

G O R D O N W I S E

*A
Great Aim
in Life*

AN AUSTRALIAN'S ADVENTURE



A Great Aim in Life

An Australian's Adventure

GORDON WISE

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To my Australian family, who may wonder how
I spent the past 83 years;

To my friends and colleagues, to whom I owe so much;

And to those setting out on life's great adventure.

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My first acknowledgement must be to my wife, Marjory. She typed the first versions of my stories, but this unskilled computer operator wiped off what had been written.

The following week I had a stroke, which put me in hospital for six and a half months. We had to lay aside all idea of writing a memoir.

Fortunately, my memory returned.

Eighteen months later, she had the courage to look in the piles of files I had left on my desk and started to put these together. We rewrote some of what had been destroyed, and added much more. Through the skill and patience of Virginia Wigan a second draft was created, with her valued additional perspective. To Ginny I owe a great debt of gratitude.

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the cover. And great appreciation goes to Sara Marafini for designing the cover.

I apologize if parts of this book have great resonance for some readers and not for others. But I wanted to try and capture in words some of the colour of my Australian family story, which has always meant so much to me, to put on record my perspective on some of the experiences through which I was privileged to live, and to outline to future generations called to the same work that I have given my life to some of the decisions we had to face and the legacy we hoped to generate. Some of these stories are explored in greater depth in the books listed in the Further Reading section.

There are an untold number of people whose stories are interwoven with my own on these pages, and for anyone who does not find themselves actually named in the narrative due to omission or for reasons of space please consider yourself named in spirit. However, certain faces sprang immediately to mind over the course of writing up these stories and I would like to acknowledge some of them here, even if as representatives of a much larger group.

I think of those I worked with in Germany after the war, and then in further countries of Europe and Asia in the years that followed. I had hosts of friends and colleagues in all we did together. I salute each one as they continue alongside a new generation. And I salute that new generation, many of whom we knew when they were setting out on their paths in this work and came to join us in London or at Tirley Garth.

I think of the group of colleagues who dedicatedly toil for peace in the Middle East. And in America, North and South, I acknowledge the warmth and close comradeship I have felt with so many. The relations and friends of Jim and Ellie Newton in Florida, who became our friends, have a special place in my heart.

To name all in Britain and Australia with whom I have shared life's experiences would fill many pages.

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Lastly, I appreciate the love and support of my Australian family and of Marjory's family.

Ticehurst, East Sussex
2006

Introduction



I am an ordinary Australian who loves the land of his birth fiercely and jealously and who has come to love Britain, my adopted home. Writing this in my eighties, I still remember vividly my boyhood in Australia's tropical north, enlisting to join Britain's defence in the Second World War – and the exhilaration of flying solo for the first time – and, on a visit to Rome with my wife, meeting Pope John Paul II.

Giant personalities come to mind, led off by Frank Buchman, the initiator of Moral Re-Armament, a commitment to which I have devoted 60 years so far. I remember conversations with Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden, two interviews in 10 Downing Street with Labour Prime Minister Clement Attlee, and with ten others of his post-war Cabinet. Others I could describe are Australia's greatest Prime Minister, John Curtin; Philippines' President Ramon Magsaysay; Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of Germany; Jawaharlal Nehru of India. I can count 55 prime ministers, presidents, governors-general and other heads of governments, in or out of office, in 49 lands, that I have had the good fortune to meet. I have been 75 times to the United States and am on my fourteenth passport since 1947.

'So what?' you may say. I am reminded of one of Frederick the Great's advisors who said, 'That general is a great military leader.' 'Why?' asked the Emperor. 'He has been in four wars,' answered the advisor. The Emperor riposted, 'You see that mule? He has been in five wars – but he is still a mule.' So in writing down some memories, it may become clear that I have not improved much on the mule – though a mule, I am bound to say, is a very useful beast in the right place at the right time.

Highlights and contrasts for me include entering Germany with a Moral Re-Armament (then often known as MRA, but now called Initiatives of Change) mission in 1947, and flying to beleaguered Berlin on the 'airlift' in 1949; fast cruising down Vietnam's Mekong River in an army launch in 1973, after the American troops had withdrawn and before the fall of Saigon; visiting Laos with my friend, Joe Hodgson, and being the first people to discuss MRA's ideas in that charming country; staying in a Buddhist monastery in Bangkok; visiting the ancient temples of Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Borobudur in Indonesia, the Taj Mahal in India and St Peter's in Rome. Over a period of years in different cities of the world I have met ten cardinals, four of whom we have counted as friends – one a very close friend. I have been at home with dockers' families in East London, the miners of Northumbria, in the mansion of an English earl, with the mafia men of the longshoremen of Brooklyn and the rickshaw-pullers of Calcutta.

