down to the obituary page.⁴

Taking his career as a whole, the facts refute the contention that Buchman’s evangelism was class oriented. He started his career by developing a hospice for poor boys in the slums of Philadelphia. True, in the twenties his main work was in the British “Oxbridge” universities and in the American eastern seaboard colleges—the training grounds for the establishment youth in both countries. In the thirties, however, his thrust took hold in the workers’ centers on both sides of the Atlantic. The forties saw expansion throughout the labor movement of the free world. In the fifties and sixties the major work in Brazil was being done in the *favelas* (ghettos) and docks.⁵ His appeal increasingly spanned all elements of race, class, color, and creed.

An early handbook, 107 pages, that was required reading and standard equipment for full-time personnel was H. A. Walter’s *Soul Surgery*. Walter, who composed the hymn “I Would be True,” was a missionary in Asia who worked with Frank in those days. The handbook notes that the principles outlined were

⁴*Time*, August 18, 1961, p. 59.

⁵“Portworkers and Peasants Prepare for Revolution in the North-East Brazil,” *New World News Pictorial*, 27, October-December 1962), pp. 8-15.

among those distilled by the experience of two men, Frank Buchman and Henry B. Wright, both of whom, Walter wrote, “acknowledge their own vast debt to the pioneer in this field, Henry Drummond.”⁶

The five “Cs” found in the handbook have achieved some renown:

Confidence—often achieved through sharing one’s own experience that might be similar to the other person’s, with the understanding that all confidences will be strictly kept.

Confession—honesty about the true state of the person’s life.

Conviction—helping the other person understand the need for help.

Conversion—decision to let go and let God transform one’s life.

Continuance—following up the person with caring and nurture.

⁶Walter, *Soul Surgery*, p. 6. Henry Drummond (1851-97) was the pioneer and patron saint of the person-to-person evangelists of the early twentieth century such as John R. Mott, Henry B. Wright, Sherwood Eddy, and Frank Buchman. Drummond was converted through the Moody and Sankey mission of 1874. See his *New Evangelism and Other Essays* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1899); also George Adam Smith, *The Life of Henry Drummond* (London: Hodder & Stoughton). Drummond’s best known work is his address on I Corinthians 13, *The Greatest Thing in the World* delivered at a student conference at Northfield, Massachusetts, and published in New York by James Pott & Co., in 1890. Buchman frequently quoted Drummond’s affirmation, “The furniture of a person’s soul can be totally changed in an hour.” See Walter, *Soul Surgery*, p. 42.

“Tell Them What Happened to You”

As to first person testimony, Frank’s repeated admonition was, “Never speak beyond your own experience.”

AA caught the idea. I attended a huge Founders’ Day meeting in the Akron University football stadium. AA counts its beginning as of June 10, 1935, the day in Akron that Dr. Bob took his last drink. Each June recoverers by the thousands descend on the old rubber capital for a celebration. AA has about the best speakers I have heard anywhere, and this day an eloquent woman began her talk with these words:

When I was asked to come and speak, I inquired,

“What should I say?”

I was told, “Give them the AA message.”

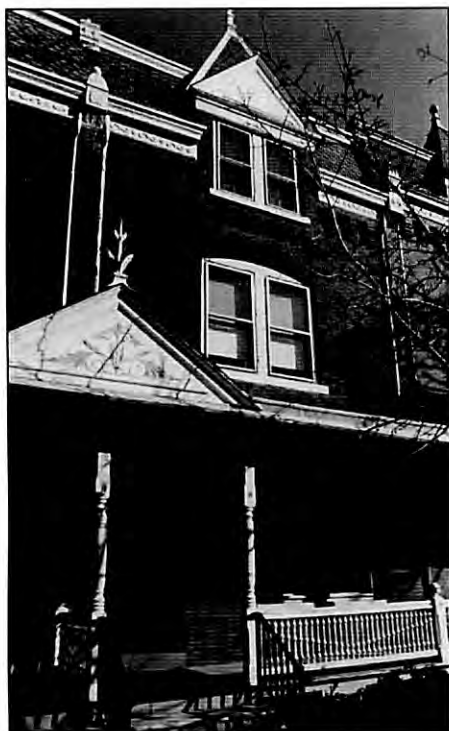
“What’s that?” I asked.

“You tell them what happened to you,” was the reply.

This is by far the best description of Frank Buchman’s approach to evangelism I have ever heard. You tell them what happened to you.



Buchman with his parents and adopted brother Dan.



*The Buchman home,
117 N. 11th Street, Allentown.*

*Credit: Sereno Jacob,
Mack Truck Co. chief photographer*



Talking with old friends in Pennsburg.



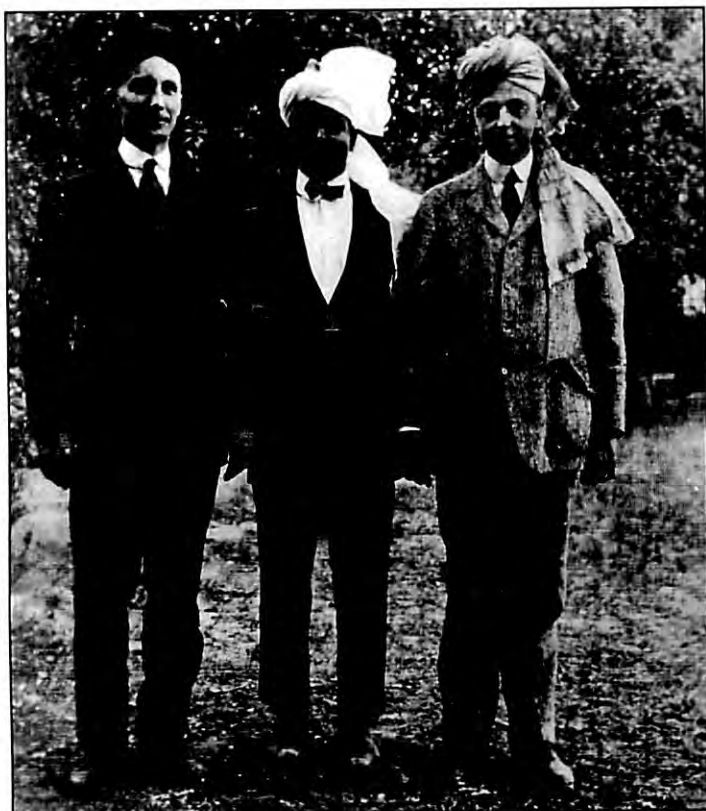
With Bishop Logan Roots at conference in Kuling, China, 1918.

With Sherry Day, an early associate who worked with Buchman on several continents.





Sam Shoemaker, rector of Calvary Church, New York, and instrumental in the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous, worked closely with Buchman for many years.



Howard Walter (left) with Buchman and their Indian host, Lahore, 1915.

*In Oxford with theologian B. H. Streeter.
Credit: Arthur P. Strong*



*With Dutch diplomat
(later Foreign Minister)
J. A. E. Patijn, 1935.
Credit: Arthur P. Strong*



*Buchman (back row, second from right) with colleagues in Baden Baden, 1932.
The group includes Swiss theologian Emil Brunner and his wife Margarethe.*

Buchman welcomed by Zeelander Dutch women, Utrecht, 1937.



*Buchman (right) with Professor and Mrs. B. H. Streeter in Oxford.
In background are Garth Lean, Roland Wilson, and John Roots.
Credit: Arthur P. Strong*



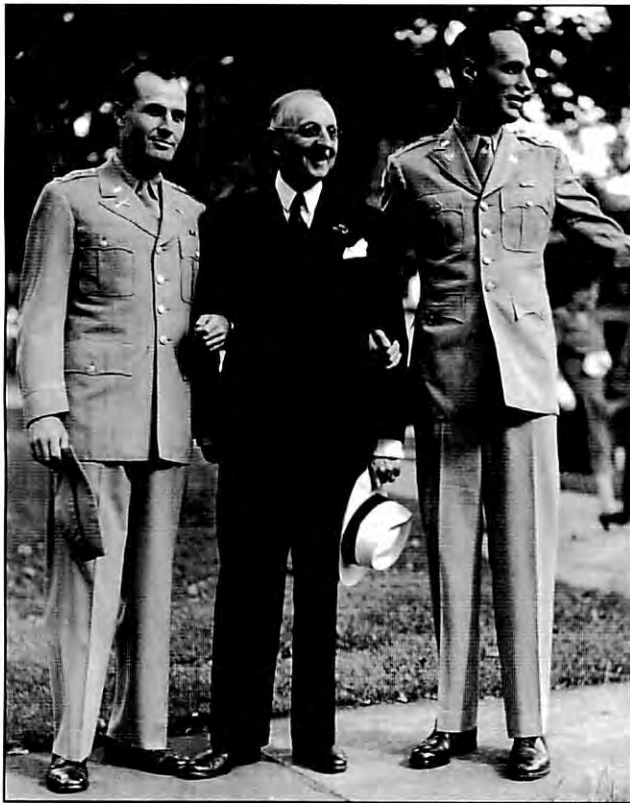
*Henry Ford
gives Buchman a one-dollar watch,
Dearborn, Michigan.*



*Buchman cuts his 60th birthday cake,
London, 1938.
With him are Lady Rennell of Rodd
and her daughters.
Credit: Richard N. Haile*



*Buchman (center)
with East London team
at King's Head pub
in West Ham, London.
Top right: Bill Rowell,
leader of unemployed
in London.
Credit: Richard N. Haile*



At the wedding of Second Lieutenant T. Willard Hunter and Mary Louise Merrell, August 22, 1945 in Petoskey, Michigan. On the right is best man John Wood. Wood and the author were among several dozen close Buchman associates who served in the Allied armed forces during World War II.



Buchman suffered a major stroke in 1942, and during his last decade had to do much of his work from bed. He continued to guide his team and reach out to world leaders.



Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman, 1878-1961.

Chapter 17

Guidance

Revelation is the keystone in the Buchman theological arch. He called it guidance, the guidance of God.

For Frank Buchman, revelation was not confined to the “big picture,” the kind of divine guidance a president might ask for on inauguration day. It was for every detail of personal and national life. This is the way he put it on one occasion:

The Holy Spirit is the most intelligent source of information in the world today. . . Divine guidance must become the normal experience of ordinary men and women. Anyone can pick up the divine messages if he will put his receiving set in order. Definite, accurate, adequate information can come from the mind of God to the minds of men. This is normal prayer.¹

Garrett Stearly, an early associate, said that it was in 1916-17, through reading in China Andrew Murray’s *Secret of Inspiration*, that Frank began to make God’s guidance a formative element in the direction of his life.²

At Birmingham, England, in 1936 Buchman addressed a crowd of 25,000 in the British Industries Fair Building. His topic was “How to Listen.”

¹Buchman, *Remaking the World*, p. 15.

²Stearly, “The Man Who Would Change the World,” unpublished memo.

When man listens, God speaks. When man obeys, God acts. The secret is God-control. We are not out to tell God. We are out to let God tell us . . . Anyone can hear the words of the Lord. It is only necessary to obey the rules. The first rule is that we listen honestly for everything that may come—and if we are wise we write it down. The second rule is that we test the thoughts that come, to see which are from God. One test is the Bible. . . . Another excellent test is, What do others say who also listen to God? This is an unwritten law of fellowship . . . No one can be wholly God-controlled who works alone.

It is to a group of willing men and women that God speaks most clearly. And it is through God-controlled people that God must one day govern the world.

It was important to regard guidance as applying to the details of personal life, but there was also a battle to keep the larger perspective so that one's guidance did not degenerate into a shopping list for the daily round of things to do, people to see, letters to write. Van Dusen Rickert shared this thought with some of us:

A quiet time is not to get guidance but to get God.

In the early days Buchman liked anagrams. The word PRAY, he said, could stand for Powerful Radiograms Always Yours. This led me to later cite for audiences the contribution of Guglielmo Marconi, who discovered radio waves. Before Marconi, radio waves had been bouncing off rocks, tree, clouds, and people for

billions of years. No one was aware. Then the Italian scientist discovered how to put “wireless” messages on them. Now civilization is totally dependent—satellite communications, air navigation, television, cell phones. Is it possible there are such heretofore rarely experienced waves in the spiritual dimension available to us? Periodically a Moses, Paul, Francis, or a Wesley taps into this dimension and gives us the word. Buchman’s idea was that every one can tune in, right now, each day.

A similar reference can be seen in the experience of Daniel Webster. When asked what was the secret of his compelling, no-notes oratory, he replied, “When I speak I can almost see thunderbolts flashing across the space above me. When I need one, I reach up and bring it down.”

Two further observations regarding Buchman and revelation:

- Prayer was two-way. It was not “Listen, Lord, for your servant has a lot on his mind.” It was rather Eli’s advice to young Samuel—“Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”³
“We are not out to tell God. We are out to let God tell us,” Frank said. The general’s postcard with two ears and one mouth laid down the two to one ratio for listening and speaking in prayer. Most of the team made the proportion a good deal more than two to one. Generally they observed a daily sixty-minute quiet time before breakfast. Most of the hour was spent in listening.
- “If we are wise we write it down.” Buchman was firm on this point. “I don’t trust your memory a minute,” he would say, and cited a proverb he attributed to the

³1 Samuel 3:9.

Chinese: “The strongest memory is weaker than the palest ink.” When God gave an agenda for the day, there was not much chance that it would happen if it were not put in black and white for later reference.

Paul Tournier, the personal development author, acquired this habit during his association with the movement in the thirties, and in his books recommended “written meditation.”

Chapter 18

Moral Standards

Buchman's encouragement to a person to commit himself/herself to the care and guidance of God often led to remarkable results. He found that such a decision was helped by a personal check-up. Many found that a "moral inventory" was made practical by reflection on four guidelines:

Absolute honesty
Absolute purity
Absolute unselfishness
Absolute love.

These he learned in the early days from his Yale friend and fellow student worker, Henry Wright, who recorded them in his book *The Will of God and a Man's Life Work* (New York: Association Press, 1924). Here are Wright's words, page 173:

To every problem, great or small, which presents itself—in a small matter like one's bearing in a game of sport, or in a large matter like the choice of a life career—the Christian who is absolutely surrendered to God asks himself this question: "Is the step which I had planned to take an absolutely pure one? Is it an absolutely honest one? Is it the most unselfish one? Is it the fullest possible expression of my love?"

If it is every one of these four, it must be the will of God for me. If it fails to measure up to any one of these four standards, it cannot be God's will and I must not take it, no matter what the

refusal may cost me in suffering, mental or physical.

Wright devotes fifty pages in *The Will of God* to the meaning of these standards in a person's life.

The section is entitled "How to Know the Particular Will of God—the Fourfold Touchstone of Jesus and the Apostles."

Buchman, who tended to reverse the order of the first two guidelines, honesty and purity, followed along with relating moral standards to the will of God. In an international broadcast from London in August 1936 he said:

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

Wright had learned of the four standards from Robert Elliott Speer (1867-1947), Presbyterian statesman and right hand colleague to world YMCA leader John R. Mott. Speer's book *Principles of Jesus* (New York: Revell, 1902) was Wright's source.

Robert E. Speer was a Pennsylvania-born son of a successful attorney and Congressman who required his children to memorize the Shorter and Larger Westminster Catechisms. During his student days at Princeton University, the young Speer was profoundly influenced by the preeminent evangelist

of the day, Dwight L. Moody, and committed himself to foreign missions. As Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in 1927, he presided over the adoption of the report of his own Special Commission, declaring that the militant doctrinal precisionism then being promoted by the fundamentalists was not binding on the church. Speer believed this action ensured the proclamation of the Gospel for the salvation of the world.

There never was any claim that it was possible for a human being to live up to the four standards. They were regarded as a way of cleaning one's windows—also as a target, like the center bull's eye on the rifle range. Peter Howard likened their role to that of the North Star in guiding ships. They were an expression of a reach. The reach was for the commandment of Christ, "You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect."¹

If this sounds like human strain, there was indeed some strain. But everyone was quite clear that human effort would never approach such an ethical level. It required a daily miracle. Whatever approach might be achieved to that quality of life was entirely due to the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

But even more important, the four standards, far from being unattainable rules, were an avenue to God. They were "the first stage of the Group way."² They were the law that led to the gospel. They were the Apostle Paul's "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." It was also seen,

¹Matthew 5:48.

²Emil Brunner, *The Church and the Oxford Group* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1931), p. 41.

that “after faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master.”³

Frank himself aspired to live this “freedom of the spirit.” He did not make his own morality a personal concern. His measuring rod was rather his inner revelation. His own posture was basically antinomian.

The four standards were a key to freedom. They were a handy tool for cleaning up one’s antenna. Repair came about through repentance and restitution—repentance before God, restitution to wronged fellow-persons. Cleaning up the fouled spark plugs or the dirty carburetor was the way to power.

It was this earthy matter-of-factness that gave the Groups such contagious reality and authority. The ethical principles were never presented as “oughts” or “shoulds” but as reported experience.⁴ Those who tried the experiment took very seriously Jesus’ admonition:

If you are bringing your offering to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering.⁵

A popular song that the Colwell Brothers frequently sang at meetings in the fifties ran, “If you don’t love your neighbor, you don’t love God.”

³Galatians 3:24-5.

⁴The idea was adopted by AA, whose twelve steps are couched not in “you shoulds” but in “we dids.”

⁵Matthew 5:23 (JB).

Chapter 19

The Bible

For Buchman the Bible was authoritative. He did not believe his message was anything new, or deviating from the traditional scriptures. His aim was to bring the old words and advice to life. Speaking at the British Industries Fair July 26, 1936, he said:

The Bible is steeped in the experience through the centuries of people who have dared, under divine revelation, to live experimentally with God. There, culminating in the life of Jesus Christ, we find the highest moral and spiritual challenge—complete honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love.

The Scripture was assumed to be authoritative. Every one was expected to read from scripture daily during one's own individual quiet time. The Bible was regarded as the inspired word of God. Inconsistencies and literalness were irrelevant issues and not discussed. The Bible was cited as the source of the four absolute moral standards. The Bible was a model for seeking and obeying divine guidance. Always there was the expectancy that Biblical-style miracles have their counterparts in people's lives today.

These are similarities with the thinking of Karl Barth (1886-1968), who along with Emil Brunner, reacted against nineteenth century theological liberalism, with its prevailing immanentism, higher critical view of the Scripture, and rather optimistic evolutionary view of man and history.¹

¹Gregg Strawbridge, Evangelical Theological Society, San Francisco, 1997.

Barth was one of the “great leaders” in whose class Henry P. Van Dusen placed Buchman in his article, “Apostle to the Twentieth Century.” (*Atlantic*, July 1934). Theologian Marcus J. Borg calls Barth one of the two most important Protestant theologians in the twentieth century.²

Time’s evaluation of Barth December 20, 1968 could well be said of Buchman:

Against those who assumed the partnership of God and man, Barth proclaimed a radically transcendent Creator whose message had been hurled like a stone at humanity. In contrast to an ethical, teaching Jesus, Barth preached a divine Christ who was, in his person, God’s message to man. Rejecting the higher criticism that reduced the Bible to human wish fulfillment, Barth proclaimed the objective authority of Scripture. The Bible, he wrote, was not man’s word about God, but God’s word about man. Barth’s thinking . . . stressed a God who stood in constant judgment against idolatrous counterfeiters of faith who sought to create him in their own image. It was just such an idolatry that Barth saw in Nazism.

Buchman would identify with Barth’s famous New York shipside interview upon arrival for an American lecture tour. Reporters asked Barth for their readers a simple summary of his message. He replied:

Jesus loves me, this I know,
For the Bible tells me so.

²Borg. *The Heart of Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper, 2003).

In the 1930s, Rufus Brett, a western Massachusetts farmer, said that with the Buchman idea he had cleaned up his life the way he would a “dirty, weedy farm.” He added: “When I used to read my Bible, I wondered why God stopped talking to people. Then I realized that God had not stopped talking. People had stopped listening.”

In the new millennium the United Church of Christ, Congregational proclaimed the theme, “God is Still Speaking.”

Salvation

On the whole, the kind of salvation that interested the Pennsylvanian was the kind that could happen in the present world. He said his work produced “a quality of life that issues in personal, social, racial, national, and supranational salvation.” What he was after for individuals was salvation from whatever was holding them back—things that might be in the way of happiness, freedom, and effectiveness.

At the time of his near-death from a stroke in Saratoga in 1942, he said he was permitted a glimpse of the other side. “I saw the outstretched arms of Christ . . . and it was wonderful . . . It was better than anything I had seen, the vision of the life beyond.”³

But that interest in the beyond did not seem to be a part of his basic motivation. The only kind of salvation that drove him

³H. W. (Bunny) Austin, *Frank Buchman As I Knew Him*, pp. 101-02. Studies in the seventies bear out this kind of experience among the near-dying. See Raymond A. Moody, Jr., *Life After Life* (Covington, Georgia: Mockingbird Books, 1975). See Elizabeth Kubler-Ross interview, *Associated Press, Foster's Daily Democrat*, Dover, New Hampshire, September 19, 1975. Jim Newton, a friend of Thomas Edison, reports that near the end, Edison briefly came out of his coma and said, “It’s very beautiful over there.” See Newton *Uncommon Friends*, p. 32.

was his divine commission to remake the world in his own lifetime. After that, he was content to take whatever was forthcoming. He assumed that for him and all the saints it would be a pleasant experience.

Chapter 20

The Church and the Theologies

Swiss theologian Emil Brunner asserts:

The Group belongs neither to the “Churches” nor to the “religious societies” or “sects.” Its desire is rather to be active throughout all the Churches and societies in the building up of the true Church of Jesus Christ . . . The word of Buchman, “Our only organization is the Church . . .”¹

Like Luther, Calvin, and Wesley, Buchman was not out to form anything like another denomination. At the same time, he did build up a world force which developed a cohesive loyalty of its own. He did not, however, show the organizational skills, or will, of Wesley’s Methodism or of Bill Wilson’s AA. How Buchman held together the lives of those affected was through an informal network of “team letters,” news periodicals, and annual assemblies in the big world conference centers—plus an able cadre of full-time leaders who visited the local communities, published the literature, mediated the Buchman mystique (after a fashion), ran the conference centers, and tried to keep the faith.

Buchman’s stance in relation to the Church was in a way to co-exist with it but not to supplant it with something wholly different. The aim was to recall the Church to the pristine purity of its beginnings. Indeed, when Frank set out at the end of World War I to create a self-conscious fellowship related to his

¹Brunner, *The Church and the Oxford Group*, p. 95.

ideas, the first name he chose was “First Century Christian Fellowship.” He did not quarrel with the existing creeds and forms. He simply insisted that the Christian life started with an experience that happened inside a person. Ecclesiastical procedures were to be judged by how they helped to initiate and nurture that experience.

Renewal

From time to time, when Buchman detected that the team had reached a flat period, he would get them all to stop and would lead them in a renewal orientation. At Lake Tahoe in 1940, it was a matter of months. Sometimes it was a weekend. On those occasions, he would reach back to his own resources—his theological training, his knowledge of the Bible and the great hymns, plus his own famous ability to “read” people—to provide new directions and new inspiration. The process was less effective as he got older. When he tried it during his last days, the magic had faded.

He liked the power of the “Salvationist” hymn—“Like a mighty army moves the Church of God.”² With scornful humor, he would sometimes recite another hymn that moaned,

Dear Lord, and shall we ever live at this poor dying rate?
Our love so faint, so cold to Thee, and Thine to us so great!³

It was completely the opposite to his own experience. He called the dying note “Struggle Alley.” He preferred “Hallelujah Boulevard.”