In Brussels and Milan respectively I sat down with the leaders of the world's non-communist Union Federations and that of the Communist Federation. The Duke and Duchess of Montrose and the King and Queen of Romania came to stay when we lived in London. In the same British Parliament I counted as friends the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Lord Chancellor, who presides over Britain's House of Lords.

I have travelled by third-class train with the Indian people, and in first class by air from Paris to Rio de Janeiro. There was also the excitement of starting an Indian weekly news magazine with a grandson of Mahatma Gandhi. Or of walking into the mosques of Istanbul. And from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land there is the memory of dawn breaking over the Sea of Galilee. Not to mention how exotic it was to swim in the South China Sea on the Gulf of Siam. I could add fishing in the Arafura Sea off Darwin with my father.

But my happiest memories are of my engagement and wedding days, of holding our little son on my shoulder, and of him running along a corridor and throwing himself into my arms.

Many people have done more wondrous – and certainly more important – things than these, but I have had my fair share of variety.

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I suppose that the sense of reward which lasts longest is of being a kind of 'midwife' in the spiritual redirection of some lives that came my way, in countries to which I was led rather than which were of my seeking. What I wanted to do more than anything was to be of assistance and to give friendship to those who had great responsibility on their shoulders. *Enabling* others.

But always at the top of my heart, so ready to overflow with emotion, is my love for my wife and son.

I

Pineapples, Pearls and Bananas

1923-1933



*The Tropical Advisor – The Wises and Hunters of Queensland –
Broome Days – Election Results*

Broome, an exotic pearling town in the northwest of Australia known as the Kimberleys, was where my father was posted when I was six. It was a magical place for a boy. Pearling luggers dominated the harbour shoreline, and the town was an extraordinary mix of all colours and races, for Broome had been until 1914 the deep-sea pearling capital of the world. There were no paved streets and even today there is not a single traffic light.

In 1929 the Premier of Queensland responded to a request from his West Australian counterpart to send over someone qualified in tropical agriculture who could develop the industry in Western Australia. My father was the man chosen to undertake this pioneering work, as Tropical Advisor. His remit included all that grew and grazed.

Broome was his headquarters and his territory was vast, encompassing hundreds of thousands of square miles, from Wyndham in the north to Carnarvon in the south and a thousand miles in between. He fostered the banana-growing industry of Carnarvon so successfully that he was elected to the State Parliament. Today at a far northern town called Kununurra there is the Frank Wise Institute of Tropical Agricultural Research, with Wise streets and place names in other towns.

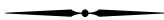
Between the ages of six and ten Broome was my home and my delight. We children happily ran around the sandy town barefoot. Saturday night meant movies in the open-air picture house, a treat bought for sixpence. The Sun Pictures building is just the same today,

although the ticket prices are now northwards of \$10. The films – Wild West serials featuring Tom Mix, and the never-ending *Perils of Pauline* – aside, my most memorable time at the pictures was when a slide was flashed on the screen during the interval to say that my father had won the seat of Gascoyne for the Australian Labor Party in the State elections. I was so proud!

Sometimes in my school holidays I would accompany my father when he drove thousands of miles over primitive roads and dried-out riverbeds to visit outlying sheep and cattle stations and to attend to the banana growers' needs. The banana industry was nourished by water pumped from under the dry bed of the Gascoyne River, and fed along cement waterways to the rows of banana plants. It still is. The sheep station owners, or graziers, always had a welcome for us, with beds and lots of fresh meat for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Dad could answer all their questions about feed, livestock, pests and the like.

I remember opening hundreds of gates across paddocks as we crossed into different properties. I was paid a penny a gate – good pocket money in those days. Sometimes the roads were only wheel ruts through sand and if my father let his speed drop, we would get stuck. And while a lot of riverbeds were dry for most of the year, you could still sink into the dry sand. We carried a shovel and a towrope so that if we were bogged a passing vehicle could help us. It's not a rarity in those parts to encounter signs saying: 'Vehicles passing this point are liable to become bogged or lost or both.'

My mother taught Sunday School in the little Anglican church, so we three kids were obliged to attend. She taught me to pray on my knees before sleeping, and that habit has been mine ever since, including the Air Force years when I shared a hut with quite a few non-churchgoers, whose language was not out of the Book of Common Prayer.