²Sabine Baring-Gould, 1864.

³Isaac Watts, “Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,” 1707. *The Hymnal* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1933), #206.

At his funeral in Saint John's Lutheran Church in Allentown, where he had been ordained nearly sixty years before, an international chorus lifted the roof with the words:

Onward then, ye people, join our happy throng,
Blend with us your voices in the triumph song;
Glory, laud, and honor unto Christ the King;
This through countless ages men and angels sing.⁴

The Theologies

In order to identify Frank Buchman's theology, the first question is: what theology? If there was anything further from the old Soul Surgeon's mind than theology, it would be difficult to find. Theories about the supernatural were not his cup of tea. "Why talk about the Second Coming," he would ask, "to someone who knows nothing of the First?" There was no such thing as an intellectual difficulty to belief. Disbelief was caused by sin. Cancel the sin and belief would result.

"We are not here to argue," he declared. "We are here for constructive planning and action." "Win the argument and lose the man," he contended.

Buchman even avoided the word "theology." Theology sounded like something religious. Its influence was probably in his mind limited to dull pedants reading scholarly papers at boring meetings. The last thing he wanted to be thought of was as a theological or religious leader. He responded more to the concept of statesmanship in world affairs. His was not a theology but an ideology, an ideology which he hurled into the global war of ideas. He was competing against other ideologies, particularly

⁴For a description of the day's observances, see Allentown (PA) *Morning Call*, August 19, 1961.

fascism and communism. Like them, he was bidding for the world's allegiance.

His conviction was that all one needed was the experience. If a man or a woman had that, belief would take care of itself.

He was very much a pioneer, perhaps *the* pioneer, of the school of "story theology," subsequently advocated by Harvey Cox and others. "When the life experience dimension is excluded nowadays," Cox wrote, "people feel cheated."⁵

Buchman's whole message began and ended with the life experience. He told his people not to speak or write "one inch" beyond their experience. It was this element that made it so difficult for the church to discover a set of beliefs in respect of which they could take a theological position.

The Buchman theology was rooted in the Pennsylvania German Lutheranism of his origin. It was a theology descending from the Pietistic movement in the Lutheran church in Germany in the seventeenth century. From there it spread to Switzerland, from which Buchman's ancestors emigrated. Pietism's leading characteristics were Bible study and religion of the heart. Its essential aim was to place the spirit of Christian living above the letter of doctrine. *The Collegia Pietatis* of its first great leader, Philipp Jakob Spencer (1636-1705) sounds like the early Oxford Groups.⁶

⁵Harvey Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), p. 100. Cox cites Ralph Waldo Emerson's exhortations to "go beyond the mere passing on of doctrines and dogmas. . . [and] learn about religion in the experience of the transcendent itself." *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁶*Pia Desideria* [pious aspirations], (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964). Cited in Monroe Peaston, *Personal Living* (New York: Harper, 1972), p. 10, in the course of tracing the influence of Frank Buchman on Paul Tournier.

Human Nature

Reinhold Niebuhr consistently railed at Frank Buchman, apparently due in measure to a lack of information and misunderstanding of the latter's aims and accomplishments. Yet their views of the nature of man and woman were similar. They both held the Biblical-Christian view of sinful human nature in need of divine redemption. Niebuhr wrote, "The issue of Biblical religion is . . . how sinful man is to be reconciled to God and how history is to overcome the tragic consequences of . . . its proud and premature efforts to escape finiteness."⁷

Sin

As noted above, in the early days Buchman introduced Loudon ("In Whose Rooms") Hamilton to talk on sin at the opening meeting of a houseparty. A master of the platform, with his towering physique and high humor, he would regale the guests with his Scottish humor until they were ready for almost anything. His monolog on sin became a classic masterpiece. A. J. Russell reports it in detail in *For Sinners Only*. An excerpt:

Sin is a force. It may be likened to a mathematician. It adds to a man's troubles, subtracts from his energies, multiplies his aches and pains, divides his mind, takes interest from his work, discounts his chances of success, and squares his conscience.⁸

⁷Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1941), 1:147.

⁸A. J. Russell, *For Sinners Only* (New York: Harper, 1934), p. 268.

The definition of sin most frequently cited in the Group was:

Anything that stands between me and God and
between me and another person.

In Buchman's mind human sin was the central global problem. He believed there was no political scheme or international formulation that could touch the problem of the innate corruption which causes the world's divisions. Only a powerful Redeeming Force that changes the human heart could do that. To him, there was only one solution to the world's ills, whether personal, family, industrial, or political:

Sin is the disease.
Christ is the cure.
The result is a miracle.

Theologians

These are some of the theologians who published works on Buchman's system:

Emil Brunner, *The Church and the Oxford Group* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1937). Other works of Brunner's were also influenced by his association with the Oxford Group in Switzerland (he called himself a "member"). Brunner spent evenings preparing lay leaders of Bible Study Circles. His 1937 book is a defense of the theology, aims, and methods of the Group Movement.⁹

⁹John Bennett told me he was impressed by Buchman's apparent authority over Brunner at the Oxford Faith and Works Assembly in 1937.

L. W. Grensted, *The Person of Christ* (London: Nisbet, 1933). The author was Chaplain of Oriel College, and Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion in the University of Oxford, 1930-1950. In his introduction, Grensted writes:

My own experience [of the Oxford Group], with that of others, has been that so far from being led aside into something new and strange, I have found that the Bible and the Church alike have come to mean more and not less . . . a Gospel that is with power to heal and to save.

Philip Leon, *The Philosophy of Courage* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1939). This professor at University College, Leicester, gives a philosophical account of the impact of the Oxford Group on his life.

Gabriel Marcel (ed.), *Fresh Hope for the World* (London: Longmans Green, 1960). Marcel, a Catholic, was one of France's leading philosophers. His association with the school of Heidegger and Sartre led him to a philosophy of "Christian Existentialism." He was also noted in France as a playwright and dramatic critic. His writings centered on the contemporary human predicament. During his last years he traveled with, and wrote frequently about, Moral Re-Armament, attending the assemblies at Mackinac Island, Michigan, and Caux, Switzerland. He wrote, "Moral Re-Armament is a hope—perhaps *the* hope."

B. H. Streeter, *The God Who Speaks* (London: Macmillan, 1936). Streeter (1874-1937) was Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, and a foremost New Testament authority. Among other numerous works was *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*

(London: Macmillan Co., 1924). The philosophy of religion was his main interest. In his closing years, he and Mrs. Streeter were actively associated with Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group, which he called "the most important religious movement of today." He died in an air crash in Switzerland.¹⁰

Reinhold Niebuhr, long-time member of the faculty of Union Theological Seminary in New York, never could contain his rage against Buchman. In speeches and articles he consistently spoke of his object of contempt as naïve and dangerous. In *Christianity and Power Politics* (New York: Scribner, 1941), Niebuhr wrote:

If the movement would content itself with preaching repentance to drunkards and adulterers, one might be willing to respect it as a religious revival method, which knows how to confront the sinner with God. But when it runs to Geneva, the seat of the League of Nations, or to Prince Starhemberg or Hitler, or to any seat of power, always with the idea that it is on the verge of saving the world by bringing the people who control the world under God-control, it is difficult to restrain the contempt which one feels for this dangerous childishness.

Apparently Niebuhr believed Christianity is OK for personal salvation for marginalized people. It must, however, at all costs

¹⁰Dr. Streeter in 1937 stated, "I went with the Group to Denmark three times, and what I saw there convinced me that the movement was not merely an instrument of moral rebirth and psychological liberation for individuals, but was capable of moving nations as such by initiating a new mental attitude in economic and political conflicts."

be kept out of international power centers where the big decisions are made that affect us all.

It is ironic that Niebuhr acknowledged his debt to fellow theologian Emil Brunner, for central ideas in Niebuhr's most famous seminal work, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (1941). During this period Brunner was an articulate spokesman of the Buchman message in Switzerland and elsewhere.

Those looking for a nutshell summary of the Buchman "theology" will be interested in one by sociologist Allan W. Eister.¹¹ He notes two premises "in the ideology of the movement and its founder. . .":

- (1) The conviction that the world of men is sinful and in need of spiritual regeneration, which is to be accomplished through changed lives of individuals and only in that way;
- (2) A belief in the direct and detailed guidance of God accorded those individuals who have "surrendered" their wills to the point of listening for divine commands.

¹¹Allan W. Eister, *Drawing Room Conversion* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1950), p.11.

Chapter 21

Finances

In June 1936 one of the largest national gatherings Buchman ever held in the United States took place in Stockbridge, colorful capital of the Massachusetts Berkshires. Mrs. Henry Ford attended. Her husband sent a fleet of automobiles to assist in the transportation of the assembly. This led to the repeated rumors that Henry and Clara Ford were financial backers. Buchman wished the rumors were true. But although the senior Fords were longtime good friends, and entertained Frank whenever he came to Dearborn, financial contributions were not a component of the friendship. The relationship was such that Buchman never asked them for anything; and they did not volunteer. Garth Lean says the Fords gave a total of \$3,000 to the work.¹ Frank was fond of telling how Henry conducted him through the Ford home "Fairlane" at Dearborn by candlelight during a power outage. The auto genius asked about the after-life. When Buchman was felled by a stroke in 1942, Ford sent him a personal message.

Indeed, Buchman rather prided himself on not asking for money. He made exceptions. I heard him ask the owner of a prominent Palm Springs guest ranch for \$25,000 to meet a monthly payment for the old Women's Athletic Club at 833 South Flower Street in Los Angeles, Miraculously, the \$25,000 monthly pay requirement was met regularly for ten months, often in the nick of time. The Club became west coast headquarters for many years.

¹Lean, *On the Tail of a Comet*, p. 249.

Frank was adept at presenting his case in ways such that those with means were inspired to help him underwrite it without being specifically requested. He never conducted a fund-raising campaign in the formal sense.

The method of financing was always a public relations problem for the movement. Partly this was due to the fact that it was all rather unorthodox. When anyone asked how the money came, Buchman's standard answer, wholly sincere, was, "We pray for it. It comes through faith and prayer." The fact that this was true was not much help to the materialistic cynic, who was apt to conclude that this was pious balderdash hiding something devious.

Another aspect of the problem was that Buchman was not about to open his books to a prying public. Enemies might get at his sources and destroy his work. It was identical to the reaction of leaders like William Green, Walter Reuther, Philip Murray and George Meany to those wanting to probe finances of the labor unions. The response was "Who wants to know?" And the cynicism grew.

There was a change when MRA was legally required to incorporate in order to receive bequests. Since then there has been meticulous public reporting of finances. At the same time, it must be said that public reports could not begin to document gifts of time and contributions in kind. Expenses were far lower than most would suspect from the public image. The reason was that none of the thousands of full-time workers ever received a cent of salary, only expenses, and generally they stayed in homes rather than hotels.

Critics have always tried to locate a Henry Ford or other mysterious "angel" as the source of Buchman's funds. It is true that a number of wealthy people contributed, but all of them

were a part of Frank's team and were convinced about what he was doing. The implication that he must have been beholden to outside "fat cats" to promote their economic or political interests has no basis in fact. Such charges reveal a misunderstanding of the Buchman dynamics. If anyone did anyone's bidding, it was usually they doing his, not he doing theirs. Powerful business types would become office boys in his presence. Big external donors were nonexistent. Most gifts were made out of personal sacrifice by people of modest circumstances. Even a determined opponent like Tom Driberg, who traveled thousands of miles and spent days at a time poring over official registers in search of damaging material to support his vendetta, never came up with a single outside donor.²

Buchman's classic statement on finances was written in a letter to MRA's assistant-treasurer, Gilbert M. Harris, formerly of Chase Manhattan Bank, New York. During the substantial construction of the conference center at Mackinac Island in the fifties, money was running out. "Panic" is too strong a word for a conservative banker like Gil Harris, but with great concern he wrote Buchman in Italy advising that the project be stopped until the required financing was in hand. Frank replied:

Dear Gil:

Many thanks for that Christmas check. It is a real help.

I know how many difficulties there are in getting money for that stupendous work at Mackinac. But God has many ready helpers. I assure you He has people who will make it possible. I greatly sympathize with you and

²Driberg, *The Mystery of Moral Re-Armament*, pp. 139ff.

feel at times the burden is too much for anyone, then the unexpected happens. It is by faith and prayer our money comes. I feel to retrench at this point with 115 men on the payroll [artisans from the area] and the building in full swing would be wrong. The country desperately needs this center. In fact this is just the beginning of the expansion that is necessary to meet the needs in the world for an ideology which can answer the problems. I agree with Congressman Charles Deane [D-NC] that these buildings represent the first line of America's defense. More than that, it will be a center from which the ideology must come to the nation if we are to have any basis for foreign and domestic policy adequate to the needs.

I am grateful for your business caution but I want you to move with me and the people of America in the dimension of what needs to be done, not what we think we can do. I want you to help me always to live at the place where I rely not on what I have but on what God gives. It is such freedom and it works.

I wish you all the joys of Christmas, and the peace and the trust of the Christ Child for you and for yours and all with you.

Ever gratefully and faithfully,
[signed] Frank³

³Buchman to Harris, December 15, 1955. (Buchman Collection, Library of Congress).

Chapter 22

Problems

In any human venture there are flaws. Nobody's perfect.

In a book which seeks to persuade media and political leaders that here is a phenomenon to which they need to pay serious attention—at the world's peril—one makes the best case one can. There has obviously been no intention here to dwell on weakness. Yet any undertaking is more credible if warts and all are acknowledged.

Most strong leaders are authoritarian. This trait gives a force the cohesiveness and the drive to do great things. Frank Buchman and his teams accepted this because following the head man's leadings so often turned out to be the right way and led to important breakthroughs. It is one reason the task forces were able to accomplish so much in such a short time. You don't stop and argue, you just do it. PR expert Immanuel (Manny) Straus observed, "MRA can do more in three days and less in three months than any outfit I know."

But the flip side of this is groupthink, a happening that surfaced in the Bay of Pigs decision to invade Cuba early in the Kennedy administration. Often those with reservations hold back out of loyalty to the group.

Authoritarianism surfaced sometimes in the smaller MRA groups. I experienced some of this in Africa. We had a team of over eighty from twenty countries. In the year 1953-54 this task force conducted presentations and workshops over a good deal of the continent. The designated leaders at first were making all the decisions, until a few of us made a move to spread the responsibility. From then on the direction of activity was determined by the more collegial consultation.

There was a problem that caused some pain in the mid-century but is no longer a factor. For a time it became *de rigueur* for people to take up with their co-workers, sometimes in a fairly severe manner, matters of behavior or attitude, suggestive of what is now frequently referred to in self-help groups as “confrontation.” This type of approach is in many instances quite necessary, as in the case of Betty Ford and her family in relation to alcoholism. There comes a time where there is no more use in beating about the bush.

But with the MRA team at one time some of this was done in an unfeeling way. It began in a healthy activity of providing the other person with an objective view. As Robert Burns put it:

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us.

Frank was good at this, and at times dealt quite severely with those who needed “correction.” He cited the New Testament — “Have the qualities of salt among yourselves.” He could have added the later word, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.”

Too often institutions miss their potential because people insist on pussyfooting, being nice to each other. But *grace* needs to accompany the salt, a trick Frank was able to manage.

At one point Frank was calling this “tamping.” Our cowboy quartet at Lake Tahoe rewrote a Civil War song and vocalized, “Tamp, tamp, tamp till we’re united.”

David Belden, son of a senior British full-time leader, had developed his own attitudes about the work and had become concerned about the damage being done. He began a newsletter in which he invited bruised people to tell their stories. These

became detailed and depressing accounts. It may have been therapeutic for some, getting their feelings out. But his periodical became preponderantly negative and with few redeeming elements. It fell of its own weight.¹ David once told me he appreciated the balance I gave to evaluations of MRA.

The problem of over-confrontation has apparently disappeared.

One of the saddest developments, in my opinion, was the atrophy of the local teams. In the 1930s it was these weekly meetings in New York and Akron that propelled Alcoholics Anonymous into the public arena.

In Los Angeles there were some thousand people that considered themselves a part of the force and met regularly in various ways. Their action with the powerful Los Angeles city school board (one of their group, Eleanor Allen, was a member of the board), made headlines and put a local Communist thrust on the defensive. Carl Rasmussen, MRA-related city councilman, could report advances in city hall teamwork and race relations.

Apparently this was happening in the by-ways as well. In Dover, New Hampshire there were crowded weekly meetings. The leaders published a hardcover book to report miracles in families and jobs throughout the city.²

It was the Miami local team in the 1950s that brought pilots and management together and saved National Airlines from a company-ending strike.

¹Copies of the letters are available at davidbelden@earthlink.net. *Ed.*

²Leon Morse, *He Comes to Me* (Dover: Foster, 1934).

Gradually the focus shifted almost imperceptibly to the full-time traveling team. Success and publicity were measured by what they were doing. The locals were encouraged to support the nationals.³

AA's leaders are wont to say they learned from MRA some things not to do. At least they have been careful to nourish their local units. The national office is lean and mean and devoted to helping the local weekly meetings with various methods of support.

There are other comments that could be made. But the intention is to suggest that here was a force that showed glimpses of human frailty as well as the inspiration and follow-through to do great things.

³I am speaking here of the American experience. Bill Jaeger insisted to me on a visit to California, that the above had not happened in Europe.

Chapter 23

The Thirties Peak

It was during the 1930s that the Buchman program attained its highest public visibility. After World War II began, the progress was made mostly behind the scenes. But the public record in the decade before the September 1939 world conflagration was impressive.

In 1932 the Buchman team was invited to meet League of Nations delegates in Geneva. It was there that Frank met Carl J. Hambro, president of the Norwegian Parliament, who was soon to become the President of the League of Nations.

In 1933-34 a cross-Canada campaign took place, after which Prime Minister R. B. Bennett stated:

“The work you are doing has made the task of government easier. Your influence has been felt in every village and city, even in the remotest outpost of the Dominion.”

In 1934 Hambro invited Buchman and team to Norway. Hambro’s evaluation afterwards was: “The work has been spreading in Norway, and hundreds of thousands of lives have been changed. The Oxford Group has also conquered Denmark in a way that none of us would have thought possible.” In Norway a special office was set up to handle all the back tax money sent in by people who received a new perspective in honesty.

In 1935 alcoholics who had been changed through the Oxford Group formed their own association, which became Alcoholics Anonymous. Jack Alexander in the *Saturday Evening Post* identified Buchman’s program as the source.

Time magazine April 20, 1936 devoted its cover story to Buchman.

A national assembly was held in June 1936 at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, attended by 5,000 people.

On July 26, 1936, 25,000 people attended a meeting at the British Industries Fair building.

A popular play, *Susan and God* by Rachel Crothers, starring Gertrude Lawrence, opened for a long run on Broadway. Although generally negative about the work, it caused wide comment. Louis B. Mayer produced the movie in 1940.

In 1937, a one-shot photo magazine, *Rising Tide*, pictorially presenting the idea of world changing through life changing, was published by the group. For a week it outsold *Life*, which later reproduced several of *Rising Tide*'s pages.

Just as the fears engendered by the depression earlier in the decade had encouraged many to seek Buchman's answer to life's dilemmas, so fears of war later in the decade led many to hope a spiritual renaissance might avoid world catastrophe.

During this decade a sizeable number of highly placed political and cultural leaders on both sides of the Atlantic issued statements to the press endorsing the aims of the movement. Press contacts in some instances were aided by one of MRA's most brilliant writers, China-born and Harvard-educated John McCook Roots. These statements appeared in the foremost metropolitan newspapers, especially the *Times* of London and the *New York Times*.¹

¹Many of them were collected by H. W. (Bunny) Austin and published as *Moral Re-Armament: The Battle for Peace* (London: W. Heinemann, 1938).

- (1) Chief among them was a message from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who made a public statement carried at the top of page one of the *New York Times*, June 5, 1939:

The underlying strength of the world must consist in the moral fiber of her citizens. A program of moral re-
armament for the world cannot fail, therefore, to lessen the danger of armed conflict. Such moral re-armament, to be most highly effective, must receive support on a world-wide basis.

Franklin D. Roosevelt²

- (2) Gabriel Heatter, fervent newscaster with the largest radio audience at the time, devoted segments of his nightly network broadcasts to MRA, one evening calling it, "The one real hope left for mankind before we get mass suicide: Moral Re-Armament."³
- (3) Also in 1939 massive convocations were held in major national arenas, including Madison Square Garden, Constitution Hall, and the Hollywood Bowl. At the Washington meeting, Senator Harry S. Truman read

²The message was read at the MRA Constitution Hall meeting by a virtually unknown New Deal Senator from Missouri, Harry S. Truman. Dedicated opponent Tom Driberg took great pains, spending days at the Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, New York, to discover whether FDR wrote it. Bunny Austin told me he brought some suggestions with him for the interview at the White House that was arranged by Endicott Peabody, FDR's headmaster at Groton. The President then made his own revisions, adding the final sentence.

³Gabriel Heatter, WOR, Newark, and the Mutual Broadcasting Company network, newscasts of February 17 and February 23, 1939.

the message sent by Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Hollywood Bowl overflowed with a record-breaking crowd of 30,000. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that some 10,000 were turned away.

- (4) H. W. (Bunny) Austin, then ranked the world's number one amateur tennis star, "the best player never to have won Wimbledon,"⁴ arrived in the United States and rallied the nation's greatest athletes in his "Battle for Peace."⁵
- (5) Manny Straus of Macy's, who among other things was behind the establishment of the interracial "I Am an American Day," voluntarily pitched in his impressive public relations skills. His efforts were heavily influential in packing 30,000 people into the Hollywood Bowl on July 19, 1939. Along with Lily Pons's concert in 1936, it still is the largest crowd in the history of the Bowl. The demonstration was preceded by Straus-inspired events like a Hollywood luncheon which glittered with motion picture stars, chaired by motion picture czar Will Hays and addressed by the industry's

⁴Austin was twice a Wimbledon finalist—1932 and 1938, the last male Briton to reach the finals. He and Fred Perry won the Davis Cup for Great Britain in the three years 1933-35.

⁵They included Babe Ruth, Glenn Cunningham, Joe DiMaggio, Carl Hubbell, Bobby Jones, Connie Mack, Jesse Owens, and Gene Tunney (*New York Times* August 28, 2000, p. B6). It was my privilege to be Bunny's "man Friday" during this period and to participate in all these interviews. (A young Hearst sportswriter, Bob Considine, wrote it up for the *New York Daily Mirror*, cf May 10, 1939). Especially memorable were talks with baseball greats Ruth, DiMaggio, Hubbell, and Branch Rickey. We had breakfast with Joe DiMaggio in 1939 at the Hotel New Yorker. As we got up from the table and he left to catch a cab for Yankee Stadium, he turned to Bunny and said, "I really do hope we can get somewhere with this."

most powerful figure of the day, Louis B. Mayer. FDR's son James attended. Singer Jeanette MacDonald ended a feud with Mayer on that occasion. She sang "Oh Sweet Mystery of Life" at Mayer's funeral.

- (6) The *Los Angeles Times* went all out. The publisher, Harry Chandler, was a good friend of George Eastman, Hollywood construction entrepreneur; he and his wife, Polly, were the principal movers of Buchman's program in southern California.⁶ George had been president of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce in 1928. A sharp young reporter, James Bassett, who was to become a top *Times* editor, was assigned to cover the events. The *Herald Examiner* also joined in. When Hearst, checking his ranch teletype at San Simeon, learned of the crowds, he hastily ordered coverage.
- (7) Foster and Kleiser, California's dominant outdoor advertiser of the day, carried the message up and down the state on hundreds of donated billboards. One segment of the boards proclaimed, "For a fear free America, try absolute unselfishness." Jim Newton suggested adding two words to make it read: "For a fear free America tomorrow, try absolute unselfishness today."
- (8) Two alcoholics, Bill Wilson and Bob Smith, were changed in the thirties through Buchman's program, attended weekly meetings for two years in New York and Akron, met each other in 1935 through the Oxford Group network, formed AA, and codified

⁶Eastman, chairman of the organizing committee for the MRA rally, had been one of the LA civic leaders who twenty years earlier had selected the site for the Bowl's construction.

Buchman's life changing principles into the Twelve Steps. National magazine articles linked the two movements in the public mind.

It was Straus who coined a concept quoted afterwards for years: "Every one has some MRA—from two to ninety percent. The job is to up the percentage." It was he who also persuaded Buchman to announce at the 1939 Bowl meeting that the MRA objective was "100 million people listening to God by December 1." Frank liked the way Manny thought in global terms. The East Indies especially intrigued Straus. He asked me to inform him of the population numbers. He figured more people could be reached there than in any geographical area.

However, the two powerful personalities developed strains. Frank began to feel manipulated. He suspected Manny might be more interested in image than in performance. The publicist too developed frustrations. One day a lieutenant brought Frank word that Manny wanted to come to help with more planning. "You tell him," Frank responded, "that he is welcome to come and plan for Manny. That comes before planning for anything else." The two parted company.

It was during this period, at a Los Angeles civic luncheon, that a city councilman said, "It is good that Dr. Buchman is bringing God to Los Angeles. I am sure that is easier than bringing Los Angeles to God."

At a meeting in the Middle West that summer one of the participants was Jessie Joy, a big, plain-spoken woman who taught in a one-room school in Salem, Nebraska. She gave a remarkable account of an outburst of honesty in the farm welfare program in her area. It was such a moving narrative that Frank immediately invited her to travel west, where she told her story to 30,000 people in the Hollywood Bowl, having never before

addressed a larger audience than nine school children. Some one from the Frank Capra organization must have been at the Bowl that night, as a strikingly similar story to Jessie's soon turned up in the movie *Meet John Doe*.

Mae West

A final publicity dollop came in 1939 after the Hollywood Bowl meeting. A sensationalized interview between Frank Buchman and Mae West was splashed across the world.⁷ Either she or her agent telephoned Buchman and said she would like to talk with him about his work. Frank was rather unclear as to who she was. His top aide, Morris Martin, noted she was the leading sex symbol of the period, recently banned from the air for her overly suggestive Eve on a radio program. Frank decided to go ahead. There was something of the Woman at the Well about the prospect.

He would not know this, but it was believed at the time in Hollywood circles that underneath her flamboyant public persona, Mae was in some kind of genuine spiritual search. She told Frank that by providing her male audience with fantasies on the screen, viewers would not have to reenact them in private. Whether she believed this, it made good conversation with the soul surgeon. He probably reacted with his usual comment, "Fine."

⁷*New York Herald Tribune*, August 19, 1939.

It was of course a made-to-order publicity set-up for Mae. Someone had thought to arrange for an AP photographer. The meeting took place in her Hollywood apartment. Frank brought along a half-dozen chaperones, a prudent mixture of ages and sexes. But the photographer was equal to the challenge. The front pages appeared showing just the two—she in a pink negligée and he in a gray business suit. The evangelist and the showgirl. A publicist's dream—for her. A bad news trap for him. The trivializers of his message were tossed another club.⁸

Susan and God

In 1951, Buchman was to mount a musical of his own on the Great White Way.⁹ But in 1937 he himself was the subject of a stage hit, *Susan and God*, which turned out to be Rachel Crothers' most successful play.¹⁰ Superstar Gertrude Lawrence played the title role. The story had Susan returning from England full of airy zeal for "Lady Wiggam's Movement." The playwright clearly had in mind the then highly publicized Oxford Group. Susan protests love for all, while ignoring her inebriate husband and lonely daughter. At the end, however, Miss Crothers had the grace to have Susan unite her family through a genuine apology for her selfishness. The Buchman idea, after a ninety-minute beating, triumphed in the final ninety seconds.

⁸The incident is described in a biography of Miss West by David Hanna, *Come Up and See Me Some Time* (New York: Belmont Tower Books, 1976), pp. 158-60.

⁹"Moral Re-Armament Presents 'Jotham Valley,' Musical Play," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 7, 1951. Also, "Cast Enjoys 'Jotham Valley,'" *Daily News* (New York), February 7, 1951.

¹⁰Rachel Crothers, *Susan and God* (New York: Random House, 1938).

The play received unusual motion picture treatment. Hollywood's foremost producer, Louis B. Mayer, enlisted his premier director, George Cukor, and signed up top names from his stable of stars—Joan Crawford, Rita Hayworth, and Fredric March. Mayer was probably trying to be helpful to Frank, but Hollywood's cynical trivialization turned the film into a disaster. Because MRA personnel were used in the picture and George Fraser's "Wise Old Horsey"¹¹ was the musical theme, Roger Hicks in India wondered whether the vehicle had been cleaned up sufficiently to be a positive weapon in Asia. He queried Buchman in the United States, "Do we support *Susan and God*?"

Frank cabled back, "Certainly not Susan."¹²

Tahoe Regroup

At the end of the decade Frank was not at all happy with his forces as they gathered in San Francisco in the spring of 1940. They were spinning their wheels. When their lackluster commitments at the World's Fair were completed, he invited the entire full-time force to a retreat at Lake Tahoe.¹³ The Kroll family had offered him their cottage at Al Tahoe, at the south end of the lake on the California side of the Nevada border.

¹¹Words and music by G. M. Fraser, Copyright 1937 all countries by Llew Weir Music Co., London. Reproduced inside back cover of *Rising Tide*, Oxford Group pictorial, New York, 1937. The theme has been used by NBC television as an intro for commercials during the national political conventions.

¹²For more detail on the filming of *Susan and God*, see Morris Martin, *Always a Little Further* (Tucson: Elm Street Press, 2001), pp. 95-97. *Ed.*

¹³Frank himself would never use a word like "retreat." He would prefer something that was more forward-looking.

Around this base Buchman built a sizeable camp. With the help of new-found friends like Frank Globin, a hotel man who formerly ran bootleg from Nevada to San Francisco, and Fred Bannister, owner of a primitive tent camp, Buchman found enough beds, hammocks, garages, lean-to's, and cottages to accommodate over a hundred people.

There at Tahoe he began to rebuild his force from the ground up. All plans were scrapped; all projects banned. For weeks he concentrated on nothing but the spiritual life of each member of the team. This was not the time to think up heavy thoughts. His only plan was to trust that his contribution to nations girding for war would emerge out of reborn people. His plan worked. It happened. There were some dramatic, and a number of not so dramatic conversions. The watershed experience resulted in rebirth in the lives of many individuals, particularly in the full-time force. It was a sort of "Great Awakening" among those responsible for the program. After Tahoe, Moral Re-Armament was something quite new.

It was the summer of 1940, and France had fallen to the German Wehrmacht. MRA families from Holland, France, and England arrived at Tahoe. Lady Rennell of Rodd and two daughters were en route to Canada in the program that provided a war haven for British women and children.¹⁴ Lottie von Beuningen, fiery Dutch dowager and women's leader, was urged to stay in the United States with the MRA force as the best way to strengthen the free world and save Holland. But she was determined to rejoin her countrymen in her homeland. She did, and there she generated some remarkable stories of redirecting the lives of occupying Nazi officers.

¹⁴See Michael Henderson, *See You After the Duration* (New York: Publish America, 2004).

A by-product of Tahoe was that from then on, major assemblies were do-it-yourself. From the days of the old houseparties, a resort hotel had usually been engaged. Tahoe taught the team self-sufficiency. From then on the group found their own quarters and did their own cooking and housekeeping.¹⁵

There was a burst of creativity in music, words, and drama. Morris Martin drafted *You Can Defend America*, a handbook for which General John J. Pershing broke a lifelong rule to write the foreword. It was to be printed in the millions, saturating war plants and armed forces units. An official War Department bulletin described the handbook as “possibly the most challenging statement of this nation’s philosophy of National Defense that has yet been written.”¹⁶

Richard Hadden, who as a student had composed the Rutgers University fight song, wrote a rouser, also entitled “You Can Defend America,” which became the theme song of a national defense stage show.

A number of musical skits effervesced for guests at Bunny Austin’s birthday party in August 1940. Both political parties

¹⁵Students of group dynamics might find here a portent of ossification. The acquisition of large conference properties in the U.S., Europe, and Asia absorbed increasing numbers of trained life-changers in maintenance tasks. Alcoholics Anonymous, whose leaders sometimes say they learned from their parent MRA what not to do, has never entangled itself with property ownership. J. Blanton Belk, while still CEO of MRA, and before he branched off to found Up With People, liquidated the U.S. conference centers in New York, Mackinac Island, and Los Angeles. Later he himself became bogged down with UWP-owned properties in Colorado.

¹⁶U.S. War Department, Bureau of Public Relations, 1941.

had nominated their candidates for the forthcoming presidential election. Morris Martin, one of our best writers, both serious and humorous, had the chorus singing:

Now Franklin D. may president be,
Or Willkie to the top go.
But if they want to see national unitee,
They'd both better come to Tahoe!

Visitors from Carson City and Reno said the show was good enough for the stage and invited it to their cities. A new weapon had been forged. It was Tahoe's biggest impact on Buchman's methodology—the birth of the stage as the medium for his message. Martin predicted that henceforth the major meetings would not emphasize speakers—as in the days of Royal Albert Hall, Birmingham Industries Fair, Madison Square Garden, Constitution Hall, Hollywood Bowl, Carnegie Hall, and the Metropolitan Opera House. Instead, plays and music would drive home the points.

He was an accurate prophet. There never again was a major speaking meeting. Never again would a George Copperman, Imperial Valley teamsters organizer, stand on a platform before 30,000 people, and tell how he established teamwork with the rifle-toting, big-business rancher G. G. Bennett of the Imperial Valley Associated Farmers.¹⁷ A vestige of this kind of witness was to be preserved in the presentation from the stage through a line-up of one-minute sound-bite testimonials just before the intermission. But that too was later phased out.

At the time, I was concerned with this trend in the work. Back in 1937, when *Rising Tide*, a one-shot pictorial magazine

¹⁷James E. Bassett, *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 1939.

which out-circulated *Life* the week it came out, was the object of all our efforts in the metropolitan centers of the east. I asked the central team what happened to our life-changing commitment to individual people? Three years later in the summer of 1940 at Tahoe, I made a rather impassioned plea to Frank and his top associates that the way to consolidate the great gains made by the big national thrusts was to move now into the personalized channels which had made our work distinctive. The idea was received with amused tolerance. One veteran of the Buchman wars stood up and said they were all grateful for the spiritual experience that Willard had received at Tahoe but that he would come around. The speaker and others had tried to change Frank in the twenties in South Africa, but realized it was they, rather than Frank, that needed the changing.¹⁸

The incident illustrates the unusual power the leader possessed. This power came not necessarily from anything he said. It probably did not come from anything he decided or was even more than vaguely conscious was happening. It was due to an intangible atmosphere he spontaneously created and a kind

¹⁸Frank had an effective way—perhaps contrived, perhaps ingenuous—of turning off the “corrective” some of his biographers claimed he desired. Sherry Day, who had traveled with Frank for twenty years and who left him before Shoemaker did, journeyed from Amherst, Virginia, to Washington, DC, at some cost of pride and travel, hoping to clear things up in Christian fellowship. Frank’s response: “Sherry will convict Frank, the more the better.” With a big smile, Buchman then joined friends in another room. Sherry said, “Frank, that’s not what I came for,” and returned to Virginia. He had been there a total of ten minutes. (Recorded interview with Sherwood Day, Amherst, Virginia, September 1973, in TWH files.) On one of my own periodic sorties with Frank, he said with a big smile, “You’re going to change Frank.” (Buchman often spoke of himself in the third person.) I answered, “That is exactly my purpose.” But in the atmosphere he could create, the whole idea was seen as preposterous. One of his lieutenants heard about it and asked me, “Who do you think you are, taking up things with Frank?”

of automatic dynamics. It was also a result of the impressive successes that Frank's guidance generally produced. There was an underlying assumption that dissent laid one open to Gamaliel's warning, "lest haply you be found even to fight against God." (Acts 5:30) A. J. Russell wrote, "Whatever he does he feels must be right, since he is doing what is the guided thing for him to do."

As noted, the Tahoe experience was a turning point for the team. It certainly was one for me. I have never been the same. Buchman had been chewing away at me. In the spring of 1940 in Florida he was telling the team that I was no more prepared to lead his objectives in the Midwest than the man in the moon.

Soon after the arrival at Lake Tahoe, he told me in assertive tones that I was a "stubborn and bull-headed Minnesotan," and that either I changed or had better find something else to do. I have been told by old timers that they had never heard him say that to anyone else. His words were a relief to me. I had quit law school to give full time to the program when I had but seven months between me and a degree from one of the world's most prestigious institutions. Here was my chance to go back. I had done my Mormon-length two years of missionary work. Now I was free again to take up my career and remount the ladder of success.

In three days all of this changed. Something quite new happened to me. I believe that what I personally decided was definitely something beyond my control. There were however steps that led up to it.

First were two books which Frank was urging us all to read. One was a classic by Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*. At the outset she is clear:

Consecration, abandonment, whatever word we use, we mean an entire surrender of the whole being to God; spirit, soul, and body placed under His absolute control, for Him to do with us just what He pleases. We mean that the language of our soul, under all circumstances, and in view of every act, is to be, "Thy will be done." We mean the giving up of all liberty of choice. We mean a life of inevitable obedience. To a soul ignorant of God, this may look hard. But to those who know Him, it is the happiest and most restful of lives.

Another key book was *How to Live the Victorious Life* by "An Unknown Christian".

Second, I did indeed make that surrender. I had been brought up in an intensely Christian home. Having drifted from that, I heard in the thirties from a missionary back from China a challenge to give everything. That experience led me to tell God I would do whatever God asked for the rest of my life.

When I met representatives of the Buchman program during my final month in college, I was convinced that theirs was the best vehicle for carrying out this commitment. I went on to law school for two years, but then cut all professional ties and in the fall of 1938 threw in my lot with the group.

When I arrived at lake Tahoe in 1940, I had run out of gas. I was mobilizing my talents to do God a favor. There was minimum juice or power.

All of this changed when I discovered I had it upside down. I was no longer to put heroic human effort into trying to make the world better. I was to become nothing but a "Minnesota cow pie." I was to be a part of nature. I was to be like a pine needle and do nothing but hang in the wind and be blown around by

whatever controlled the pine tree. At that point I decided that I was nothing, and God was everything.

There was an explosion. No longer did I have any fear. No longer did I feel inferior to fellow human beings or superior to other creatures. No longer would I have a brilliant plan of my own. From then on I was surrendered to whatever the Creative Force had in mind.

My relation with Frank was instantly remade. He had an uncanny sense of whether you were in or out of what he called “power.” At once he noticed me. Immediately I stepped into equality with him—not in terms of talent or accomplishment, but in terms of our respective relation to the Source of the power. From then on I treated him like anybody else, a fellow sinner who needed friendship, camaraderie, and the recognition that we were both in need of saving grace. For me Tahoe was the great leveler.

Whether I was right or wrong, it was this release that enabled me to raise the questions I did with this unusual person and to be a good friend for the rest of his life.

There is an interesting footnote to this story. A year later in June 1941 at a hotel in Plymouth, Massachusetts, we were in another re-group mode, preparing for an assault on the state of Maine. Frank was in his best look-ahead form. This was the month of headlines proclaiming that Henry Ford had decided not to shut down his plants in defiance of the labor unions but to become the first big automaker to sign every demand the UAW-CIO made. I was in a rather depressed mood by that time. Frank noticed this and either was trying to give me a boost or was subconsciously recalling things I said at Tahoe. He looked at me and told the group at least twice, “I want you to keep prophesying, Willard. Prophecy!”

It was the Tahoe experience in 1940 that changed everything around for me, including, as I say, my relationship with Frank. More than one person asked me, with a tinge of jealousy, how I did it. It is difficult to analyze anything so intangible. But at Tahoe I became convinced that we were all clods together. Each of us had different callings and abilities, to be sure, but we were all alike just the same. There never was any question that Frank's sensitivities and skills and vision were something extraordinary. But I accepted what he himself insisted, that he really had nothing to do with it.

This left me free to talk to him like any other sinner, tell jokes, comment on politics, and take up with him items where I thought he made a mistake. This approach was unthinkable for almost anyone else around him, who took the position that the king could do no wrong.

My impression was that most of the team did not see Frank as having any needs. He was always supplying theirs, and most viewed that as the accepted flow chart. What I found helpful in my relationship with him was that I tried to cut through the "great spiritual leader" concept and perceived him as a human being—an unusual human being to be sure—but a human being all the same, with the ordinary human needs of fellowship and perspective, which I tried to supply.

I must add that he did not always accept advice. I won on a few small points, and struck out on the bigger ones.

My biggest strike-out was my request that he reconsider his treatment of Sam Shoemaker. Sam's concern was that Frank had been so bent on the world picture, that he was slipping away from the basic personal life changing impact that had got the work going in the first place.

Start With Myself

Our problems all have one thing in common: the erroneous belief that the great task before us is that all we need to do is come up with ingenious structures, new institutions, and regulations, without ever attempting to change anything in ourselves or in the habitual motives and stereotypes of our behavior. As in everything else, I must start with myself.

VACLAV HAVEL

Chapter 24

War, Peace, and Nobel

Following the Hollywood Bowl meeting in July 1939, Buchman led the Second World Assembly for Moral Re-Armament the last ten days of that month in Monterey, California. (The first had been in Switzerland the year before.) Following this event, his forces moved one hundred miles north for the officially designated “MRA Days” at the San Francisco World’s Fair of 1939.

The Buchman program would not again achieve the public attention reached in 1939. In September the globe was plunged into war. Nothing in the world would ever be the same.

There was an inevitable let-down. By the beginning of 1940, Buchman was in a stage of some depression. Like the saints of old with their dry periods, he had difficulty determining what God’s guidance was for him and for his team. No one knew what course the war would take. All his European operations were threatened. An ancient nation like France might not survive. New directions were demanded. But what? Frank included me in a group accompanying him for a period of re-assessment in Stuart, Florida, in February 1940. Clearly he was waiting and reaching.

He was hoping to visit Joseph Kennedy, back from his post as ambassador to London’s Court of Saint James, and resting at his winter home in Palm Beach. Already the Kennedys were casting their charms over the nation. “The great thing about sending Joe to London,” President Roosevelt had told reporters when announcing the appointment, “is that you get eleven ambassadors for the price of one.”

But the senior Kennedy patronizingly put Buchman off on a phone call. "Well, we didn't quite pull it off, did we?" Joe observed. It riled Frank. He was unhappy when anyone wrote him down as another peacenik. His program with Kennedy would have been not to commiserate over how they had failed to stop war but rather to plan how to regroup for producing national and international strength. War was upon us. That was the reality. It was time for new measures.

But there was neither peace nor war for the United States. Frank was also upset with his old friend, retired Princeton professor Philip Marshall Brown, and associates, who through the Atlantic Union movement were trying to get the country into the war as quickly as possible.

A short-term immediate direction shortly emerged in the form of another invitation from the San Francisco World's Fair. The 1939 exposition had been successful enough to warrant a repeat in 1940.

Buchman had exclaimed at a civic luncheon on an earlier visit to the city of the Golden Gate, "What bridge builders these San Franciscans are!" symbolically linking the Bay's sweeping spans with his own program for interracial and international bridges between people of all races, classes, and nations.¹

¹The MRA song that achieved virtually official status in the thirties was "Bridge Builders":

*On sure foundations build we God's new nations;
Strong and clear tells each year of new-bridged relations.
As land reaches to land, on a world front will we stand,
And build together what none shall sever,
Bridges from man to man the whole round earth to span.*

Words by John M. Morrison, music by George M. Fraser (New York: Carl Fisher, 1936).

Interestingly, another “Bridges” was in the headlines. Harry Bridges, the West Coast longshoremen’s boss, was perennially up for deportation to his native Australia as an alien suspected of being subversive. At one point, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the prosecutor asked him, “Is it not true that you receive the *Daily Worker*, *New Masses*, and other Communist literature regularly?” “Yes,” said Bridges, “and I receive the *Moral Re-Armament* literature regularly, too.” It was a kind of recognition, by a keen student of affairs, of where at the time the ideological fulcrum lay.

Some of the shipowners saw possibilities of teamwork on the waterfront through MRA, especially the president of the port employers group, Frank Foisie.²

A harbinger of new directions was a labor-management conference in Brookdale, California, in the late spring of 1940.³ The meeting turned up some steelworkers’ leaders who backed Buchman for life.

Although there had been some sporadic activity in the labor field before, Brookdale may fairly be said to be the beginning of the rather spectacular industrial teamwork successes that marked the Buchman program for the next twelve years.

United Nations

As the war wound down, the nations began envisioning a world body which could keep the peace. A. R. K. (Archie) Mackenzie, a young Scottish diplomat with the British Foreign Service, had attended all the organizational planning sessions

²Foisie’s son Jack became a foreign correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*.

³See Chapter 9, “Labor”, p. 59.

that resulted in the United Nations, beginning even before the Dumbarton Oaks meetings in Washington. He had originally come to America in 1939 to study at Harvard and the University of Chicago. His academic field was international relations “with special reference to the influence of Moral Re-Armament.” The war prevented completion of his thesis. His speeches in a score of international conferences, however, have documented the subject.⁴ For the rest of Buchman’s life, Archie was a major source of intelligence and consultation on the international situation.

Archie had a great Scottish sense of humor. One of his notable stories was about a train ride during World War II. A young diplomat and two British army generals shared a carriage. Noting his civilian dress, they started making comments to each other about how all able-bodied young men should be serving their country in uniform. At length the young man burst out, “Gentlemen, I can’t help overhearing your remarks. I want you to know that I am in the British Foreign Service. And if it were not for the British Foreign Service, you wouldn’t have your damned war!”

I had known Archie since Harvard days. The handsome Scot attended most major MRA assemblies for thirty-five years. Because of his considerable gifts of diplomacy and diction, he was generally called on at the close of each conference to evaluate how the “three things we have seen here” related to the world scene.

Just as Buchman between wars tried to help regenerate the League of Nations, so at World War II’s end he saw the potential in the plans for a future United Nations. He believed

⁴A. R. K. Mackenzie, *Faith in Diplomacy* (London, Grosvenor, 2003).

at the same time that the human element was the key. At many conferences, Archie said, the problems *around* the table got in the way of solving the problems *on* the table. Treaties and agreements and peacekeeping machinery would fail unless people found new motivations.

Garth Lean cites Buchman's planning in 1945 for the United Nations organizing conference as an illustration of the uncanny psychic powers of the man. He notes that Frank booked a theater in San Francisco for *The Forgotten Factor* on specific dates in June, six months before it was known that the first UN conference would be held there. It was this kind of extraordinary "coincidence," attributed to the guidance of God, that drew and held many to his side throughout his career.