On the other side of the continent from Broome, in rural North Queensland, between the Tropic of Capricorn and the Equator, lies a land of great richness. It attracted all four of my British-born grand-

parents. My English grandfather, on my father's side, fancied himself as a landowner, and sailed to Australia as a farming settler; my Scots maternal grandfather was more of a buccaneer, and thought that in the Southern Hemisphere he'd be able to make his fortune. My parents were born after their parents had settled in Queensland, my father Frank in Ipswich and my mother Elsie in Cairns.

Charles Edward Wise, born in the Elephant and Castle area of London – I once found the small street, but the houses had given way to a hotel – was by trade a shoe finisher and not by nature or experience a man of the land. Although Queensland produces magnificently of nature's bounty, it proved a struggle for him to make his farming property pay. On his wedding certificate he described himself as a 'salesman'. In addition to the smallholding, he and my grandmother ran the General Store and Post Office at the 'village' of Wamuran, not far from the state capital, Brisbane. My father, Frank, left school at the age of twelve to work on his father's property, but later secured a two-year scholarship to nearby Gatton Agricultural College, graduating as dux of his year. This qualified him for a job in the Queensland Department of Agriculture, which later led him to Western Australia.

Meanwhile my mother's father, Ernest Hunter, kept a hotel – Hunter's Hotel in Kuranda, an idyllic small town on the edge of the Atherton Tableland near the spectacular Barron Falls. An area of fertile volcanic soil, it was said that if you planted a stick there, it grew.

My parents made their first home there, on the Tableland, and I was born in the town of Atherton itself on March 25, 1923. The doctor who delivered me was one Jarvis Nye, whom I met again 50 years later. My first memories are of reading the comics in my grandfather's store (with the privilege of not actually needing to buy them) – and when I went back 50 years later, the building was amazingly still as it was, with comics still being sold. Other vivid memories of those days are being out with my father when he would harvest a ripe pineapple, warm in the sun, too ripe for market, and slicing it for me to eat between two pieces of bread and butter. I also remember a pony ride, and having a boiled egg for my 'tea' when I stayed overnight with my grandparents.

When I was about twelve, I remember Grandpa Wise taking a trip ‘home’ to England, travelling steerage on a Cook’s Tour. It cost him about £33. He came back having proven to his own satisfaction that our family was related both to General Gordon of Khartoum (my grandmother, his wife, was a Gordon), and Sir Walter Scott (his own mother was a Scott). But in later years no-one can locate the documentary evidence, and when I visited the home of Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford, the living relative there thought an Australian connection was highly unlikely. My own researches into our family tree go back as far as 1837.

Grandma Wise dressed in black with high-lacing shoes and was rather stern. She once gave me a good telling off after catching me up to no good. Grandpa had a ginger moustache and was a very earnest Baptist and a Mason. He used to write me scriptural advice. My father himself was a man of great principle, although this didn’t extend to religious observance – his non-churchgoing likely due to a surfeit of such in his youth, for his father expected attendance up to three times on Sunday. But there was a bonus to this: he would always prepare the family Christmas dinner, and I’d come home from church with my mother and sisters to a sizzling roast turkey with home-grown veggies.

In 1983 I was in Brisbane and went to look for their graves. My Grandma had died first, and on her tomb Grandpa had put, ‘She hath done what she could’. This seemed meagre, until I realised it was from one of St Paul’s Epistles and meant that she had, in his opinion, done ‘all she could’ in this life – high praise indeed, for she was now fit for heaven.

Before I turned five, I started at the primary school in Wamuran, my father’s current posting. When I later went back to Wamuran with my wife and son after five decades, the store and school were exactly as I had pictured them in memory’s eye, although the school had become a small church. Our son even reached up to the shelf in the store to read the comics, just as I had done.

I don’t remember my mother’s parents except for a vague impression, perhaps reinforced by photographs seen later. But driving through the rain forests to Atherton in 1978, we found Hunter’s Hotel

still standing in Kuranda, but empty. It was of wooden construction, of two storeys, with wide verandahs. The proprietor of the more modern hotel nearby, the Fitzgerald, was serving in his bar when I walked in. He showed me Hunter's and remembered my grandfather as a towering six-footer of impressive demeanour. We found his grave marked by an appropriately massive slab in the local cemetery. It was a stirring moment to see my nine-year-old put frangipani flowers on his forebear's grave.