Numbers of UN delegates attended the play in San Francisco and heard the testimony of how national and international problems had retreated before the assault of Buchman's program. Mackenzie was influential in bringing representatives into the hall. Carlos P. Romulo of the Philippines was a key figure and spoke to one of the audiences of how he had lost his resentment against the British and had withdrawn a road-block resolution as a result of his friendship with Archie and Buchman associate Ray Purdy.

Alger Hiss was general secretary of the preparatory United Nations Conference on International Organizations (UNCIO). Some of those who were with Buchman in San Francisco say he met Hiss one day, had no idea who he was, reacted intuitively, and warned his people against him. There has been speculation as to the respective influence of these two men on the UN's formulation.

President Truman, only two months in office, stayed during the UN founding conference at the Fairmont Hotel on Nob Hill.

The reason may be partly due to Buchman introducing Truman in 1939 to George Smith, manager of the Fairmont and the Mark Hopkins hotels. It was in that year that Truman had delivered an MRA radio broadcast from the Fairmont. The Missourian, generally loyal to his associations, made the Fairmont his stop when thereafter he visited San Francisco.

Nobel Peace Prize

Frank Buchman was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize of 1951, and again in 1952. His name was advanced for the award by a dozen parliaments. Other honors were accorded the Pennsylvanian for his influence in international affairs. Tom Driberg, a dedicated opponent, writes, "he had been photographed with and decorated by more monarchs, statesmen, and other potentates than any other religious leader except, possibly, the Pope."⁵ France made him a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. West Germany bestowed on him the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit; and Japan, the Order of the Rising Sun. Other nations giving him their highest honor were: Greece; Republic of China, (Grand Cordon of the Brilliant Star); the Philippines, (Legion of Honor with Gold Medal); Thailand, Knight, (Grand Cross of the Crown); and Iran.⁶

Daniel A. Poling, *Evening Bulletin*, March 29, 1951, p. 21, syndicated column: "As the founder and inspired leader of this movement which has changed the lives of tens of thousands of men and women and affected world affairs, Dr. Buchman more than any living person deserves the Nobel Peace Prize in 1951."

⁵Driberg, *The Mystery of Moral Re-Armament*, p. 18.

⁶*New York Times*, August 9, 1961.

Reasons for Nobel Peace nominations are not announced. But a European expert on Russian affairs, Dr. Hans Koch, adviser to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in the German-Russian negotiations, outlined five reasons why Buchman might have qualified:

- (1) foundations for new trust between Germany and France;
- (2) unity between Japan and her neighbors in southeast Asia;
- (3) interracial unity and moral basis of self-government in Africa;
- (4) moves helping the Islamic world build a bridge between East and West; and
- (5) racial teamwork in the United States.

Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi made an MRA-inspired tour of southeast Asia, apologized for what the Japanese had done in places like the Philippines, offered reparations, and laid groundwork for trade agreements.⁷

Former Mau Mau leaders and white settlers were both represented at Buchman's funeral. They had been reconciled through MRA in East Africa.⁸ Nnamdi Azikiwe said the absence of violence in the transition to his nation's freedom was largely due to his insistence on "not who's right but what's right" for Nigeria, plus key apologies to militant rivals.

⁷See text of Kishi's speech at Caux, 1961, *MRA Pictorial*, Autumn 1961, pp. 10-11.

⁸See "I See Hope in Kenya," by Nahashon Ngare, *MRA Pictorial*, Spring 1961, p. 14.

Mohammed Masmoudi, Tunisian minister of information in the early sixties, said, "MRA has saved Tunisia from a war without mercy with France."⁹

The color barrier was downed in the entrances and the orchestra section for the first time in a major Atlanta theater in 1958 during the run of MRA's *The Crowning Experience*. The play, starring Muriel Smith, dramatized the life of Mary McLeod Bethune, the pioneer black educator and consultant to Presidents. Bethune had said, "To be part of this great uniting force of our age is the crowning experience of my life."

The Associated Press photo of Daisy Bates, militant Arkansas black leader, who was active in desegregating Little Rock schools, shaking hands in reconciliation with Governor Orval Faubus, went around the world. The CBS review of 1959 called it the most significant news event of the year. Mrs. Bates said seeing *The Crowning Experience* in Atlanta moved her to take the step.

⁹See *MRA Pictorial*, Spring 1961, p. 30.

Chapter 25

Power Centers — Mackinac Island and Caux

In 1941 and 1942 *You Can Defend America*, the wartime stage revue promoting national unity, was widely welcomed by state and local civil defense councils throughout the east, south, and middle west. The entourage made a 36,000 mile tour through 21 states, usually playing to packed houses, totaling some 250,000 people.

In the spring of 1942 the show played extensively in southern Michigan, notably in Detroit's Masonic auditorium. Top industrial players like Henry Ford and Victor Reuther of the United Auto Workers attended. It became clear to many that a force was being let loose that was raising morale in industries and communities. Comments were made by civic leaders like, "We had some idea what we were fighting against. Now we have seen what we are fighting for." Strikes were shortened or called off, absenteeism went down, and production went up. When race riots broke out in Detroit that year, they found that the schools where there was no violence were the ones where the *You Can Defend America* handbook had been distributed.

A by-product of all this was an interest in training people in the new concepts. A few hours of an evening could only mean an introduction. An extended time could make possible longer-range effects. Michigan's was one of the many state civil defense councils sponsoring the thrust. They offered the Island House, an abandoned hotel on Mackinac Island (pronounced "Mack-inaw") for a dollar a year. The team moved in. It was July 1942.

Frank said that Clara Ford, thinking he needed a rest, had urged him to establish a summer base in northern Michigan. The Fords had a place in Ironwood, Michigan, Upper Peninsula,

where Henry had vast timber holdings. I recall Frank going down to the shore at Mackinac when the Fords were expected to be going by in a big Ford-owned ore carrier. The Seiberling family, who had backed this work in Akron, sometimes summered in Les Cheneaux Islands (“The Snows”) in northern Lake Huron.

Warner Clark and I were in on the Island House negotiations in Lansing led on our side by Howard C. Blake, in conferences with the State’s Defense Council (Wendell Lund), the Mackinac Island Park Commission (Wilfred M. “Bill” Doyle), and the governor’s office (C. W. Lucas). Full support for the effort was given by the two commercial power brokers on the island, W. Stewart Woodfill of the Grand Hotel,¹ and Otto Lang of the Arnold Line. The latter company ran the chief ferry link to the mainland and was owned by Michigan Senator Prentiss Brown, whose home was in Saint Ignace.

Mackinac Island is what the late George A. Dondero, congressman from Royal Oak, Michigan said it was: “an emerald isle set in a sapphire sea.”

Mackinac Island’s beauty is legendary, its history impressive. One can walk around its nine miles of shoreline in three hours. It is located on the Lake Huron side of the Straits of Mackinac, six miles east of the bridge linking Michigan’s two peninsulas. Long a center for Indian trading and worship, the island’s first white visitors were Jesuit missionaries. A statue of Father Marquette dominates the park on the harbor. The old fort on the bluff long controlled Great Lakes traffic and at various times flew the French, the British, and the American flags. In the nineteenth century John Jacob Astor established headquarters

¹Woodfill was to become the driving force in convincing Michigan to build the Straits of Mackinac Bridge, which was dedicated in 1958.

for his North American fur trade there and put Robert Stuart in charge.

The island made medical history when Dr. William Beaumont, the fort's army doctor, was able to observe for the first time the human digestive process through a hole in an Indian fur trader's abdomen, caused by a bar-room brawl gunshot wound that failed to close. The *Reader's Digest* told the story under the title, "The Window in St. Martin's Stomach."

Autos are not allowed on Mackinac Island. All transportation is by horse and buggy (or wagon), bicycle, or shanks' mare. The streets are lined with souvenir and candy shops. Walk-around tourists are called "fudgies."

When MRA turned over its Mackinac Island plant to subsidiary Mackinac College, the location difficulties permitted it a life of only four years, 1966-70. The plant was then sold to Akron TV evangelist Rex Humbard. Even with all his media promotion capacities, he was able to keep his college there for only one year.

In August 1942 the first assembly to be held at Mackinac Island was opened with the world premiere of what became MRA's most successful stage play, Alan Thornhill's *The Forgotten Factor*. It was an industrial drama demonstrating the key to teamwork within and between families on both sides of an industrial strike. This play—together with a Canadian show, *Pull Together Canada*—was presented to a large crowd at Mackinac's premier convention center, the Grand Hotel ("the longest porch in the world"). Following the performances, Wilfred M. Doyle, Chairman of the Island's Park Commission, took the stage and said, "You have brought a new spirit to the entire north country. We hope you will make Mackinac Island your permanent national headquarters."

We did. In time, a magnificent conference center for a thousand people, complete with television facilities unsurpassed between New York and Hollywood, was erected between the birches and the seagulls. But not with any help from Bill Doyle. It was the last kind word he ever said about MRA. From then on it was as though he made it his life aim to remove this force. The cause of his animus has never been clear. Since he was a professional lobbyist in Lansing for a broad spectrum of interests—chain stores, beverages, motion pictures (and these were just the tip of the iceberg)—some suspected he might have feared a statewide clean-up if MRA ever really got going in Michigan.

Whatever his motives, Doyle's opposition was virulent and skillful. He kept MRA's Mackinac operation always in turmoil. In the courts and the legislature we were in a constant battle. As the legal representative of MRA in Michigan during those years, I was privy to a good deal of the in-fighting. Doyle was not the kind of influence peddler who confined his leverage to friendly persuasion in Lansing bars. He could make or break law makers through economic forces in their home constituency, even to removing them from office. Five out of seven powerful Michigan House Committee Chairmen who spoke favorably of MRA on the floor in the spring of 1947 did not come back after the 1948 election. Doyle's position in Michigan was reminiscent of a contemporary lobbyist in California of whom then governor Earl Warren said, "On matters that affect his clients, Artie Samish unquestionably has more power than the Governor."²

But Bill Doyle failed to remove MRA from Mackinac. Other forces did it for him. And when the assemblies ceased, and the

²*Collier's*, August 13, 1949, p. 13.

successor Mackinac College finally folded, that aging Irishman with the golden voice, sitting in his rocking chair on the bluff, must have felt some quiet satisfaction that he finally outlasted Moral Re-Armament on Mackinac Island.

In 1942, during World War II, a Swiss diplomat, Philippe Mottu, and a Swiss businessman, Robert Hahnloser, visited Mackinac Island. There they planned with Frank Buchman for a similar conference operation in Europe. The result was the international MRA/IofC center at Caux, Switzerland. Thousands of Europeans, particularly Swiss, made considerable personal sacrifices to purchase the hotel there.

It was a luxury resort in the old days, which was used to house civilian refugees during World War II and also served as an internment camp for escaped prisoners of war. The operation had fallen on hard times postwar, and was badly run down.

The new managers changed the name from Caux Palace to the “Mountain House” modeled on the “Island House” at Mackinac.

Opened in 1946 immediately after the war’s close, it became a focus for postwar reconciliation, credited by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a Washington think tank, as having played a significant role in French-German reconciliation, leading to the coal and steel pacts, and ultimately to European Union. (See Chapter 6).

Only Once in a Thousand Years

Five Buddhist monks on their first venture out of Asia traveled 6,000 miles to present their message to Frank Buchman. The occasion was his eighty-third birthday, June 4, 1961, two months before he died. It had been the first time such a tribute had been given to a person in the West.

Their leader, Sayadaw U Narada, General Secretary of the Presiding Abbots' Association, communicated their belief in this revelation:

ONLY ONCE IN A THOUSAND YEARS
IS SUCH A MAN BORN ON THIS EARTH.

Chapter 26

The Final Curtain

By the spring of 1941, danger signals went up on Frank's health front. Heretofore the man seemingly had limitless energy. Now atypical fatigue was showing up, and his eyes were redder. Dr. Irene Gates, with a lively mid-Manhattan medical practice, had for a decade been applying Buchman principles with interesting results to her clientele.¹ Frank was one of her patients whenever he came to New York. She detected a heart condition and battled with some success to keep him rested. He was approaching sixty-three. Irene was one of the few who would on occasion be stern with him. Once after he had dressed down some of his team in a considerable burst of temper, she read him the riot act. She made it quite clear that if he wished to live, he would have to stop that sort of explosion. He was more careful, but danger lurked.

The Stroke

In the fall of 1942, while visiting Saratoga, New York, Frank Buchman suffered a severe stroke. It nearly took his life. He was permanently crippled. He never again could use his right hand. From then on he walked with a limp.

It was a traumatic experience, not only for him but also for the whole fellowship. John Roots told me of being present at that time and crying copiously over the prospect of life without Buchman. Frank summoned his closest friends to his bedside. He noted there were twelve. He said his farewells. But the time was

¹Irene Gates, *Any Hope, Doctor?* (London: Blandford Press, 1954).

not yet. People all over the world prayed around the clock for his recovery. In Washington we organized his friends into prayer teams and asked them to volunteer for time slots. During that week there was never a minute—day or night—when some persons in the nation’s capital were not on their knees praying for Frank. Finally he turned the corner. His guidance was he would have another twenty years. He missed the prediction by only twelve months.

From then on, however, his leadership was quite different. Garrett Stearly, one of his earliest associates from the twenties, noted a change in leadership style after the stroke, requiring “parameters of judgment of quite a different order from Buchman’s work up to 1942.”² There was probably thenceforth an unrealistic submission to an ill man. Habits of accepting infallibility did not change. No one turned up with a mode of inspiration which could in any way supplement, let alone replace, what the team had known as the central guiding force. Until his dying breath Frank Buchman remained in complete charge of the work he founded.

He devoted years to recovering his strength at various health centers. He attributed the stiffened fingers of his right hand to an “inexpert masseur” at Hot Springs, Arkansas. He spent a great deal of time in bed. In the summers at Mackinac he occupied the old Webster cottage, the residence of one of Fort Mackinac’s early commanding generals, ancestor of Frank Buchman and of CIA’s William Webster. The house during that period, was thus the world headquarters of Moral Re-

²Garrett Stearly, “The Man Who Would Change the World,” unpublished 23-page informal memo to TWH, September 1973.

Armament.³ He received a stream of people through his room. Personal and family problems and decisions, national problems and decisions, world problems and decisions, all handled with humor, warmth, caring for individual people, an unquestionable sure touch, and a contagious zest for living.

In 1952-53, Buchman headed a special mission in Asia.

In Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Buchman articulated the union of the material and the spiritual for which he had always striven. Standing in the puddles of a rice field, he said that world changing through life changing would mean that,

Empty stomachs will be filled with food, empty
hands with work, and empty hearts with an
idea that really satisfies.⁴

The following year he announced he would make a similar tour of Africa. I applied to be a part of the entourage. However, Frank's strength was not up to participating himself. I was accepted and was gone from home nearly twelve months in 1953-54. It was a thoroughly rewarding experience, which I have drawn on ever since.

In his final years Frank was increasingly unhappy about the spiritual level as well as the ideological performance of his force. During his last summer, 1961, he drew the full-time team to be

³When new buildings and embassies had been acquired in various capitals of the world, we would discuss among ourselves which was now the world headquarters of MRA—London, New York, Washington, Los Angeles? C. Scoville (Sciff) Wishard, puckish Penrod out of Indianapolis and Williams College, said with a big grin, "The world headquarters of Moral Re-Armament is wherever Frankie is."

⁴He repeated the concept in his New Year's Day address to members of the Indian Parliament in New Delhi. Also see, "MRA Supplement," *The Hindu*, (Madras), March 12, 1953.

with him in Caux. He gathered his own strength in one last effort to stoke up the fires. Perhaps he prayed for a Tahoe-type rebirth, which had resulted in such a blossoming of his force twenty-one years earlier.

Buchman concentrated particularly on the ones he called “my beloved Americans.” They included the stalwart troubadours who had been with him from the very beginning, drawn from the Atlantic seaboard colleges following the close of World War I. Why were they such yes-men? Why were they so uninspired? They and he assumed it was their fault. It would not occur to anyone that much of it was his.

The veterans manfully dredged up shortcomings and peccadillos they could share. This had been the avenue to spiritual power in the old days. But nothing clicked. It was the end of the line. Finally, his heart bruised, the old warrior departed. “If they will not go my way,” he said, “maybe they will do better going theirs.”

It was reminiscent of the final heartbreak of Mahatma Gandhi when his people at the end of his life abandoned nonviolence. North Frank journeyed to the Black Forest, to the wooded lanes where he had been infused with the big thoughts. In Freudstadt, he wrote, “Here God first spoke to you about Moral Re-Armament. Here you will lay down your life and die.”

On August 7, 1961 he did.

He was 83. His last words, according to Peter Howard who was with him were,

“I want Britain to be governed by men governed by God. Why not the whole world governed by men governed by God?”

World statesmen, including Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman, and the King of Morocco, sent cables. Among them was this from President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam:

It is with deep emotion that I have heard the news of the passing of a great friend of Viet Nam, Dr. Frank Buchman . . . At a time when humanity is dangerously threatened by the onrush of godless materialism, our consternation is deep at the loss of a man who has contributed so much to the fight for the defense of freedom and human dignity, and the genuine values of our civilization.

On August 18th in Allentown's Fairview Cemetery, the body of Frank Buchman was with loving hands, mine among them, lowered into the Pennsylvania earth from which he had sprung.

One week earlier, on the floor of the United States House of Representatives, eleven Members had spoken in tribute. In addition to their own words, they read messages from eight prime ministers or heads of state.

One of the most senior members of the House, Charles E. Bennett of Florida said,

History has been written,
and written better,
because of this man.

Frank's life was a testimony to the challenge of George Washington:

Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair. The event is in the hand of God.

He did a pretty good thing. Few have done so much for so many.

It is not finished.

The event is in the hand of God.

Author's Note

The core of this book began as a thesis for a Master's Degree at Andover Newton Theological School in 1977. The original is on file in the School's library.

The work has undergone many revisions since that time. Days and months were spent in evaluating how it could be transformed into a piece of wider understanding beyond its original theological purposes. Finally the decision was made to make it into two presentations: (1) *How to Kick the War Habit*; and (2) an evaluation of the Frank Buchman legacy, its impact and its promise, under the title *World Changing Through Life Changing*.

The author's first hand experience is with the Moral Re-Armament years. There is no attempt to review the developments since it became Initiatives of Change.

I trust that there is some evidence here and some directions indicated that may provide hope for a troubled world.

Appendix A

FRANK NATHAN DANIEL BUCHMAN

Born Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, June 4, 1878

Died Freudenstadt, Germany, August 7, 1961 age 83

Buried Allentown, Pennsylvania, Fairview Cemetery

- 1740 Ancestors immigrated to eastern Pennsylvania from St. Gallen, Switzerland
- 1878 Born of Sarah Greenwalt and Franklin Buchman, grocer, restaurateur, Pennsylvania German
- 1892-94 Perkiomen School, Pennsburg
- 1894 Moves to Allentown family home at 117 N. 11th
- 1895 Allentown High School
- 1899 Graduates Muhlenberg College, Allentown
- 1902 Mount Airy Seminary, Philadelphia
- 1905 Establishes in Philadelphia the first Lutheran social service settlement in America - conducts hospice for poor boys
- 1908 Experiences a personal spiritual turn-around, Keswick, northern England
- 1909-16 Serves as YMCA secretary at Penn State, appointed through John R. Mott
- 1916-21 Part-time lecturer in evangelism, Hartford Seminary, with travel missions in Europe and Asia - meets Gandhi and Sun Yat-sen
- 1919 Forms First Century Christian Fellowship, soon known as The Groups
- 1921 Movement begun in students' rooms at Christ Church College, Oxford, develops during decade "houseparty" strategy with global aim of "world changing through life changing"
- 1926 Muhlenberg College Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree
- 1928 Oxford Group name first used - in South Africa
- 1930-38 Annual assemblies at Oxford University
- 1932 *For Sinners Only* by A. J. Russell, published by Harper, broad bookstore sales, anecdotal, stories of the man and the movement, numerous translations (probably the model for AA's "Big Book")
- 1932-34 First continent-wide campaigns establishing national movements in United States and Canada
- 1933 First major meeting with League of Nations delegates, hosted by Carl J. Hambro, president of the League and of the Norwegian Parliament
- 1934-37 National penetrations, Scandinavia and Holland
- 1935 Alcoholics Anonymous founded by Oxford Group members, New York and Akron (severed connections 1939)
- 1936 North American assembly, Stockbridge, Massachusetts
- 1938 Moral Re-Armament (MRA) conceived, Freudenstadt, Germany; new name replaces "Oxford Group"
- First world assembly for Moral Re-Armament - Interlaken, Switzerland

- 1939 Mass meetings introduce MRA to USA - Madison Square Garden, Constitution Hall (DC), Hollywood Bowl. Senator Truman on platform with Buchman reads message from FDR
- 1940 Stage and screen strategy developed, Lake Tahoe
"You Can Defend America" handbook and stage presentation produced
- 1942 Mackinac Island, Michigan, conference center established
"You Can Defend America" inspires spinoffs "Battle Together for Britain," "Fight On, Australia" et al.
Gestapo warns of MRA
- 1946 Caux sur Montreux conference center established above Lake Geneva, becoming largest hotel operation in Europe—Konrad Adenauer and Robert Schuman among the thousands attending in its first years
- 1947-61 *Remaking the World*, Buchman's collected speeches, published - periodic updates, eleven languages
- 1950-52 Decorated by governments of France and Germany for contribution to postwar reconciliation between the two countries; also decorated by governments of Republic of China, Greece, Iran, Japan, Philippines and Thailand
- 1951 Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize, repeated 1952
National Airlines strike settled, Miami
- 1952 Addresses members of both houses of the Indian parliament, New Delhi
- 1956 Last major journey, Far East and around world
- 1959 Daisy Bates, Arkansas black leader, loses hate, shakes hands with Gov. Faubus
- 1961 Dies Freudenstadt, Germany, is buried in family plot Allentown
Peter Howard, British newsman, succeeds Buchman as world MRA leader
- 1965 Howard dies in Peru, no successor - leadership developed in each country
- 1967 *Up With People* launched by J. Blanton Belk
- 1976 Buchman home in Allentown opened to public by Lehigh County Historical Society
- 1977 Frank Buchman Centennial Year 1977-78 declared by Borough Mayor and Council of Pennsburg, Pennsylvania. Centennial Year also declared by Lehigh County Commissioners, Allentown
Plaque installed at Buchman birthplace, Pennsburg, May 28, 1977, to launch Centennial Year - plaque contributed by actor Joel McCrea, keynote address by Representative Charles E. Bennett, Florida, acting chairman House Armed Services Committee
- 1978 June 4 declared Frank Buchman Day throughout Pennsylvania by Gov. Milton J. Schapp
- 1978 Year-long Buchman Centennial celebrations, notably in Pennsylvania and Germany
- 1991 Pennsylvania Historical Marker installed by state representative at Pennsburg
Bust of Buchman by Minnesota sculptor Paul Granlund dedicated in Muhlenberg College boardroom, duplicate placed in Great Hall, Caux, Switzerland

Appendix B

A Hollywood Couple

John and Bonnie Green

The Greens provided one of the evening programs during the Moral Re-Armament Conference, "Making a World of Difference," held at Georgetown University, Washington DC, June 15-23, 1985. They presented their story by means of a rapid-fire dialogue.

Richard Ruffin introduced them:

John and Bonnie Green have been an inspiration to millions of Americans. John, also known as Johnny, has been an inspiration in the music and entertainment fields since the early 1930s. He is a graduate of Harvard University with a degree in Economics at the age of 19. For ten years he was the general music director and executive in charge of music at MGM Studios. Since 1973 he has been a member of the Songwriters' Hall of Fame. He is one of the very few non-actors with a star in Hollywood's Walk of Fame. Apart from his renowned catalog of international song hits, like *Coquette*, *I Wanna Be Loved*, *Body and Soul*, his symphonic works have been performed by major orchestras in the United States and abroad. He regularly appears as a guest conductor of most of the major symphony orchestras on the North American continent, including the Hollywood Bowl. He is a director of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers. For his work in such films as *Easter Parade*, *An American in Paris*, *West Side Story*, and *Oliver*, he has been nominated for fourteen Academy Awards and has won five. His wife, Bonnie, was internationally known as one of America's great swimmers, and gained additional world fame in films as one of MGM's six-foot-tall Glamazons. She met MRA in 1961 and is now a dedicated Christian counselor, specializing in marriage and family relations. One of her colleagues from Glamazon days says, "We had great fun in those days, but I can honestly say we have even greater fun now."

John: Now, despite that impressive introduction that Dick gave me, I'm a very realistic and very honest fellow. I'm not a face that is seen in everyday on national television. I know that there are some of you here that, when he was introducing me, said "Johnny Who?" I don't blame you. You may not know me, but I figure that if I could start the evening off by playing one of my songs that to this day is well-known internationally—How do I know it? My royalty statements—that's how I know it. [Laughter] I thought that this would give me perhaps a little bit more intimate identification to all of you. I hope you will recognize it. If you don't, please make believe you do. [Laughter]

[JG plays the piano and sings: ♪ "You came to me from out of nowhere, You took my heart and found it free. Wonderful dreams, wonderful schemes, from nowhere, made every hour sweet as a flower for me. ♪]

I have the feeling that now we know each other better, right? [Applause] Good. As we say along Tin Pan Alley, "By their songs ye shall know them, and if ye don't, God help them." [Laughter] Is it ever true! Now, what Bonnie and I are going to do this evening is some pretty heavy sharing. We're going to share with you the story of our married life. We're going to share with you the story of our married life, which has not been, throughout its long course, an ideal. And we're not going to pussyfoot on this stage. One of the things that we both learned in our contact and association with the ideals and people of MRA is that sharing is one of the best ways to purify the spirit and sustain other people; to engender trust, to encourage love, and to find security. And, selfishly, if you will, to feel less alone in a world that is inclined to make one lonely. So, we're not only going to share with you our story, but then we're going to try, as best we can, to relate what we've done to make a world of difference in our own lives together, to try to show to you how we felt that that might indeed apply to the WHY of our being here at this conference, endeavoring to make a world of difference on a far larger scale. That is our objective this evening—how far we will come along the way of achieving it rests Up There.

One of the things that Bonnie asked me to tell you about has to do with this inevitable flower of mine. Since 1926 I have never been seen anywhere without either a white or dark red carnation here. People ask me, "Why do you wear it?" Well, it is not because somebody close to me just died, or because I'm getting married tomorrow, or because I'm a floorwalker at Macy's [Laughter] or a head waiter. It is because there is something pristinely and simply beautiful and divine about a flower. And I started wearing this flower when I was a sophomore at Harvard, which was 1926, only 8 years after the end of the First World War. And there were those of us in our teens in those days who, like it or not, very much resembled the teenagers of the '60s. It was an ostensibly prosperous world at that

time. But there were those of us in our teens who didn't find it so beautiful, and who foresaw troubles coming that our much wiser and more experienced elders did not. And in a world that was, to me at that time, very harsh, very cruel, and potentially very ugly, I wanted something very beautiful close to me all the time. And that is why I started wearing a flower. And if you don't think that it took guts to wear a flower to lectures and classes, even at Harvard, you're crazy. [Laughter] But then, people wonder how it is, that no matter what time of the day or night, I'm seen, this flower is always so fresh. There is a very simple scientific and horticulturally valid answer to that question; and that answer is that I wear only carnations with extraordinarily long stems and I wear wet socks. [Laughter]

I am now going to introduce to you that remarkable lady, with whom God gave to me to share the major part of my life. Dick told you many things about her, but you're going to find out a lot more about her, and I think a lot more remarkable things about her, during the next little while. Ladies and gentlemen, the truly great honor of my life is to be able to say: I bring to you now my wife Bonnie. Well, the best way to start the story is to point up the enormous, really cataclysmic differences in Bonnie's and my backgrounds. I, an upper middle class Jewish intellectual from a very affluent New York City family; Bonnie, the lower middle class, total non-intellectual, erroneously so-called by Jewish people "Gentile" from a Southern California-to-Arizona-back-to-southern California family of very modest means. Add to that the improbable fellowship of a three-week, headlong dash into marriage, three-and-a-half weeks after our first date, before either of us really knew the other or in fact knew anything about one another, certainly the earthly or worldly odds against the success of this marriage, but to say the very least, heavenly. However, the condition of this union today, as it approaches its forty-second anniversary next November, professes that it is—it had to have been—a marriage that could only have been made in heaven. For certainly none of its original earthly attributes and characteristics could possibly have produced such an enduring and—so help me—loving marital relationship.

Bonnie: I stress the enormous contrast between John's upper middle class, highly intellectual, truly cosmopolitan background, and my own lower-middle class, totally non-intellectual, "All-American," decidedly non-cosmopolitan background, in a family headed by a bigoted alcoholic father. John was a fine student with a major artistic talent who had graduated from Harvard at age 19, with an economics degree, yet. While I was lucky to swim my way to a diploma in a Los Angeles high school. My only claims to fame were an athletic ability—which was rather a big one—and a physical beauty that I was blessed by God with. My early athletic and show business success resulted in my being both glamorized and very spoiled. The loss of my amateur athletics standing in the midst of my being trained by Johnny Weismuller for the 1936 Olympics showed my total lack of knowledge of what

a commitment was. First of all I broke his heart by not seeing that through, and I also had no idea what a commitment to marriage was.

John: And by the way, as it turned out, I didn't know the meaning of a marriage commitment either. Bonnie was my third wife. But I remind you—says he, defensively—that was almost 42 years ago. To make everything worse and more difficult, on her, principally, but on both of us, the fact that I was a dedicated, undeviating, compulsive workaholic, not only in my professional life, but also in my far-too-numerous socio-political and organizational involvements.

Bonnie: I had no interest whatsoever in politics, or doing anything for anyone else. I even voted the way John did, so that I wouldn't have to read newspapers and get involved. I really didn't care one way or the other why John was working. He was a liberal, left-of-center Democrat and I didn't know what that meant. I've found out a great deal since then. Then, there were our children. We had three daughters. Two that John and I had, and one that he had had with Betty Furness. I suppose some of you know her from Channel 4—she's a consumer advocate on the news. Because we had this domestic help, including a governess, neither one of us really knew our children. We were never home. We were on the A Group in Hollywood. We went to two parties a night at the time, and so we didn't really spend much time at home. We were both involved in our own things most of the time. Now, my own things were very devious. I had other men in my life because I thought I would get even with him, because of his being a workaholic. I would really do my own thing. And, uh—you'd better take it. Just for a minute, darling.

John: Well, what Bonnie didn't tell you—she should've said this—that neither of us had any really viable, honest, conception of what Truth really was. And she was [?not], because she knew that something was terribly wrong in her life. But her problem was that she couldn't put her finger on it.

Bonnie: Then I met Moral Re-Armament. And the first thing that I heard was Muriel Smith singing "That Old Rugged Cross." I was so hoping that she would sing it during this conference because no one sings it the way she does. I'll never forget that. That was a life-changer for me [*Amid prolonged applause*]. The other thing was Marie von Selm, who literally laid her life down for me, because once I was challenged, and I was told I should be the woman God meant for me to be, and I didn't know what that was. I hadn't had any contact with it whatsoever. My friends, which I had made very quickly in MRA, saw me through some very trying times. They helped me get started with Four Standards. They said, "Take four sheets of paper and write at the top of each one: Honesty. Purity. Unselfishness. and Love." So I did that and I've used reams of paper because I started equating my whole life under each of those. I began to see how little I really knew what life was all about.

John used to call me terribly selfish, and I couldn't understand that. I couldn't realize that I was selfish. But as I got through Honesty, began to be honest, I began to see that I'd been lying to myself, not only to other people around me. I used to carry big books under my arm so everyone would think I was brilliant. I didn't know what they said; I never really read them. So I had a very false front. Anyway, I know that God forgives me and He's given me the grace and the strength to begin to change in those things.

Now, the second thing that He began to talk to me about was asking forgiveness of everyone I had hurt. And in those Four Standards, I realized how many people I had failed. So I decided to start with my children first, and I went to each one, and I said, "Please forgive me for being the kind of a woman and the kind of a mother that I've been. I know I've failed you." Well, two of them didn't know what I was talking about—the two older ones-- they just said, "We know you had problems; we didn't know how to talk to you; it's okay, Mom." The youngest one said to me—she was fourteen at that time—she said I'll never forgive you, you'll never stop screaming, you'll always be the same old witch, you won't change and I won't forgive you."

I sit here now and tell you it took 17 years for her to do it. But she has done it, and we are now the best of friends in the whole world. Really, it's beautiful.

Another thing was, I finally got to John, and if you think that wasn't hard, I went to him and I thought I would tell him what only I wanted him to know, and the lights would all come on, and we would have a beautiful marriage. Instead of which, he became like a psychiatrist and he began to question me, and I wasn't prepared for that. To sit in a room and have these questions asked was terribly difficult, so we drove the car a lot. We drove two or three hours at a time, for something like five weeks, and he dug and he pulled, and before I knew it, everything was out. I had nothing buried, nothing left, concealed in there to feel guilty or frightened about. Well. That was what freedom is all about. I'd never felt so free in all my life. It was a wondrous feeling! The only trouble with that was, when I got free, I also became terribly self-righteous. I had a halo as big as the moon; it was so big.

John: Let me tell you something, if you know something about self-righteousness. They say that beauty is only skin-deep, and you can't judge a book by its cover, so don't judge a human being by his or her looks. That may be true, but beauty is not repulsive, either, I think you'd agree. Let me tell you about her in those days. You know, can you picture in your mind's eye those Amish women we see with their hair pulled back like this, and tied in a bun? [*Bonnie interpolates:* I used to wear it that way] **John:** She had no make up. I want to tell you, she became intolerably self righteous, thereby turning me off of MRA completely. And— far from incidentally— turning me off her, herself. [*Bonnie interrupts:* Now I'm going to interrupt again, because when God is in the center of things, He is faithful, believe

me. For six years we lived together after this confession of mine. He did not touch me, I never got a kiss on the cheek, a birthday card, or a Christmas card. But he didn't move out; he stayed with me. [*John interpolates*: Masochist, that's what I was— masochist. [*Laughter*]

Bonnie: Well, in all that self-righteousness, one day he yelled at me, "You have all the answers to everything!" And I cringed at that, because I really wasn't aware that I had gotten that self-righteous. All of our friends dropped us. You remember I said we were in the A party group, and we were at two parties every night? Now, no one was calling. We weren't invited any place, and people have always been very, very important to my husband. And he was hurting a lot. I was hurting, but not quite the same way; I was stubborn and determined that I was going to try to walk with the Lord, and try to get my life straightened out, and the Lord would take care of him in His time, later. So, sitting in church one Sunday, Louis Evans, who was preaching in the First Presbyterian Church in Washington, said in his sermon, "When God puts his hand on your shoulder, he'll cut away the people who are holding you back." Now, that was another very freeing thing for me, because I realized that the people we were spending our time with were the same kind of people I was trying to change from being. So I felt wonderful, you know, it didn't bother me at all that none of them were still around. I found that my friends in Moral Re-Armament were the kind of friends that everyone should have. I'll explain something a little bit later to you, about how I learned what that real friendship was. It's your turn.

[*John interpolates*: Don't tell me you're through? Bonnie laughs, Sure, I'm not, I'm not, I'm not. Anyway [*Laughter*] You see, when I work alone I don't have any trouble, but if I have to share it with him, I have to let him open his mouth once in a while, too. Anyway, [*John interpolates*, singing, ♪It ain't necessarily so♪] Anyway, he got an offer to do the film *Oliver* in England, and it would mean a two-year stay, and I had no idea what that would mean, because here, six years of no communication between us—he only spoke to me when he had to, but when he said to me, "Would you come to England with me?" and, "Would you find a home for us to live in for two years?" I thought, Oh God, you're giving me another chance. This is great, and I'm going to be the woman you want me to be. So I went ahead to England. He'd been over several times, setting up the studio—and I went over to find a house. I found a wonderful house: four stories, with a kitchen on the ground floor and a huge room on the top floor, which made a wonderful studio for him, that we put a piano in, and he'd play on weekends when he'd come home. He was only there on weekends, because it was so far out of town. Anyway, I thought I was going to be the wife that he really needed. About six months after we had been there I began to get a little thread through my guidance in the mornings: Keep your eyes and ears open. I stayed out of the house on weekends when he was working with his secretary—and on this one Sunday I came home to take them tea

in the afternoon. And when I got to the top of the stairs, the door was open just a little crack, and through it I heard sobs, and I saw him on his knees in front of his secretary, holding her, and she was sobbing her heart out. My teacups started to rattle, so I went back down the stairs to my bathroom, which was my prayer closet, and I said, Lord, what is that? Why? What's happening? And very loud and clear I heard His voice say, "Ask, don't point a finger, don't accuse him, just ask." So, that night I fixed a lovely dinner down on the ground floor, and I had a candlelight dinner for him, and I waited until dessert when I put my hand on his arm and I said, "Darling, is there something going on between you and Liz?" He jumped to his feet and he said, "Yes, and I love her very much, and I've laughed more with her than with any woman in my whole life." And I suddenly said, "Oh Lord, that's something that's been left out of me, I've forgotten how to laugh and have fun." But, foolishly I thought, now that he knew that I knew, he'd go and tell her it was over. He flew out of the house and left, and I sat in a window, waiting for him to come home until 5:00 in the morning. As he came through the door, he said, "I'm willing to try something if you are: I want three nights a week with her, no questions asked, and you can have the other four."

Bonnie: Well, it gets better, I promise. [*John interpolates:* "Isn't that awful?"]

In my own self, I couldn't have said I'm willing—believe me, I couldn't; I have a very sharp tongue, I'm a very stubborn and strong lady, and I could've said "Out! Who needs you?" Instead of which, I said "I'm willing." Now, we lived a year and a half that way in England. Many of you didn't know that, who saw a great deal of me, and I had those friends like the Austins and the Blairs who stood at my shoulder, and Jenny Bocoek. I would go and scream and cry on their shoulder. You know, when you're hurting, you have to let it out somewhere. And I would go and scream and cry to them, and they listened with their hearts. Believe me, I never had people listen in that way. And they let me get it all out, and they'd say, "All right, now you go home and get on your knees and give it to the Lord." Never once, "You poor thing" or "Who needs it?" "Walk out, make him move." They turned me right to the Lord, and that's when I began to get my life straight. God is more important to me than John, and John knows that. But that's when I got my personal relationship really working. And if I could do it, believe me, any of you can do it. Now, many things happened in that year and a half. Our children each came over with their own problems. We couldn't let them know we were having problems, and it was a very trying time. I didn't know until just a few days before we were to leave England whether he was going to divorce me and marry her, or come home with me. But about four months before we were to leave, I was getting dressed for my evening with him—and if you'll pardon me, I was standing in a bra and pantyhose—and the door flew open and he came and he said, "Why do you think we should stay married?" Now, I hadn't thought, I really hadn't thought about that. And I said under my breath, "Lord, you're going to have to answer for me, because I don't know what to say. I love him so much but I don't know what to say." So, as

John tells me, I spoke for about seven minutes, and he calls it my Gettysburg Address. [John interpolates: Well I could tell you something; she made a piker out of Lincoln and his Gettysburg Address. Incredible, what she said.]

Bonnie: "It's your turn"

John: It's my turn? Well anyway, during all this time, I was learning an awful lot. From God but through her. And when she—using a common colloquialism of today—when she laid these reasons on me, after the terrible, amoral—there's only one word for it—louse that I had been, something in me—and what was that something? It was God, that's what it was—said to me, "Any man who would walk out on that kind of a love would have to be an absolute idiot." And one thing that the record seems to prove, is that— except where my spirit had been concerned—I had not been an idiot in life. Spiritually, I had been worse than an idiot; I'd been both an idiot and a villain. But after what she laid on me that evening, I just knew that I was not meant to leave her.

[Bonnie interpolates: You see, it takes two. He had forgiven me, and the Lord had forgiven me for so much, and so who was I to stand in judgment on him? So the Lord took care of all of that for us, or else we couldn't do it.]

John: It's very strange, it's really very strange. But it was throughout this trying, difficult and, believe me, very uncomfortable for the both of us period. It's a long time, a year and a half—that not only she, but I too became very keenly aware of life's true values. And even I, who was by no means fully enveloped by all of what we're here for stands for, even I at that time had begun to realize the genuine indispensability of MRA's Four Absolute Standards to a genuinely fulfilling and service-full life. And both of us also came to learn and to appreciate: A) a strong united family is the cornerstone of a strong united society; and B) that a viable family in life must be founded on, and powered by, a genuine love. We use the word "love" so blithely, so frequently, so superficially; we love carrots, we love tomatoes, but we don't love bananas. Love is a very, very important word. And the love that I'm talking about now is the genuine love that is set forth in the Bible in First Corinthians 13. That's the kind of love that a viable, strong family—and through a viable strong family, a viable united strong society—is based on.

Bonnie: I began to understand and care much more about not only my husband and my children, but about our community, our nation, the world, and all its peoples. I even prayed, "Lord, love other people through me," because I used to be a very private, selfish person, and I would only open my arms if I felt like it—which wasn't too often. And so I asked the Lord two things: first of all, Love other people through me, and Lord, please give me a sense of humor and teach me to laugh and have fun again. And he did both of those things with such bounty.

John: Let me tell you about laughter and her. We haven't exaggerated. Dull she isn't, dull she's never been. But I don't think we laughed for 18 or 20 years. Now, I'm a musician; I've lived by my ears. And I'm here to tell you, the single most musical sound in my life, now and for the past several years—and as long as God will let me stay here—is the sound of her laughter. That's the greatest music I've ever heard. But when she says that she started learning about the importance of community, other people, society, our country, the world and all its peoples, strangely that's when she stopped evangelizing me and let me find my own way spiritually.

Bonnie: I think that's one of the hardest things to do, that is: take our hands off our husbands, our children, and let God do what He wants to do with them. We have to learn to trust, and that's terribly difficult.

John: But you see, now, when she took her hands off me I was led—not by her words and prodding—but by her benign and God-given example. And there's a world of difference there. And it was just about this time—it was in late 1974—that I was commissioned by the Denver Symphony Orchestra to compose a major work in connection with the 1976 Bicentennial Celebration of the birth of the United States. My work would be the dedication composition for the opening of Denver's then-upcoming New Venture Concert Hall, which was postponed several times, and finally occurred in March of '78. I was awed, in fact frightened, by the enormity of my task, and I found myself dry as a bone—not an idea in my head. I kid you not. I prayed to God for help and He answered my prayer. He awoke me at 4 o'clock one morning—this is the gospel truth—and told me to compose a one-movement symphony to be called "Mine Eyes Have Seen." It had nothing whatever to do with these eyes, the eyes in my head, your head. Having to do with these eyes—the eyes of our souls. That's what it was to be called. I don't make up all of this—a one-movement symphony called "Mine Eyes have Seen." It would be motivated by direct parallels and contradictions as between both testaments of the Bible, and the three hundred—not two-hundred—year spectrum of American history.

I was in great shape with American history. However, my acquaintance with the Bible at that time was at best, shall I say, casual. There ensued for me a five-and-a-half-month crash course in the Bible. Night and day, seven days a week—I thought that I had studied hard for my divisionals at Harvard—but they were a pipe. I never studied in my life as I studied for those five-and-a-half months. I had two teachers—Bonnie, and a very close friend—many of you know him from the early MRA days—a great architect by the name of George McClain, who had become a true man of God, and whose knowledge of the Bible is absolutely encyclopedic. And it was through this study, that I came to realize and to know that Jesus is the true Messiah, whom our Jewish prophets had foretold throughout the Old Testament. And thus it was that I, a 5,000-year-old Jew, asked Jesus into my life, and was baptized in August of 1977. But let me be on the record that

baptism—I learned, and not without some pain—is only the beginning. Only now, eight years later, am I finally building a loving personal relationship with the Lord.

Bonnie: I want to interrupt here one second and say, his symphony, he did write wonderful music for the symphony, but what he did with the parallels and contradictions had to be printed wherever the symphony was done—they had to be printed; the history was on one side and the Bible was on the other side, and you read across—this way: some were parallels and some were contradictions. It's amazing how much is in the Bible that is relevant to today. And I have to take over here and tell how constantly he did this—I am astounded by the relevance of the God-given parallels and contradictions that motivated John's symphony. Now, John, why don't you, for instance, give us one of those?

John: Well, here's a for-instance: I'm gonna take one of the contradictions—remember there are parallels and contradictions. Here is one of the contradictions. In Deuteronomy 8:18 there is written: "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is HE that giveth thee power." Now, such had been the contradiction of that Biblical precept, as exemplified by America's people and their amoral behavior, that in March of 1863, when the fortunes of the United States were at their lowest ebb in our then history, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation in which he stated the reason for our appalling situation at that time. Lincoln said in that proclamation, and I quote, "We have forgotten God; we have vainly imagined that all our blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own." So said Abraham Lincoln to the American people at their lowest ebb since the days of the colonies, as an explanation as to why they were in their god awful trouble. And if that isn't what this very conference in which we are now meeting is all about, I don't know what is.

Bonnie: And in the final parallel, the Bible side is a synthesis of Matthew 5:16 and Romans 2:13. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. Now surely, nothing could be more applicable to the whole thrust, motivation, and purpose of this conference—or, to put it more simply—quoting Tom Paine, one of the great fathers of our country, upon the signing of our Constitution, and I quote: "It is impossible not to be sensible that we are acting for all mankind; may our own dedication to God's purpose light the way to change all mankind."

John I told you at the beginning that Bonnie and I were not going to pull punches. I said it took guts to wear the carnation. It takes guts to tell that kind of intimate truth. So if you have any doubts, you good people, about how we love you, you're very much mistaken. You mustn't doubt it. And that's what this is all about. *[Applause]*

Appendix C

Confessions of a Congressman

Charles E. Bennett

Charles E. Bennett represented Jacksonville, Florida, in the U.S. Congress for forty-four years, 1949-1993, winning twenty-two elections during the administrations of nine presidents. He was one of the dynamic young war veterans, John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon among them, who ran for Congress after World War II. The Charles E. Bennett Federal Building in downtown Jacksonville is named for him. He became the second most senior member of the House of Representatives and rose to the top of the House Armed Services Committee, serving as chairman of its Sea Power Sub-Committee. He was the author of legislation that started up arms control committees, and also initiated the House Ethics Committee, which he served as chairman 1979-81. When Congress was in session, he and his wife Jean and three children lived in a suburban Falls Church home, where over the years I was a periodic house guest. He was a Captain in the U.S. Army, a guerrilla fighter in the Philippines in World War II, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

He delivered the following remarks at Georgetown University, Washington DC in June 1985, during a Moral Re-Armament conference on "Making a World of Difference."