Ernest Hunter was what nowadays would be called an 'entrepreneur'. He got involved in gold mining at nearby Charters Towers, and even sailed to London to have the company he set up listed on the Stock Exchange. My mother said that he made and lost two fortunes. But he was elected to the Queensland Legislative Council. A local history of the Kuranda region calls him 'a person of considerable repute.' His first wife, my grandmother, died in about 1919, but in 1921 he remarried, to a schoolteacher who had fallen in love with the area so much that she had even written a book evoking the glories of the place, based on her experiences on a trip there in 1913. She was 27 years his junior.

In Cairns on that trip in 1978, we found my mother's youngest brother, Uncle Bob. He was by way of being a 'hard-doer' and was appalled that I did not drink beer, bringing along a crate of the amber liquid when we had dinner. A widower, Bob was an agent for a line of menswear. Relations between him and my father were prickly; my father said it was because Uncle Bob had kept Dad's valuable collection of butterflies when Dad moved to the West, and presumably had sold it.

I've still got relatives in North Queensland. A step-uncle, Ross Hunter, grew avocados up on the Tableland, and on a later visit which I made alone in 1983 he lent me a Land Rover to scoot about in. It was a voyage of discovery in an enchanted area, its luxuriant growth including delicious tropical fruits – mangoes, paw-paw, pineapples and custard apples.

Grandfather Ernest Hunter went to London in 1930 as North Queensland delegate to the Empire Congress of the Federated Chambers of Commerce, where he was presented to King George V.

In the mid-Thirties he despatched for the King's enjoyment an oak casket with drawers containing cigarettes made of tobacco grown in Mareeba, where he was President of the Chamber of Commerce. But they went mouldy during the long sea voyage, and the casket was returned empty by Queensland's Agent General in London.

My sisters – twins, named Una and Shirley – were born in Gympie, where our father's job had taken us (about 100 kilometres south of Atherton) in 1926, when I was three. Our house was built on stilts so as not to be attacked by termites. My mother's labour came unexpectedly early and my father had no way of getting her to hospital in time, nor was there a midwife on hand. Fortunately, there was a telephone. My father told me much later – when I was about 60 – that he had delivered the twins himself, guided by advice over the phone from the hospital matron. My mother thought she was expecting one baby, so the first-born twin was called Una. Shirley soon appeared and throughout their lives they have been the closest of companions, and very loving sisters to me.

All those years later my father also said to me, 'Look under the sole of your foot. While I was delivering the twins, you played outside and stepped on a broken bottle under the house. I couldn't attend to you until the delivery was over.' I found the scar.



Broome, my father's next posting, is on the opposite side of the continent from where I was born. Supplies came by coastal steamer from Perth and Fremantle in the south, and the butter and perishables invariably ran out before the next ship was due. Tinned butter was ghastly, so we'd have bread and dripping until the ship arrived. It always received a warm welcome at the jetty. This jetty was a mile long because of the enormous tidal differences, which also meant that we boys could walk on the mud around the ships' propellers as they sat on the bottom waiting for the next tide.

I remember the names of Master Pearlars – 'Captain' Gregory and Sam Male for two, the Male family's name still emblazoned proudly above the general store of Streeter & Male. It was an extraordinarily

cosmopolitan town of all colours and races, and had been for generations. Many of the pearl divers had come from Japan, and there is a cemetery full of headstones beautifully inscribed in Japanese. I also remember Chinese and Malay crews preparing rice in pots over fires on the beach, and I used to watch the men mending the pearl luggers' sails. The cook would sometimes share their meal with us boys. However, the white Master Pearlers were the elite, and strode around town in immaculate white suits making it clear who led the community. There was a real air of a Somerset Maugham-style colonial outpost to the place.

My parents employed an Aboriginal couple, Paddy and Mary, who lived on the grounds of our first house. They had been educated at the Catholic Mission north of Broome at Beagle Bay, well-regarded at the time, which had a mother-of-pearl altar in the church. Part of Paddy's wage was in chewing tobacco, which he used to eke out by rolling the wad in white ash from the fire.

The village school was sound enough in its instruction, but the head teacher, one Jimmy Gill, was something of a sadist. He used to whip us with freshly-picked oleander sticks. I say 'freshly-picked' because whenever we had a chance, we would throw his sticks up into the loft above the classroom – and he would cut another. By the time my father became Minister for Education in the late Thirties, he'd heard enough other complaints about Gill to have him transferred to an administrative job some place else. The school room stood alone, squat and on stilts, with fans in the ceiling and open at the sides to allow the wind to blow through.

Our winter, which ran from May to September, was warm and I enjoyed the 40 degree heat; we then soldiered through a very unpleasant tropical summer that ran from October (including a full Christmas dinner in December) to March, with rains in April. This monsoon, called 'the wet', cooled us down, but it would also wash away roads and bridges. My early conditioning in the tropics prepared me for my later ten years spent in 15 Asian countries from the early Fifties on. And when an English summer's day is deemed hot by the locals, I have to disagree politely.