...I came to Washington as a young Congressman right out of World War II, I'd been about two years at the end of the war in a hospital recovering, and I had picked up a pretty bad addiction, smoking 4 or 5 packs of cigarettes a day, and was, generally speaking, not in very good health. I was troubled about a lot of problems that I thought we'd tried to settle in that war, but that we really hadn't quite settled. I met Stuart Smith and Willard Hunter, who I think is here today. Also Blanton Belk and others who are part of the Moral Re-Armament movement, and was very much inspired by them. They were very helpful to me to get my feet on the ground, and getting started in Congress. We had quiet times together, and as a result of that I was able to kick my habit of smoking and got that out of my life. I also got a pretty good perspective on the fact that the Lord would talk to me if I'd listen, which is always a hard thing to do. It's easy to talk to the Lord, but not very easy to listen to Him sometimes. And that sort of joining together with other people who were spiritually inclined in matters of listening to the Lord speak was helpful. They told me about the very thing you referred to, and that was the Arms Control Agency. I became convinced that the work that I'd tried to do as a guerrilla leader in the

Philippines and as a soldier in war for the United States Army in New Guinea, were going to be lost, unless there was some effort made to have people study how best they could bring about peace in the world.

And so, that was the reason I introduced legislation to create the Peace Agency. Actually the Peace Corps split off of that. President Kennedy took that as his particular thing. Senator Hubert Humphrey and I worked on establishing what became the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, which at least gave us knowledge about what is before us and challenges us today. As a Congressman, I apply this in other ways, the things I learned in Moral Re-Armament and a spiritual brotherhood and friendship with various people who were involved in Moral Re-Armament. One of them has to do with my daily practice of making this decision. I found that a decision is easier to make since I sort of categorized it in my life as to how I should operate.

Number One, I have observed that almost all decisions are based pretty much on the acquisition of facts, and few people really want to get the facts. They want to sort of put that off. And when you DO get the facts, you—generally speaking—get an answer to the question about 99% of the time, in my opinion, if you really do get all the facts, in an impartial manner. So that's one thing I do.

And the next thing I do, if I still don't have a real answer to it, I get on my knees and pray, and ask the Lord to give me some sort of guidance. He never has sent a bolt of lightning to me, but I have become contented with the decisions I've made, in the context of doing them with spirituality. Not asking the Lord necessarily to say, "This is the thing you ought necessarily to do" but to give me the sort of guidance to make a decision. So, then, having asked for that guidance, and acting on it and doing the best I can with it, I take it out of my life. It's no longer an important thing in my life. I've done the best I know how to do. I can't blame myself.

Blaming yourself is probably the most painful thing that any of us do in life, and I do a lot of it. I lost a son about seven years ago to drugs and suicide, and I've never recovered from that. I've had other blows in my life, but that was the biggest blow I've ever had. I'm still seeking guidance from the Lord as to how I can rectify that in my life, because I feel responsible for it. I feel guilty about it. We do have pain. I realize that a lot of people think that people in public office live in a very isolated situation, that a lot of these things don't affect them. But in fact, maybe they affect us a little more intensely because it's big news when something bad happens to a Congressman. So he has to be constantly reminded about it all the time, and if he feels guilty about it, as I do, that guilt is constantly on my mind. How to throw it off is a very difficult thing to do. But like the idea of what I said about making decisions, I do have some degree of throwing off the things I can no longer do anything about. I can't re-enact history. Whatever has happened, has happened.

Every day is a new beginning, and I try to operate on the strength of what inspiration I can get.

Now, one point that occurred to me when I was preparing my notes, I did have a list of some 12 things which I think are important in the life of a Congressman. I can't remember the 12 because I never memorized them. But I do remember the first one, and it has a connection with Moral Re-Armament. The first one is also Frank Buchman's first one, which is Honesty. The greatest criterion of being in public life is Honesty. Having candor. Being frank. Saying things like how they are, not how you want people to think they are, and something like that—but how things actually are, how you see it. Of course you might be wrong, but I just thought it was sort of a coincidence last night, when I was looking at Frank Buchman's four Principles, Honesty, as well as Purity, Unselfishness, and Love. Every one of them is in these 12 groups, though not in the same order, but every one of them was there and it really didn't come from Moral Re-armament, it came from an analysis of What it Takes to Be a Congressman.

You've really got to love people to be in public life. If you don't, you're not in the right business. Because if you don't love people, it'll find its way into what you do, and you're a loser. This is a job for a lover. It's a place for somebody who loves people. And so, Love, which is the last one of Buchman's Principles, is one of the ones I've mentioned. I've mentioned Honesty, which is the first in both.

Purity is one we all have difficulty with, but I think it's important there. The way I worded it in my twelve ideas was: Live a good clean personal life. I remember one time I was in a group about this size, at a Black college in Jacksonville Florida, and I asked what people thought about what was the major thing a man or a woman should have in public life, and some young lady stood up and said, "I think they ought to be a nice person." I never thought about it before: be a nice person. And what she had in mind, I think, was really they were not people who were fraught with a lot of sins, they were people who were trying to live a good clean life. And I think that's a pretty good definition itself, of one thing that you ought to be able to do.

Unselfishness: if you don't really want to serve people, you're really wasting your time in public life, because that is what you should do. That's ALL you do—serve people. And so, if you don't really WANT to serve people—and some people don't—they really should not be in public life.

I mentioned Purity, which is hard to come by. Honesty, which is not really that hard to come by. Unselfishness. Love. And these are all principles that are innate in the thing about being a public official.

I didn't list very high in my list The Ability to Speak, because you can learn how to speak, to say what's in your heart, and make a good speech anyway if you think it's important to say. If you think it's important to say, and you just say it, it really doesn't make much difference how the grammar is or anything like that. If you're just speaking from one soul to another, that's the important thing in communication. So, Speaking Ability is not that great.

Intelligence: you might say you ought to be very intelligent. No, that's not necessary because you can hire intelligent people to do the work for you [Laughter]

I recently had an experience of this, a kind of painful experience. I have shared some of my pain with you. By far the loss of my son was the greatest pain in my life, but I had a recent pain, in which I was defeated for the chairmanship of the House Armed Services committee, after waiting 35 years to be chairman. That's kind of a letdown—it's kind of a shock. When I was defeated—the caucus is more liberal than I am—in other words, I was more of a hawk as they say in the caucus, I said to them, "I've thought about this. I knew I was going to be defeated the day before I came." I sensed I was not getting all that much support from the people I thought I would get it from. And so I said to my wife, "You know, a few years, a decade or so from now, I'll be knocking on the Pearly Gates, and when I do, I know one thing St. Peter's not going to ask me: He's not going to ask me if I was ever Chairman of the Armed Services Committee." [Laughter] That puts things in proportion sometimes, when you think about what really IS important.

But I want to tell you how I reacted to this, because it's really kind of practical—it may happen to you sometime. It's kind of tough when it happens to you when you're as old as Ronald Reagan. I say that because nobody thinks of him as being old. [Laughter] Anyway, I decided where I could go off in a corner and cry. But I'd done enough of that in the last seven or eight years anyway—hopefully quietly— but I really didn't want to give up, quit, turn my back on my party, or anything like that. I really didn't want to do that. I decided I wanted to do something more positive. Well, how to do something more positive, when you're already just about busting your gut doing everything you've got to do, is a difficult thing to do. But I came to the conclusion that there were some things in which I was really not that good, like finding out the cost of having conventional warfare, so traditionally strong in Europe. There are other things like that— which were one of the main pushes that I'm trying to do so we can prevent having a nuclear war. So I hired some additional people, which I had previously had when trying to take care of the Treasury. I had the ability to hire them all the time—most congressmen DO hire them—but I had a little separate staff of my own, three people in that staff. They don't report to the rest of my staff at all. They only answer the questions that I ask them to answer, and with the speed and the promptness and the priority which I give them. In other words, they don't have any option at all. I tell them, "Quit

what you're doing and I want you to do this thing today, I've got to get this thing in a hurry," which has made a great difference in my life.

I'm a much more exciting individual, I've lectured at Harvard, I've written Op-Eds for the Christian Science Monitor, Wall Street Journal, Miami Herald, things like that—none of which I did prior to being defeated for the chairmanship. So I've become a little better Congressman as a result of this. And if any of you have pains that occur in your life like that, maybe that's what you need to do.

I want to thank you for the privilege of meeting with you, and conclude my remarks by saying it's a great inspiration to somebody in public life to realize that there are thousands and, yes, millions of people through the world who are NOT dedicating their lives to how to do-in somebody else, either in their private life or by their national stance. But they are in fact trying to see how you can learn to love everybody in the world, how you can bring everybody together—that is the natural thing in the world to do. It's natural for us to feel all together and supportive of each other, when we have difficulties, to help each other, to strengthen each other.

And that's what you're doing, so God bless you.

Appendix D

SAYINGS of Frank Buchman

(Some original, some borrowed)

People are more important than things.
Leadership goes to the spiritually fit.
Train ten others to do your work better than you do it.
Live to make the other person great.
Out-live, out-love, and out-laugh the pagan world.
We are working for a classless society.
Don't administer eye medicine out of a second story window.
Don't put the hay so high the average mule can't get at it.
The ribbon thought—so that he who runs may read.
Everyone a force, not a field.
A revival which continues in survival.
First things first.
Interesting sinners make compelling saints.
The way to deal with sin is to hate, forsake, confess, restore.
In life-changing you woo, win, and warn.
Jesus — Just Exactly Suits Us Sinners.
Where God guides he provides.
Study men more than books.
No true duties ever conflict.
Why talk to people about the Second Coming of Christ if they have never experienced the First?
Win the argument and lose the person.
Seek out the key people.
Good food and good Christianity go together.
God gave us two ears and one mouth; why don't we listen twice as much as we talk?
Some will come and others will think. (Rationale for sending printed invitations to persons unlikely to attend.)
One hour out of power may menace a nation.
Pray — Power Radiograms Always Yours.
Faith — Forsaking All I Take Him.
All I have I give to Jesus; I surrender all.
Human wisdom has failed, but God has a plan.
In great power. (Describing a person or a meeting. George Whitefield sometimes described himself this way.)
No true duties ever conflict.
Repetitio, repetitio, repetitio - mater latorum.
Peace is not the absence of war but the presence of God.
If you're not winning you're sinning.

Sin is anything that separates you from God or from another person.

Learn to read a person like a page of print.

Recipe for Bible reading: Read accurately, interpret honestly, apply drastically.

The fellowship. (An often used word to describe his groups, whose pre-Oxford Group name was "First Century Christian Fellowship." He would say, "It's a great fellowship." It was called "A fellowship of sinners who have quit bluffing." AA also uses the word.)

No lone wolfing.

(Always work in a team.)

Men's work for men and women's work for women. (Interestingly, I heard an Overeaters Anonymous regional representative speak against man-woman sponsor-sponsee relationships. "We have enough hang-ups without complicating the situation with that," she said.)

Love is blind but the neighbors ain't.

Sugar catches more flies than vinegar.

You'd be a sweeter singer without the stinger.

Have a personalized program; don't try to personalize some one else's program.

Never speak an inch beyond your experience. (Cf. "AA message": Tell them what happened to you.)

Give a little truth, then a little explanation, then a little truth etc.

Man's extremity is God's opportunity.

She has sheetitis. (Referring to a woman who is inhospitable because she does not have the right this or that.)

Jesus, stand amongst us in thy risen power.

Labor led by God will lead the world.

Impression without expression leads to depression.

Many people would rather pay than pray.

It is fine to create experience, but you also need to relate experience.

World changing through life changing.

New Men - New Nations - a New World.

We seek not to get people into Moral Re-Armament but to get Moral Re-Armament into people.

A hate free, fear free, greed free world.

Above party, race, class, creed, or point of view.

You cannot register with MRA; MRA registers with you.

We can disagree without being disagreeable.

A liquor missionary. (A person who tries to get someone who is off the juice, back on.)

Sound homes, teamwork in industry, national unity.

(Program for U.S. in World War II.)

"Shine on me, Lord." The trouble is people want to do the shining.

A united mind. (FB was strong on consensus.)

They had something I didn't have, and I wanted it. (This was frequently said by someone making a public witness.)

I can't say so much for my past, but my future is spotless.

(Jim Newton picked this up somewhere.)

The true patriot gives his life to bring his nation under God's control.

God-controlled personalities make God-controlled nationalities.

One person really different. A million people different. A nation changed.

The only sane people in an insane world are those who are guided by God.

The strongest memory is weaker than the palest ink. (He attributed this to the Chinese.)

There's enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed.

If everyone cared enough and everyone shared enough, everyone would have enough.

Our program enhances all primary loyalties.

Sin is anything that separates you from another person or from God. (Sam Shoemaker.)

When I point my finger at my neighbor, there are three more pointing back at me.

(Ma Nyein Tha, Burmese educator.)

Everybody wants to see the other person—or the other nation—change. But everybody is waiting for the other person or nation to begin. If you want to see the world different, the place to start is with yourself and your nation.

A whole new "pattren" for the "modren" world. (sic)

Everybody has some of this quality, from two percent to ninety-eight. The point is to up the percentage. (Manny Straus, New York PR professional.)

When did you last steal?

Give all that you know of yourself to all that you understand of God. (Also attributed to Shoemaker and incorporated in AA's third step: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*."

It's either guidance or guns. The world will listen to guidance or it will listen to guns. (Elizabeth Morris, Interlaken, before World War II.)

It's not who's right but what's right. (Paul Cornelius, LA meatpacker.)

You can plan a new world on paper, but you have to build it out of people.

You can't make a good omelet out of bad eggs.

Human wisdom has failed. But God has a plan.

You can't keep crows from flying over your head, but you can keep them from nesting in your hair. (Re temptation)

If your problem is falling off cliffs, it is not good to see how close you can get to the edge. (Roland Wilson)

A program of life issuing in personal, social, racial, national, and supranational change.

A nation's surest defense is the love and gratitude of her neighbors.

Upon a foundation of changed lives permanent reconstruction is assured. Apart from changed lives no civilization can endure.

Everyone has some MRA in him—anywhere from two to ninety-eight percent. The point is to up the percentage.

Appendix E

Harry S. Truman Library and Museum
Oral History Interview with T. Willard Hunter
Independence, Missouri, August 9, 1988
by Benedict K. Zobrist, Director

ZOBRIST: It's a real pleasure to have you here with us today, on a rather unexpected visit. You've been telling me so many interesting things about Harry Truman, and Moral Re-Armament and that whole dimension. I'm putting you on the spot. I'd like to have you tell us a little bit about it, but why don't you tell us something about yourself first?

HUNTER: I'd like to. I certainly am privileged to be here at the Harry S. Truman Library. I've been here before. What you people are doing to preserve the values that Harry Truman stood for, for our country, I think is terribly important. We're all very grateful. I came originally from Minnesota. My father was a professor of English at Carleton College for 33 years; I grew up in Northfield. Incidentally, Northfield is where Jesse James got stopped. I think he comes from Clay County here.

ZOBRIST: He does. In fact, you know in Missouri we say the three most famous people of Missouri are Harry Truman, Mark Twain, and Jesse James.

HUNTER: Well, Harry sort of took the line that a lot of people in Missouri take, that Jesse James was kind of a Robin Hood, a sort of good old boy, who took care of the widows and others. We don't think that up where we come from. We don't see any evidence that he ever did much of anything for anybody. But he that as it may, I don't want to argue with Harry Truman on this august occasion, especially in this Library!

I decided that I wanted to get into politics. When I was graduated from Carleton in 1936, I went to the Harvard Law School, which has sometimes been known as a "stepping stone to greatness." Michael Dukakis is one of those that followed a similar trail.

Before too long I decided that law and politics and diplomacy weren't really going to do that much. Besides, I had always from the beginning felt that I was called to get into something that dealt with people and changing people. Unless you deal with human nature, you're still always going to have the same problems, I think, because most problems stem from human nature.

While I was still a student, the program of Moral Re-Armament came by. It had been initiated by Frank Buchman back in the twenties. It was known as the Oxford

Group for a while, and out of it came Alcoholics Anonymous. He was so good at life-changing that a number of alcoholics were changed. Some of them wanted to apply the Oxford Group idea only to the one problem. So they separated off. The twelve steps of AA were Frank Buchman's life-changing principles. There are over a million living recoveries and it is growing around the world.

I kept on with the Moral Re-Armament program for 18 years full-time and a good deal of that was in Washington, DC. I was one of the movement's Washington operatives, you might say.

One of the people that I worked with there was John Roots. He was the son of a man, Logan H. Roots, who was the Episcopal Bishop of Hankow for 35 years. John was a brilliant man, and had been a foreign correspondent with the *New York Times* and other papers.

He also was giving all of his time to this program with Frank Buchman for Moral Re-Armament—"World Changing Through Life Changing." One of the things that we were out for, particularly in Washington, was if you're going to change the world; you need to change the people who run it. So we were out, among other things, to "make Christians out of Congressmen." We made quite a dent in a number of lives there, quite a few situations which I think, looking back on it, were really quite impressive.

In 1938 Buchman said that what the world needed in the midst of the physical arms race was moral and spiritual rearmament to undergird civilization. So the name of the program changed in 1938 from Oxford Group, which had been named that because students from Oxford had taken the program all over the world, to Moral Re-Armament.

To introduce Moral Re-Armament in the United States the following year, 1939, there were three big meetings. One was at the Madison Square Garden, May 14, 1939—packed house. The second meeting was June 4, 1939, in Constitution Hall in Washington, DC, also packed with the top people in the town—I mean Congress, Cabinet, Judiciary, Armed Services. Then the third one was the Hollywood Bowl meeting on July 19, 1939. It was six weeks before the war began. That was the peak of the MRA public visibility.

Leading up to the Constitution Hall meeting June 4, Endicott Peabody, who was the headmaster of Groton School, where Franklin Roosevelt had attended, persuaded Roosevelt that he should get in on this, that it was an important thing for him to back. Roosevelt, in this area of things, rather trusted Peabody's judgment. He developed a statement which was very good, about the undergirding of the moral forces of the world. Then the question was who should present the President's message at the Constitution Hall meeting. Roosevelt went down the list of Senators, and he picked Harry Truman because he had such an excellent New Deal voting record. He could speak for the President as well as anyone.

Truman was happy to do this, and he came. I remember Frank Buchman, who initiated the Moral Re-Armament program, was in the chair for the evening. He was introducing the different speakers, and when it came time for the President's

message, he introduced Harry, and they shook hands. I was sitting right on the platform; I remember seeing these two men, Truman and Buchman up there. Truman read the President's statement. I don't think he made any further comments. At that point he didn't know a whole lot about it, but he did read that message with great vigor.

ZOBRIST: This was a message written by, would you assume, Roosevelt or his speechwriters?

HUNTER: Yes, right. I think he got a couple of suggestions from Endicott Peabody, and there may have been from John Roots, I don't know. I think it was Bunny Austin, the British tennis star, that really actually obtained the message from Roosevelt. Bunny told me that there was a whole sentence that Roosevelt himself added, stating that "to be most highly effective" the program "must receive support on a world-wide basis." He wanted it in there, and it strengthened the message.

At that point, Harry Truman was obviously quite intrigued with the possibility. Of course, he had a basic Midwest ethic; I mean moral standards were important to him. I remember him speaking once; he said, "All you really need is the Sermon on the Mount and the Ten Commandments." He believed that. So he responded to this type of approach; he knew that something needed to be happening beyond all the physical, material things. You had to have this kind of thing going on. So increasingly he got interested in it.

As I say, John Roots became quite a close friend of his. John Roots was a very persuasive fellow, and a brilliant fellow; Harry kept moving along and he would do a lot of the things that John would suggest. He'd say, "No, I'm not going to do that," or "Yes, I'll do that." I was impressed with the way he went about his business.

I was in his office once, I think with John, and "Cece" Broadhurst, a big, tall singing cowboy who had a birthday on the same day as the Senator. He always wrote a special song for Harry. He said, "Since Mr. Truman hasn't been able to write a song for me, I'm going to write a song for him." Truman said on that occasion, "That fellow has really got it."

Once, when I was in his office, we were talking about one of these meetings that was coming up: I was impressed by the speed with which that man Truman made decisions. He never would say, "Well, I don't know about that," or he wouldn't say, "I'll think about that and let you know tomorrow." Right now, it was either "yes" or "no" and there was no question. Everybody in the room knew that that was the way it was going to be. I was interested to read that, later on in the White House, that's the way he made decisions, about the atomic bomb and almost anything else he did. He just decided that messing around wasn't going to improve the quality of the decision.

Truman then, of course, became the chairman of the watchdog committee of the Senate, investigating the war industries -- what was happening in war production.

ZOBRIST: Yes, the Truman Committee.

HUNTER: The Truman Committee; whether we were getting enough “bang for the buck” and all that. And he began to notice the work of Moral Re-Armament in the war industries. Of course, we helped him; John or some of us would help him when he was going around to Los Angeles for example, and we’d say, “Now, you want to see so and so,” and he did. Dale Reed, who was the head of the machinists at Lockheed Aircraft in Los Angeles, said, “There are planes over the fighting fronts today that would not be there but for the work of Moral Re-Armament at Lockheed.” He was referring to the increased teamwork between labor and management, getting new trust going between them—reducing absenteeism, providing new motivation and trying to help these people, not only with what they were fighting against, but also what they were fighting for. All of this heightened efficiency and increased production. Wherever Truman went he found that this spirit was working out, that there was an improvement. So he got more and more interested and more and more solidified in his conviction that this was a good thing to keep moving.

Near the end of the war, in late 1943, he worked with Jim Wadsworth, who had formerly been a Senator from New York, and now was a Congressman from Genesee, New York—well respected. They said of Representative Wadsworth that he was one of the few members of either the House or the Senate who could change votes with a speech. He also was convinced that MRA was the way to go.

So Truman as a Democrat and Wadsworth as a Republican made a good team, one from the House and one from the Senate. They went up to Philadelphia and they spoke on November 19, 1943 from the platform of a Moral Re-Armament play called *The Forgotten Factor*. Truman called it “the most important play produced by the war.” It dramatized the human side of labor-management problems by showing the life of a labor leader and his family, and the life of the management leader and his family, and how the trust had broken down. It showed how rebuilding trust began when one of the kids apologized to the family on the other side. I don’t need to go into the whole story. Anyway, it was a dramatic thing which had made impressive impact in war plants and civic centers. People got the idea: Yes, teamwork is possible, and it’s fun and it’s productive. This man George Seldes, that Miller quotes,¹ says that Moral Re-Armament was trying to tell the workers to take less, or back down or give in. It was entirely opposite from that; I mean there were usually equal apologies on both sides and standing up as individuals to each other in the interest of justice and equity for everyone.

So Truman and Wadsworth spoke at Philadelphia. The presentation was sponsored by the union and management at Cramp Shipyard. It was so successful

¹See Richard L. Miller, *Truman: The Rise to Power* (McGraw-Hill, 1986), p. 368.

with all the folks in Philadelphia, that people said, "Wouldn't it be good to do this also in Washington where it will reach the nation's leadership?" So they did. Truman and Wadsworth went together on a committee and invited pretty much everybody who was anybody in Washington.

I was in the balcony of the Senate one day and I looked down, and there was Harry Truman sitting at his Senate floor desk with a pile of invitations, that high. In between those dull speeches, he'd be signing his name to these invitations. It wasn't a staff-printed thing; it was a personalized signed invitation to Eisenhower and to everybody else.

So they got that going. The date was May 5, 1944, in the National Theatre in Washington. A leading newspaperman looked around and saw the political leadership and the military leadership; he said, "If a bomb had been dropped on that theater that night, the whole war effort would have been put out of commission."

At that point, Harry Truman—I don't know whether it's right to say—backed out or what. I think he did. I was in on some of that. You remember the name Matt Connelly?

ZOBRIST: He was on the staff.

HUNTER: Yes, and Harry Vaughan; I knew those people. I was down in the Willard Hotel where we had an office and the replies to the invitations were coming in. Matt Connelly came down and said, "I wonder if you wouldn't just as soon, in answering the phone, not say 'Truman-Wadsworth Committee' anymore. It might get mixed up with the 'Truman Committee'." I said to myself, "There is something else going on besides that." There was just a little wisp in the wind. At that time Robert Hannegan of Missouri was starting to carry the torch for Harry Truman as the Vice Presidential nominee under Roosevelt. Everybody knew that Roosevelt's days were numbered. His health was so bad that the 1944 Vice Presidential nominee would become -- if the Democrats won -- would become President. Of course, Truman was a natural. I got credit as a seer among some of my friends for predicting two months before that convention that Truman would be nominated. With the Truman Committee's reputation, and the Senator's standards and his reputation as a clean-cut family man, people had confidence in that man.

At any rate, a Teamsters leader out in Detroit—this is in May of 1944—said to some of us, "Truman's not going to be at that meeting." We said, "What do you mean? He's promised; he's committed himself to be at that meeting." "I'm just telling you, he's just not going to be there."

I'm sure that the word went out from the party managers that Harry should now begin to divest himself of anything that he would have to explain, no matter how good it was. I mean he could explain it for ten minutes just perfectly, but in politics you wanted not to have to explain anything. I think he bought that and decided that was what he would do. This was only ten weeks away from the 1944 Democratic National Convention. The disappearance of Truman so abruptly

seemed to me rather ruthless. I thought at the time that when presidential politics gather force, it is a bit terrifying. It should also be added that it was about that time that I heard of some kind of falling out between Truman and John Roots, which may have been a factor in the break. For the rest of his 80-year life, Roots would not talk about this.

In addition, for the record, Miller thinks Truman lied about the extent of his involvement with MRA, which Miller called "intense," in his letter of response to George Seldes' attack, an attack which no doubt contributed to Harry's skittishness. Seldes repeats his groundless smears in his autobiography *Witness to a Century* and takes credit for waving Truman off the program.

Mr. Truman did a couple of things after he was President. For example, he sent a message to the family of Bishop Logan Roots, John Roots' father, when he died.

On the distaff side, we also got to know Margaret and Bess quite well. John Roots' sister, Frances Roots, was a brilliant pianist. As a matter of fact, even to this day, she and her husband do piano duet national concert tours. Margaret and Frances hit it off, partly because Margaret was into singing, and in a music program at George Washington University. Frances could play almost anything that she wanted to sing. My wife was Mary Lou Merrell at that point. She was one of the team there too, and she recalls how Bess made them a special batch of brownies. They used to talk about those brownies a lot.

I remember my wife and I went to the opening of the baseball season in Washington. That was probably 1948. At that time the Washington Senators were the team in the capital city. They were never any good, but they were the ones that always opened the season, and the President threw the ball out. Harry threw the ball out. The family were in the Presidential box. By strange coincidence some good friends of ours in Washington, who had a season box that was not far from the Trumans', gave this to us to go to that game. So we were pretty close. I recall particularly Margaret trying to get my eye, and she finally did. She waved in what struck me as a friendly way.

It was after that, that my wife invited her out to our house for tea. We were at that time living in the Cleveland Park area of Washington. Margaret accepted. She came out in a big, long, black White House limousine. I don't know whether it was a Cadillac or a Lincoln, or whatever, but anyway it had all the trappings of the Presidency. She was very charming, as she always was. I've never talked to anybody that was quite as charming as Margaret Truman, just a beautiful person. She had all the time in the world and we had our kids and so forth. At that time she was in between concerts in her professional concert series. She was being given a hard time by some of the critics. She knew that if her name was Margaret Smith, she probably wouldn't have been getting all that attention. I heard one of those concerts and she had a nice voice; it wasn't a strong voice, but it was a nice voice.

ZOBRIST: That's right.

HUNTER: But she was having a great time, and she wasn't kidding herself. She said about the critics, "Most of the critics are frustrated performers."

Then we also talked about Douglas MacArthur. I think it was about that time when MacArthur was getting a little bit uppity, and Harry had to keep him in line. She wasn't telling us any secrets or anything, but I recall she had some interesting little things that she said about MacArthur.

ZOBRIST: Most people don't realize that there was tension long before the firing of MacArthur.

HUNTER: Yes. Well, it took some thing to fire MacArthur, because of his position, and stature and so on. But he finally just had to do it, and I think he was right.

When I was in uniform in the service I used to correspond with Margaret. I never could tell whether it was just because of friendship, or whether she had a policy at that time as the daughter of the President, of answering every letter that she got from a GI. I think it was probably something like that. I wrote her; said I'd seen her on a newsreel waving to the crowds, and doing all that must be kind of hard. She wrote back that it wasn't all that hard. Since that time, not much, but maybe every two or three years, we corresponded when something came up.

She's very good on correspondence, I think. I imagine she really makes a point of answering those letters. Very few people I find in public life do; most people when they get to be a star they feel they don't have to. But she did and so, as I say, I think the last letter I got from her was about a year ago. So that's our relationship with the Truman family.

ZOBRIST: Great; this is a most interesting story. I thank you for giving us some insights, particularly, you know, into the thirties and also the wartime period. Anything else you want to add?

HUNTER: I don't think so. Well, of course, Truman was in the artillery in the First World War, and I think he thought that Moral Re-Armament was a good combination because it didn't detract from military strength. As a matter of fact, it would increase military strength, although it wasn't for or against war. You've got to have character, wherever it is, whether it's on the home front or on the overseas front. I think he felt that.

ZOBRIST: I think that's right.

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Van Dusen Evaluation
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THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

VOLUME 154  NUMBER 1

JULY 1934

'APOSTLE TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY'

Frank N. D. Buchman: Founder of the Oxford Group Movement

BY HENRY P. VAN DUSEN

ABOUT twenty years ago an unknown and rather unimpressive man, then secretary of the student Christian association in Pennsylvania State College, began to speak to his friends with confident certainty about the imperative urgency of world-wide religious revival, and about its imminent possibility. He pointed to progressive moral disintegration the world over; he predicted its continued steady advance. He dismissed the buoyant, breezy, expectant self-satisfaction, the jaunty well-being of the then prevailing outlook (all this, recall, was at the height of the pre-war optimism); he reported men's poignant spiritual hunger, their readiness for radical conversion. He pronounced the futility of measures then universally trusted to assure human advance — education, scientific research, social reform, international sentiment and agreements. Nothing, he said, but religious revival of a most drastic and

sweeping kind could possibly save the world from impending catastrophe.

Furthermore, he clearly envisioned how the revival would be brought to pass. The day of mass evangelism was over, he declared; the key to revival lay in work with individuals one by one within intimate fellowships. He drew a vivid picture of a world-wide movement of 'peripatetic evangelism' — small bands of completely committed, disciplined, carefully trained men and women of different nations moving continuously across the face of the world, touching with new life individuals here and there, binding them into close-knit fellowships, and then bearing the contagion from group to group. It must be a work directed primarily to wealth and position and privilege, to the 'up-and-outs'; these, he felt, the churches were neglecting to reach with a message of radical transformation. The movement would begin in the universities; Oxford would

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kindle Yale; Princeton and Harvard men would be used to revive religion at Cambridge and Cape Town. From the great universities the influence would flow out into the newer and smaller colleges, thence on into communities and churches. From America and Britain the fire would spread throughout Europe, to the Orient, South America, South Africa, the ends of the earth. He reported that China, India, South Africa, the British universities, were as ripe for such revival as the American colleges. A radical regeneration of the entire church would be the final outcome.

His analyses and predictions were couched in an original and often mystifying vocabulary — as strange to the ear of that day as were the convictions themselves. He spoke constantly of 'sin' and 'evil thoughts,' of 'absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness, love,' of 'confession' and 'surrender,' of 'witness' and 'sharing,' of 'propagating Christians,' of 'Bible Christianity,' of a 'movement of life within the churches,' of 'social transformation through individual conversion,' of 'quiet time' and 'listening' and 'hunches' and 'luminous thoughts,' above everything else of 'God-guidance.' His habitual speech was studded with cryptic aphorisms repeated almost *ad nauseam* — 'crows are black the world over'; 'don't throw eye medicine out of a second-story window'; 'every man a force, not a field'; 'revival which continues in survival'; 'interesting sinners make compelling saints'; 'hate, confess, forsake, restore'; 'woo, win, warn'; 'J-E-S-U-S — just exactly suits us sinners, just exactly saves us sinners.' When questioned about the financial undergirding of so gigantic a world strategy, he was certain that 'where God guides, He provides.'

That was twenty years ago. How startling were such diagnoses and fore-

casts when they were first uttered can be appreciated only through a vivid recollection of the temper of the pre-war decade. To recapture the prevailing atmosphere of those years is no easy task for the imagination. Those were the days of commercial expansion and technical prowess, of daily miracles in almost every aspect of man's achievement, of peace conferences, peace treaties, peace pilgrimages, peace platitudes, of the unchallenged regnancy of the dogma of progress, of intense preoccupation with science, education, business, sport, of objective healthy-mindedness, of an exuberant and expansive self-confidence.

The transformation wrought by the intervening years is familiar enough. Not least striking have been the changes in the world's religious climate. They have been mainly in two directions. Those features of the above conviction which were then least novel, indeed lip-serviced elements in the accepted Christian thought of the day, — the emphasis upon sin, the insistence upon the surrender of each soul to God, the obligation to personal evangelism, — have almost disappeared from the current Christian message. On the other hand, those aspects which then provoked incredulity, — the threat of world-wide moral collapse, the need of world-wide spiritual revival and its possibility, — these are to-day matters of common discussion in circles far removed from orthodox church loyalty. Through all the kaleidoscopic events of these two decades, not a day has passed when that strange man has failed to proclaim the same diagnosis and to declare the same predictions to anyone who would listen — always with unwearied repetition of the same words and phrases, always with deepening confirmation of his own certainty.

To-day there is a movement of con-

tagious personal religion ceaselessly at work across the face of the world which is perhaps the most powerful as it is certainly the most striking spiritual phenomenon of our time. It has vigorous and rapidly expanding centres in England, Scotland, Holland, Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland, Rumania, Egypt, South Africa, the Near East, South America, India, the Far East, as well as in every corner of the United States and Canada. Its professed adherents number thousands, its sympathetic inquirers many times as many. The inner circle of its leadership includes several of the ablest minds of the Christian world and a considerable sprinkling of church leaders of eminence and wisdom. The Right Reverend Logan H. Roots, one of the most revered and beloved missionary bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church, speaks of it as 'the frontier movement of Christendom . . . the expression of the greatest movement of the spirit of Christ in our generation.' And C. F. Andrews testifies that 'a new spirit has come in South Africa. . . . If the whole atmosphere of South Africa is different and full of promise, it is due in God's good providence very greatly to the Oxford Groups.' All over the world, sober men are querying whether the religious revival, which the churches have so long heralded and which they have so signally failed to bring to birth, may not really be upon us.

For the propagation of its influence this movement relies entirely upon touching the lives of individual men and women, one by one, and then binding them into the intimate fellowship of closely knit groups. Its work increases and expands through teams of devoted, carefully trained men and women from various nations who travel from land to land to the far corners of the earth as peripatetic evangelists,

carrying the contagion from one vital centre to another. It defines itself as a 'movement of life within the churches' for the enlistment and training of 'propagating Christians.' It promises a 'new world order through changed lives.' Its goal is the spiritual renewal of the entire church. Through its speech there echo and reëcho the words and phrases already mentioned which unfaillingly identify its adherents, and which, when understood, furnish the key to its essential message. When inquiry is made about the financial support of so far-flung and prodigious an undertaking, members of the movement will invariably reply, 'Where God guides, He provides.'

This, very briefly, is the story of the emergence of the Oxford Group Movement.

II

By any possible calculus, Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman is a man of very remarkable powers. Not a few people utterly fail to understand the Oxford Group Movement through ignorance of the personality, the background, and the convictions of its founder.

Mr. Buchman is a man just turned fifty-five years of age. By common consent, he has not been richly endowed with gifts of personality; very few people feel themselves drawn to him at first meeting. It is all the greater indication of the man's power that the intense personal devotion which gathers to him from all of his following has arisen in spite of this seeming lack of personal charm. Harold Begbie's description has become almost classic:—

In appearance he is a young-looking man of middle life . . . upright, stoutish, clean-shaven, spectacled, with that mien of scrupulous, shampooed, and almost medical cleanness, or freshness, which is so characteristic of the hygienic American.

His carriage and his gestures are dis-

tinguished by an invariable alertness. He never droops, he never slouches. You find him in the small hours of the morning with the same quickness of eye and the same athletic erectness of body which seem to bring a breeze into the breakfast room. . . . He strikes one on a first meeting as a warm-hearted and very happy man, who can never know what it is to be physically tired or mentally bored.

Mr. Buchman was born and lived through youth and young manhood near the heart of the 'Pennsylvania Dutch' district in Eastern Pennsylvania. It is from that simple, stolid, deeply religious German Lutheran stock that Mr. Buchman comes, — his paternal ancestry was German Swiss, — and to it he owes all the most formative influences upon his own inner life. In his home, English was spoken brokenly. Its atmosphere was Pennsylvania German through and through, of that very distinctive pietistic intensity made familiar to an earlier generation through the quaint and charming tales of Helen R. Martin. From the German Lutheran college of Muhlenberg, Mr. Buchman went to the conservative theological seminary of his church at Mount Airy, Philadelphia.

A few years later, while attending a conference at Keswick in England, a vivid and life-determining experience of conversion crystallized the dominant influences of youth and early training. By then, or very soon thereafter, all the basic certainties of his life and the directions for his life's work were 'given' to him; they have suffered modification at no vital point since. Subsequently wide travel and varied contacts have given him knowledge of the world and familiarity with diverse movements of thought, but he has felt no necessity to alter the structure of his early conviction. In extraordinary measure, his personal religion to-day is that of his simple and beautiful pietistic Lutheran

home, and his theology that which he was taught at Mount Airy Seminary thirty years ago.

This explains not a little in Mr. Buchman's religion, and in the Oxford Group Movement, which otherwise must be mystifying. He springs from a type of Protestant belief and practice which to most Americans is strangely unfamiliar. No one can understand him or the movement which centres in him without a deep appreciation of conservative Lutheran pietism. This also accounts for much misrepresentation of features which are in no sense peculiar to his work, but are characteristic of the school of religion which has given it birth — its otherworldliness, its loyal acceptance of existing political and social authority, its pessimistic estimate of human nature, its stress on 'sin' and 'faith' and 'rebirth' and 'regeneration,' its uncritical use of the Bible, its intense mysticism, even its practice of Divine Guidance. The voice of Martin Luther himself echoes through not a little of Mr. Buchman's personal teaching. To be sure, the Movement is committed to no distinctive theological position and embraces a considerable range of view. Moreover Mr. Buchman has usually rather disparaged stress on theology: among his favorite maxims are 'Study men, not books,' and 'Why talk to men about the Second Coming of Christ when they have never experienced His first coming?' Nevertheless his personal faith is exceedingly conservative, indeed premillennialist. And many of the features which so sharply distinguish this striking Movement, including some which are especially suspect, can be traced in the last analysis to the religious heritage of its founder. Far more than is recognized by its adherents, its presuppositions and its practices are colored if not determined by his personal faith.

III

The most important stages in the development of Mr. Buchman's career may be briefly reviewed. Fresh from the Seminary, he undertook to resuscitate a struggling parish on the outskirts of Philadelphia. With tireless energy and indomitable will he built a vigorous church and founded a settlement house and hospice, meantime sharing his pitiable resources with several destitute persons. But sharp differences with the governing board led to his resignation. He sought escape from this bitter experience in a trip to Europe, which had its climax in the profound awakening at Keswick; he has ever since regarded this as the starting point of his effective service. For seven years thereafter he was secretary of the undergraduate religious society at Pennsylvania State College; here many of his principles and methods were given their first thorough testing and confirmation. Two visits to the Orient furnished intimate acquaintance with the missionary enterprise, and especially with the personal inner struggles of individual missionaries, for it was to them that Mr. Buchman gave his special attention. In 1919 he returned to the United States to resume a lectureship on personal evangelism at Hartford Theological Seminary.

From this time his overmastering concern was given to initiating the movement of revival which should fulfill his vision — the vision which had gradually been growing upon him and now completely possessed him. True to the guidance of that vision, he began in the American universities. For several years his efforts achieved amazing influence. Something approaching revival began to stir the campuses of Princeton, Yale, Harvard, Williams, Smith, Vassar, Bryn Mawr — the most

unlikely colleges in the land. Men flocked into the leadership of the church. Of the fifty ablest younger ministers on the Atlantic seaboard today, somewhere near half were directed into their vocation through his influence at that time. During the summer holidays Oxford and Cambridge were the centre of activity. There began the international visitations by teams of youthful converts which are so distinctive a feature of the work to-day. 'Buchmanism' was widely discussed on both sides of the Atlantic. On a very limited scale, some of his extraordinary predictions began to come true.

But about 1924 the tide suddenly turned. Criticism and opposition, hitherto largely latent and spasmodic, became vocal and rapidly increased in volume. The officers of Princeton University, where the work had established its strongest foothold, felt compelled to conduct an investigation and to request Mr. Buchman not to return to the campus; soon his followers there also withdrew. Many of the early adherents fell away or turned to more usual types of religious effort. The Movement had failed to gain significant strength at Oxford or Cambridge. By about 1925 it is probable that not over a half-dozen persons on both sides of the Atlantic would have acknowledged Mr. Buchman as their leader. Success had been meteoric but short-lived. Almost nothing remained of the revival which was to have regenerated the church and shaken the world.

Mr. Buchman was disappointed, but undismayed. With his small nucleus of loyal followers he started afresh. The base of operations was shifted to England, where it has remained. Slowly a new and more careful strategy was beaten out. Quieter and less spectacular growth, a new emphasis upon rigorous discipline, much greater attention to the training of leaders, far more

exacting requirements for admission to the trusted circle, insistence upon unquestioning 'loyalty' to the Group and its leader, characterized the new phase. Gradually there began to take form much more cohesive and disciplined fellowships in local centres, each faithfully reproducing the same essential features, each captained by a leader who followed in minutest detail the tactics of Mr. Buchman.

After several years of unobtrusive consolidation, teams of trained and disciplined workers began once again to cross the ocean from continent to continent — this time to South Africa (where the name Oxford Group was first coined), later to America, to South America, to the Orient. To annual international house parties at Oxford, leaders and inquirers from widely scattered groups all over the world came on pilgrimage, first in dozens, then in hundreds, now in thousands. They give the Movement cohesion, furnish a focus for training, and demonstrate in impressive dramatization its ever-expanding outreach. In spite of its far-flung lines, the enterprise is thus held in a quite extraordinary unity and uniformity. Beginning cautiously, guarding its inner integrity jealously, the sweep of the Movement has acquired a steadily accelerated pace. No continent and hardly a nation is untouched. To-day at a dozen corners of the world something promising the possibility of national revival is suggested. Local groups are numbered by scores, their members by thousands. They boast as patrons and supporters not a few of the most distinguished statesmen, scholars, and churchmen of the world. To the house parties, not only at Oxford, but in New York or Quebec, come more enthusiasts than can easily be accommodated. And the end is not yet. For there is not the slightest indication

that the zenith of expansion has been achieved.

From so tiny a nucleus the Oxford Group Movement of to-day has sprung in something less than eight years. It is the fruit of one man's vision and indomitable determination. Without him it cannot be accounted for.

IV

As with all men of genius, the secret of Mr. Buchman's influence is not easily defined. One thinks at once of obvious qualities which distinguish him and make their contributions to his effectiveness — a quite extraordinary skill in administration; personal attention to the importance of the minutest detail; intimate solicitude for each person's needs and idiosyncrasies; tireless resilience of body and nerves; playful and unclouded gayety of spirit; financial sagacity, not to say shrewdness; tenacious memory; a sense for strategy which might quicken jealousy in a Napoleon; exuberant and contagious optimism. But one is driven to conclude that none of these is the gift of inborn equipment; all are by-products of some deeper secret. The ultimate sources of Mr. Buchman's personal power are, I think, four: uncanny prevision of the future, expert understanding of the inmost problems of the human spirit, unclouded certainty in his own procedure, and the absolute deliverance of self — his hopes, his necessities, his reputation, his success — into the direction of a Divine Intention, clearly and commandingly made known to him. How far the first three are themselves the result of the last, no human analysis can reveal.

1. Of Mr. Buchman's premonition of coming tendencies something has already been said. I do not know whether he prophesied the Great War. But long before the war's advent he clearly

foresaw and foretold the moral and spiritual chaos which has dogged the post-war era and America's wild orgy of prosperity. That is to say, he was acutely aware of underlying forces of which the war itself was only a first catastrophic expression. His understanding of history does not concern primarily political and economic events, but those profounder ethical and spiritual factors which, neglected by the shallow insight of statesmanship, fashion political and social destiny.

Even more striking has been his anticipation of the major spiritual trends of our time. Some indication of this foresight is suggested in the following fact. When Mr. Buchman began his public work twenty years ago, four of the features which most distinguished it then, and which have been central in its emphasis ever since, were widely regarded as just a little beyond the pale of respectability; in the intervening years, each of the four has established itself not only in the practice of the most respected Christian leaders, but also in circles far beyond orthodox religion. I refer to his emphasis upon problems of sex, his employment of private confession, the house-party technique, and his vivid mysticism.

Here, once more, only a deliberate effort of the imagination will succeed in recalling the atmosphere of those pre-war years. Then, Mr. Buchman's frank insistence upon problems of sex as the most serious inner difficulty of many people was regarded as unhealthy, dangerous, a trifle morbid, perhaps slightly perverted. To the healthy-minded objectivity of those days, sex was almost a banned topic. It is just the two decades since which have witnessed the deluge of books on sex, the advent of psychoanalysis, public discussion of the most intimate issues of personal life, the morbid preoccupation of increasing numbers of

people in this matter. Mr. Buchman's emphasis long antedated the vogue of Freud and Jung and Adler, of sex-saturated literature and sex-perverted movies, of sex appeal and sex drama and Oedipus-complexes, of the expensive and dubious ministrations of private psychiatrists.

Similarly, twenty years ago, private confession of personal failure was regarded as a distinctive practice of the Roman Church — to most non-Romans an obsolete and rather revolting practice. To-day, confession is the basic technique of all types of mental healing; and it is a regular element in the practice of many foremost ministers.

For the propagation of his work, Mr. Buchman has always relied not only on personal conversations, but also upon informal intimate group gatherings, — 'house parties,' in his own original parlance, — where spontaneous disclosures of the most private experiences of the spiritual life could occur quite naturally. In the early days these were viewed askance. To-day, retreats and informal intimate discussions for sharing personal discoveries are commonplace features of religious work.

Again, in its earliest expression Mr. Buchman's message was marked by an intense and vivid mysticism. From the beginning he has taught that every person should expect direct suggestion of God's guidance. In those hard-headed, preoccupied, blatant pre-war days he placed the very centre of his insistence upon this belief. Absurd nonsense it sounded to the ear of that time. His conception of 'guidance' is still one of the most serious stumbling-blocks to many. But no one who has felt the spiritual pulse of recent decades can have failed to detect the returning tide of mysticism. Even to the most skeptical, this unusual practice appears

far less unique and absurd than it then did. One can have no doubt that the currents of the time, outside formal church circles no less than within, have set strongly in the direction of Mr. Buchman's teaching — and at a steadily heightened pace. Clearly this is no ordinary prophet with whom we have to deal.

2. When we turn to Mr. Buchman's understanding of the ills of the human spirit, especially in its deeper reaches and secret struggles, we touch the gift which confounds most persons at first meeting and is the key to his magnetic power over them. I doubt if there is a psychiatrist in the world whose intuitive sensitiveness to spiritual disease can begin to compare with his in acuteness and accuracy. Years of unbroken concentration upon the inmost problems of personal life have furnished him with unique powers of instantaneous and piercing diagnosis.

But to equipment forged by experience is undoubtedly added remarkable inborn aptitude for character discernment. For Mr. Buchman is not only a mystic; he is a psychic as well. Not infrequently, after two sentences of casual conversation with a new acquaintance, he will suggest the presence of secret difficulties which the other has been hiding from his most intimate companions, or even from himself. When he enters a drawing-room, his rapier insight moves unnoticed from person to person. Within five minutes he has formed his estimate of every person in the room, fastening upon the inner keys to behavior in each person's life — all the while taking his part fully in the inconsequential patter. No faintest outward hint of the struggle with secret impurity, of sensuality, of insecurity or inferiority, of pride, of selfishness, of solitariness or disheartenment or defeat, of the false bravado which masks inner

uncertainty, of the cynicism which masks self-disgust or world-weariness, escapes him. Often, when outward sign is lacking, he recognizes their presence by some more immediate intuition.

No one who aims to take the measure of the man can afford to overlook this extraordinary power. Occasionally he badly misses his guess, sometimes with grossly impertinent accusations and unpardonable injustice to people's character; but not often. And, when he feels confidence in his diagnosis, he does not hesitate to confront the person with his failing or need, be he peasant or prelate, statesman or archbishop or Pullman porter, chance traveling companion or one of his closest associates. But, his message does not stop with diagnosis. In every instance, with equal assurance he prescribes the needed remedy — however obscure or chronic the spiritual malady, however shackling the other's defeat, however jaunty his self-confident exterior.

3. Here we meet another of the most conspicuous marks of the man — his unshakable certitude in his own 'leading.' Never for a fleeting instant or in any possible circumstances is he unsure in speech or action. It makes no difference whether the matter concerns the strategy for winning a continent or the relief of an over-solemn meeting by an injection of humor, the right word to say to impress an official whose favor controls doors of opportunity or the right necktie to wear to win the confidence of a particularly fastidious Eton boy. As a matter of fact, in his view, each of these matters may be equally important; that is why God guides us in the selection of our haberdashery. Momentous decisions are formed instantly, and then pushed to fruition with zeal bred of certainty that the Weight of the Universe is behind them. Mr.

Buchman's assurance is not the ponderous, impressive dogmatism of self-conscious importance, but the quick, gay, rapier-like abandon of one whose wisdom proceeds from gushing springs inaccessible to the ordinary soul.

Hence, in part, springs Mr. Buchman's extraordinary authority among his following, an authority not superimposed but gladly accorded. He is always quietly sure he is right; and he has been vindicated in the sequel too often to be lightly contradicted. Here, also, is the explanation of his imperviousness to criticism. Only from those who fully share his views and his technique of insight will he hear the slightest questioning. Even from them he is much more receptive to suggestions for improvement in his dress than for modifications in his theology or methods. Such certainty is possible because Mr. Buchman knows his every thought and action to be immediately determined by the Divine Mind; it is the direct corollary of his belief in Divine Guidance.

Eminent European leaders of the church who knew Mr. Buchman at student conferences twenty years ago are astounded when they confront him and his Movement to-day. The man is essentially unchanged. There is no novel note in his message, no modification in his methods. Their first impulse is to say that he has learned nothing from the years, or almost nothing. Then, they regarded him as a sincere but rather eccentric devotee of a particular technique of personal evangelism; above all, a very American American. To-day they find him one of the most powerful spiritual forces in the world, with influence far greater in aloof Britain and conservative Holland and insular South Africa than in his credulous homeland — a man who bids fair to bring to pass within their own country the religious revival for which

through all these years they have been impotently longing. Small wonder there is a claim of 'miracles.'

The critic may find an explanation in two facts. The tides of history have swung to Mr. Buchman. *And* through all those years he has never for one moment doubted God's appointed task for him. To which the friend will retort with two questions: 'How came the tides of history to turn in that direction? Why has such strange, almost fanatic, assurance borne such extraordinary fruit?'

4. But the central secret of the man's power must be sought at a still deeper level. It is in the absolutely unqualified gift of himself to his God and that God's intention for him.

A quarter century ago, there took form within him the inner certainty that God had a particular work — daring, difficult, momentous — for him to accomplish; and that, in the measure of his unquestioning fidelity, he would be supplied with explicit directions for his every act and adequate provision for his every need. From then until now he has lived from day to day and year after year in nearly unclouded trust — trust in the authenticity of his commission, trust in provision for his need. 'Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.'

To-day he is seldom seen except at the most fashionable hotels and on the most expensive liners, with apparently limitless financial resources flowing from mysterious reservoirs. But for years he existed precariously from hand to mouth, sharing his pittance prodigally with needier folk. More than once I have met him with fifty cents in his pocket and a bill many times that amount at his hotel. To-day he is the undisputed director of a powerful world-wide enterprise, revered almost to worship. But there were years

of crying in the wilderness, of criticism and calumny and cutting disdain; not long ago he saw the hard-won accomplishments of a decade crumble and found himself with only a handful of scattered followers. Not once or twice, but repeatedly, he has broken with colleagues, surrendered position, income, security, and the certainty of influence, and thrust himself into solitary isolation because he could not endure the temporizing and cowardice and selfishness of conventional Christian leadership. To-day he and his Movement exude a buoyancy, an optimism, a light-hearted well-being, which many who take the tragedy of their world's life seriously find almost repulsive. But behind the success of to-day lie periods of desolating loneliness and blank failure — failure of plans which were felt to be the dictation of God Himself.

Facile explanations of the Oxford Group Movement's astounding growth are rife to-day. Most of them are patently superficial. Even many adherents who have joined in the flood-tide of its importance fail utterly to comprehend the real key to its strength. No one can understand, or appreciate, the dogged resilience of this 'Movement of Life' who has not pierced through its obvious features and come face to face with the inner spring of all its energy — the rock-like consecration of its leader. Frank Buchman belongs in that tiny company of the centuries who have known themselves summoned to the surrender of all to the exacting demand of the Divine Will, and who, making the surrender, have pressed on through darkness and light in immovable confidence in the Divine Guardianship of their destiny. A like surrender he requires of every person who would share intimately in the leadership of his work. Dwight L. Moody was fond of saying that the

world had yet to see what God could accomplish by, in, and through a man completely given to His Will. Frank Buchman has earnestly endeavored to be that man.

V

I would gladly leave the matter at this point. However, our objective is not merely an appreciation of Mr. Buchman's sterling strength, but as impartial and complete a portrait of him as possible. If I am to be true to that aim, it is necessary to speak with equal frankness of his shortcomings. And all the more for this reason: I have urged that any adequate inquiry into the power of the Oxford Group Movement must find itself finally confronting a man; he is the answer to the inquiry. In precisely the same way, an attempt to account for what are widely regarded as serious dangers or weaknesses in the Movement will bring one face to face with him. Without exception they spring directly from the personality or conviction of its founder. This part of our task is especially delicate because the things most criticized are less matters of doctrine than of personal characteristic. I shall mention three.

1. It is reported that the first serious inner crisis in Mr. Buchman's life occurred when a fellow seminary student accused him of ambition. The deliberate selection of a difficult and obscure post for his first ministry was his response to the charge. Apparently the suggestion touched a sensitive point of consciousness. In the years since, Mr. Buchman has often been accused of ambition, of unfairness, of intolerance, of hypersensitiveness to criticism, of self-righteousness, of courting opposition.

Now the line between personal ambition and passionate concern for God's work may be a very narrow one. It is

clear that from very early in his career Mr. Buchman has felt himself designated for important tasks, and equipped with gifts adequate to their importance. Moreover, he has been driven by an overmastering sense of urgency and a corresponding impatience with cowardly or half-hearted or conventional measures. He has known God's Will for himself, for the church, and often for others. As a result, he has been unable to conceal his contempt for what he believes to be the incomplete dedication which characterizes most Christians, even those in responsible leadership. He has been unable to check a quick disdain for the lumbering and inept and ineffective efforts of most workers within the church. He has been unable to stifle sharp resentment at any who might raise questions as to the soundness of his own vision or the wisdom and effectiveness of his methods.

So certain is he of the indispensable importance of that which he knows himself called to do — winning individuals one by one to complete surrender of their lives, and then to the winning of others — that everyone else *must* be called to precisely the same task. In his view of the Christian enterprise, there is no division of responsibility in this matter; all are required to be 'soul surgeons.' This is the *sine qua non* of the Christian life. No one — statesman, physician, research scientist, bootblack, bishop — is excused from that primary responsibility. Nor is this all. No one is recognized as really winning souls effectively unless he is doing it in precisely the manner developed by Mr. Buchman.

This is one aspect of the picture. There is another. Not only is Mr. Buchman unsparingly rigorous in his estimate of the effectiveness of others; he will not abide the slightest questioning of his own work or that of his col-

leagues, except from those fully within the Movement. When queries are raised by outsiders, they are not met with reasoned rebuttal. 'Win your argument and lose your man' is one of his favorite warnings. The best defense is a vigorous attack. The validity of the slightest question is emphatically denied. Moreover, even if it come from a person of wisdom and experience and, as far as the questioner can read his own conscience, it be sincere and sympathetic, it tends to be labeled 'opposition.' On the other hand, honest opposition is labeled 'persecution.' Almost always criticism or doubt or even indifference is attributed to 'sin' on the part of the questioner — perhaps the rationalization of some grave hidden weakness or the sin of jealousy or laziness or cowardice.

It is easy to understand why Mr. Buchman has always found it exceedingly difficult to work with others except those who fully share his convictions and acknowledge his leadership. There were sharp disagreement and clash in his first position; he resigned, harboring deep resentment against the committee which had vetoed his policies. There were acute difficulties at Hartford Seminary during his tenure there. At various times he has been intimately associated with important Christian leaders and movements as a colleague; almost always the connection has finally been severed when his associates did not completely accept his views or would not fully accede to his plans for their work. It is not clear that these sharp differences always centred on matters of fundamental principle. It is significant that Mr. Buchman's career has left a trail of broken and raw relationships, of men and women branded as enemies because they ventured to raise doubt about some element in his programme or the infallibility of his judgment.

Only in the past few years, when he has been surrounded by a widening circle of loyal followers, have Mr. Buchman's personal relationships been unclouded.

Moreover, he has always found it difficult not only to understand but to forgive those who might differ from him. Here again he has been aware of his own temptation to harbor resentment. The experience which he speaks of as his 'conversion' and which determined the subsequent course of his life occurred as a climax to months of bitter rebellion against the committee which had blocked his plans; release and the gift of power came as he mastered ill will and bravely asked forgiveness from those who he felt had wronged him. It is possible that the weakness so courageously confronted on that occasion was rooted too deep within consciousness for complete exorcism. To sympathetic observers it has often seemed as though Mr. Buchman were deliberately inviting opposition, stirring criticism where none existed, discovering persecution in friendly but sincere query.

Now this marked characteristic is not to be put down as a serious failure of character without further comment. In greater or less measure it distinguishes most effective prophets with a vivid sense of personal mission. With them as with him, certainty of the rightness of one's own 'leading' carries, as its corollary, a poor estimate of others, a quick intolerance of inquiry, a tendency to regard honest questioning as deliberate opposition. The line between personal ambition and passionate concern for God's purposes is a narrow one. The same tremendous life energies flow out in two related channels. It is not easy to distinguish clearly between resentment at willful blocking of the Divine Cause and resentment at foiling of one's own plans. And it is not easy

to forgive criticism of self when one is so clearly the direct instrument of the Divine Purpose.

Moreover, as a practical tactic there is shrewd wisdom in never acknowledging weakness. So often, raising questions is a device for dodging the real issues. To consider criticism is to take up a defensive position and thus allow the critic to escape the positive truth of one's own message. As a friendly but careful appraiser has wisely said, 'Some antagonism comes from misunderstanding of and ignorance about the Movement; some opposition probably proceeds from jealousy that such vital results should be produced by a comparatively young group of workers; and much criticism undoubtedly comes from troubled consciences.' Mr. Buchman's sense for the failings of others is uniquely acute. Rare indeed is the honest soul who can face his exacting demands on life or the evident power of his influence for good without serious self-questioning. But there is a scriptural injunction about a 'mote' and a 'beam.' And the exigencies of 'effective tactics' may often furnish a subtle rationalization for personal pique or inner weakness.

In any event, the psychological factors at play are clear enough -- a passionate, hypersensitive nature and an imperious will, with some native predisposition to suspicion, resentment, and self-pity, gifted far beyond the ordinary with insight, empowered far beyond the average by self-dedication, stirred to righteous impatience by evident half-heartedness and ineffectiveness, steeled in self-assurance by a mystic sanction of Divine Commission. "The marks of "Messianic-consciousness" and "martyr-complex,"" a psychologist might suggest. 'The inevitable weaknesses of a true prophet,' supporters will affirm. In any event, here is the root of the self-righteousness,

intolerance, 'persecution-complex,' and spiritual pride of which the Oxford Group Movement is often accused.

2. No feature of the Oxford Group Movement so strikes the casual observer or furnishes such innocent merriment to friendly critics as its studious attention to position, title, and social prestige. No meeting is properly launched without its quota of patrons of rank and social standing. No reference to the work is typical without its listing of the important personages who have lately given their allegiance to it (or have expressed some friendly interest in it) — generals and bishops and M.P.'s and counts and baronets; or, failing these, sons and daughters, nephews and nieces, cousins and aunts, or friends of generals, bishops, M.P.'s, counts, and baronets. It is probable that no socially ambitious ecclesiastic of the most socially exclusive church ever made such habitual and unblushing employment of the names of the great, the near-great, the would-be-great, or the thought-to-be-great as the Oxford Group Movement.

Let it be said at once that this characteristic, likewise, proceeds directly from Mr. Buchman. All his life long he has paid an uncritical, almost childlike, deference to people of birth or social position, especially royalty or titled nobility. I suspect this is partly due to his own background; it is characteristic of many of humble but sterling birth to hold the socially élite in quite false reverence — a mistake not so easy for those more intimately acquainted with them. Partly it is the typical attitude of conservative German Lutheranism.

Closely related is the association of the work with comfortable, even luxurious living. It has long been Mr. Buchman's principle to stop only at the most fashionable hotels, and usu-

ally to travel in first-cabin accommodations on the most expensive liners. He encourages the same practice in his associates. Some years ago several of them, heading for Europe for a summer of training with the Groups, had engaged second-class passage; they received peremptory instructions from Mr. Buchman himself to exchange for first-class tickets in order that they might be assured of significant contacts on shipboard! When, on the opening day of an important campaign in Aberdeen, Mr. Buchman suddenly received imperative 'guidance' to leave the mission and sail for South America, it was a matter of surprise to no one that the guidance had directed him to go and return on the ship by which the Prince of Wales happened to be traveling. Let it be added that, while it is not recorded what result was achieved with the Prince, the ship's doctor was soundly converted and became one of the Movement's most effective workers!

At first thought, one is inclined to dismiss all this as a very human weakness. It has exposed the work to not a little playful chiding, as in the case of an American, himself a man of great ability, who, when told of all the big-wigs who were to grace a certain meeting, inquired plaintively whether there was any possibility that he might find there one or two ordinary citizens like himself. Or in the gently barbed limerick: —

There was a young man from Peoria
Whose sins they grew gorier and gorier.
By confession and prayer —
And *some* savoir-faire —
He now lives at the Waldorf-Astoria.

Sometimes it is difficult to take with seriousness a work which so completely falsifies the real values of life.

To be sure, all this is justified by Mr. Buchman in the certainty that his distinctive mission is to those of privilege and position, to the 'up-and-outs.'

It is his deliberate strategy to reach 'key people,' — those who set the pace and control the organization of our civilization, — in the faith that the influence will then filter down from the top until it touches the most obscure lives. But this raises serious doubts. For one thing, it suggests an employment of precisely the features of modern, high-pressure selling technique which are among the most repellent and unchristian features of our age. Again, it may open the door to very serious rationalization. It tempts, as we shall note in a moment, to a use of names and reputations which is not completely warranted by the facts. It tempts to a superficial analysis of the problems of poverty, injustice, and social struggle, a sentimental confidence in good intentions and personal holiness. It may tempt to a somewhat more lenient standard of devotion for those whose support is of strategic value.

Most of all, it is a little difficult to reconcile such philosophy and practice with the religion of One who came among men as a child of the peasantry and whose passionate solicitude was ever for the poor and the outcast. Nothing could be farther removed from the strategy and the faith of the Christian movement in its early outreach, which for its world-transforming influence trusted to 'not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble.' It invites the almost irresistible suspicion of rationalization. And that suspicion gains strength when we learn that, long before Mr. Buchman interpreted his mission as directed so exclusively to the top of the social scale, one of his favorite and oft-repeated epigrams was 'Good food and good Christianity go together.' That, too, is a principle not easily adjusted to the genius and practice of the first-century Christianity which he was

claiming to reproduce. In any event, here is the source of the social exclusiveness, the preoccupation with the externals of position, the indifference to social injustice, the blindness to the distinctive sins of privilege, which many find insuperable stumblingblocks in the Oxford Group Movement.

3. We come finally to a most sensitive point of inmost character which has been involved in the others. One of the four fundamental and inexorable 'tests of Christian character' demanded by Mr. Buchman is that of 'absolute honesty.' Many people question whether his work fully meets that exacting test.

Here again criticism must not permit itself to be unreasonable. It is a familiar trait of a consciousness convinced of the superlative importance of its own mission to see its accomplishments and those of its following through roseate glasses, and to undervalue the labor of others. Of Mr. Buchman's disparagement of outsiders we have already spoken. There is a corresponding tendency, almost juvenile in its naiveté, to see the virtues of his associates, the quality of their performance, and the significance of their achievements somewhat out of true perspective. This tendency pervades the entire Movement, but it is a contagion caught from Mr. Buchman's own habitual attitude. It is clearly marked in the literary apologists, especially those with a natural bent for the inveterate exaggerations of journalism. (It is noteworthy that the Movement's most striking expositions have come from the pens of professional journalists or advertising men.) Several of the characters in Harold Begbie's *Life Changers (More Twice-Born Men)* would hardly be recognized by their own families, so heroic have become their proportions in his portraiture. A critical eye will

catch a dozen misrepresentations or serious overstatements in a single chapter of *For Sinners Only*.

It is difficult to place the limit of excusable false impression. For example, the Movement still makes use of stories of 'changed lives' which long since severed active connection with its work, and in at least one instance of a remarkable life conversion whose final state was very close to its first. In the recountal of personal narratives which make up the great bulk of the spoken and written evangel, there is frequently heightened painting both of the gravity of pre-conversion vices and of the measure of post-conversion transformation. The same blindness obtains in the use of 'guidance.' In the course of a day I have heard Mr. Buchman report twenty or twenty-five instances of direct 'guidance' — predictions of definite events which God had told him were surely to occur. Perhaps a fourth or a fifth of them actually came to pass. They were triumphantly cited as vindications of the practice. The great bulk which at the end of the day remained unfulfilled were blithely ignored.

Generous allowance must be made for the very human exaggeration of a great enthusiasm. But exaggeration is a subtle and dangerous foe of the honest spirit. It is infectious and its contagion spreads rapidly through other chambers of the mind. All too readily imagination displaces fact; one believes true what one wants to believe. To exaggerate one's own experiences is natural, if unfortunate. But to misrepresent the attitude of others touches more profound issues. Two instances will serve as illustration.

When in Oxford three years ago, I stopped in at a training house party of the Movement then in session and chanced to meet Mr. Buchman. 'I hear you are going to F——,' I said, mentioning a city where the Groups

were soon to conduct a large mission. 'Oh yes,' he said, 'So-and-so [naming one of the most distinguished Christian leaders in Great Britain] wants us to bring a team there, so we're going.' Some months later, while visiting F——, I mentioned the conversation to Dr. So-and-so. I learned that, far from urging the Groups to come, he had been quite unfavorable to their plans; but, informed that they were coming willy-nilly, he had, with true Christian grace, urged his fellow clergy to lend sympathetic interest and had consented to chair an opening meeting.

Some years ago, when the work at Oxford was libeled by a college lampoon, several of the strongest college officials, moved by a sense of fair play, issued a public statement giving the true facts and exonerating the Movement from the more serious imputations. It was immediately heralded abroad that these officials were now active supporters when they had been at particular pains to make clear to the leaders of the Movement that such was not their attitude and that their statement must not be so interpreted.

These are illustrations which could be duplicated many times over.

In brief, a good word for the work, in the face of cruel slander, is represented as convinced support. Attendance at a meeting as a curious inquirer may forthwith be widely circulated so as to convey the impression of full membership. The vaguest expression of sympathy with the general objectives is quoted as though it were a declaration of complete approval.

Forthright and determined honesty of mind is one of the most difficult virtues. It is perhaps especially difficult for the religious spirit, always tempted to confuse dreams with realities, to mistake its intentions for achievements. Like all consummate qualities of character, it comes only

'with prayer and fasting.' It is born of a reverent passion for truth, and the exacting self-discipline which only that passion can beget. And it is sustained only in those souls whose central certainty is that, in the end of the day, truth alone prevails and endures — that is, in those who believe that God is Truth, as well as Love and Power. That certainty is a foundation stone of all true and profound and enduring religion.

VI

Many who are eager to understand the Oxford Group Movement might think we have drawn too great attention to Mr. Buchman. They are mistaken. It is *his* Movement. Quite naturally he dislikes the title 'Buchmanism,' partly because it is ugly, partly because it has become a nickname of derision. But there never was an initiator of a great religious awakening — Francis, Swedenborg, Wesley — who more deserved to have the movement take its name from him. There is not one single feature of this Movement by which it may be distinguished from conventional current Christianity which is not derived directly and wholly from the thought and practice of Mr. Buchman. There is not one feature of it to which men bring

violent objection which is not part and parcel of the life and conviction of Mr. Buchman. Many men of maturity and eminence and force of character have joined themselves to the work with the frank purpose of modifying certain of its attitudes and methods which they regarded as unsound. They themselves have changed, always much more than they would have believed possible, often very much more than they themselves realize. The Movement has not changed an appreciable iota in any one of its fundamental characteristics.

Quietly, unobtrusively, without the slightest overt dictation or domination, Mr. Buchman continues to be the determinative focus of the Movement — one of the most extraordinary men in a period which may be distinguished in the annals of history as the Begetter of Great Leaders.¹

¹ The great leaders I have in mind are not the Hardings, Coolidges, and Hoovers, but Lenin, Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler, Roosevelt, Barth. It is my conviction that Mr. Buchman really deserves classification with these figures, not only as regards certain very striking parallels in personality and influence, but even as regards stature. With all his shortcomings, which I have been at special pains to point out, I think he is one of the most remarkable men in an age which is characterized by the emergence of extraordinarily powerful and dominating figures. — ACTUOR

(The Atlantic will publish a second article by Professor Van Dusen appraising the Oxford Group Movement itself)

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