Our first home in Broome had white verandahs running around it, and my father grew everything possible in the garden. There was a cage with birds in it, so we always heard birdsong. But most of the time we were in Broome we lived on the grounds of the Continental Hotel, which was run by Mrs Locke. The menus were the same each week. I used to particularly enjoy the pea soup on Friday nights. The Ogilvy, Bardwell, Durack, Gregory and Miller families were all friends, and we still know some of them. A long way off for our small feet (and I went most places barefoot in those days – not, I think, because we couldn't afford shoes, but because that was the simplest thing to do in sandy Broome), but today only a few minutes by car, was the famous Cable Beach, so named because it was here that the international telegraph cable came in to Australia from Indonesia. The dazzling white sand, 22 kilometres of it, stretches apparently endlessly. My father would sometimes drive us there at weekends, but we swam mostly around the town jetty, much closer to where we lived, inside a shark-proof wire net. We would see sea snakes and turtles and huge mud crabs nearby.

We spent so much time outdoors that Shirley once suffered from sunstroke, and I can remember her screaming. Luckily an experienced doctor was staying at the hotel and he knew how to treat her. (What I remember best about this Dr Hungerford was him teaching me to dry between my toes!)

I led a little gang of boys. Once, wanting to make a 'cubby' or camp in the scrubland near the beach, we pinched the sail off a lugger that had been pulled up on the sand. But next day the sail had disappeared. While I was addressing my crew with colourful language, my father happened to be within earshot. All he said was, 'Do you want me to tell your mother what you have just said?' I gave him the simple answer, 'No, I don't.' That was enough to put me right. I never discovered what happened to that sail.

Then there were exotic places like Shark Bay, where I would fish while my father met the locals. I also passed the time watching local pearlers boil up their 'pokey pots' of smaller pearl shells. Any shells that had pearls in them would sink to the bottom of the pot. When

we went to Shark Bay a half century later and asked if anyone remembered my father, I was directed to an old-timer who said, 'Frank Wise? Of course I remember him. Shark Bay had 200 votes in those days, and your father got them all.'



Carnarvon is in a region called Gascoyne, named after its river. Further south than Broome, but still in the northwest, it is geographically about the size of Ireland. When the banana growers and graziers there, appreciative of his support for their work, asked him to represent them in the State Parliament my father, who had a strong sense of public duty, said that if he did stand it would be on a Labor ticket; that was his conviction. The farmers were usually given to voting for the conservative Country Party, but they nonetheless gave my father their vote.

Labor had never won in the region before, and Teddy Angelo, the Country Party Member, was most surprised to find himself unseated by twice the vote he had received. John Skipworth, nearly 100 at time of writing, recalls wheeling Dad down Carnarvon's main street in a mail cart in an impromptu victory parade. But party politics weren't the be-all and end-all among my father's associates: another political opponent of his kindly gave me a life membership of the Royal Commonwealth Society in London, to act as a base when I was away in the war. However, after my father left his seat in the West Australian Parliament to become Administrator of the Northern Territory, Labor never took Gascoyne again.

My father's election meant moving to Carnarvon, in 1933. I was ten. When I had been there before on my school holiday gate-opening journeys, we had stayed at the Gascoyne Hotel on the riverbank, run by a cheerful hotelier called Dick Cornish. Now we were to live in a rented house, which had a fig tree in the garden the fruit of which was ripe enough to just pluck and eat. At about eleven, I became editor of the school newspaper, which was pasted to a wall for everyone to read.

Two local Labor Party activists, Don and Bill Willesee, helped my

father with his constituency work. They taught me to swim across the Gascoyne River in the wet season, when it was flowing. Don later became Foreign Minister in Gough Whitlam's Labor Government in the Seventies, and Bill followed my father's second stint in the Western Australian Parliament as Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council.

Carnarvon, like Broome, then had broad, tree-lined streets of hard earth. Bitumen would only come later. As in Broome, the State Ships *Koolinda*, *Kangaroo* and *Kybra* brought supplies up from Fremantle, and sometimes my father took me on voyages with him. I loved being treated as a grown-up by the ship's crew, choosing my meals from a menu and working my way down it. Like a hotel, there was soup, a fish course, meat and dessert with cheese and biscuits. The ships' menu also included chops and eggs, or sausage and eggs, or steak and eggs, as well as bacon for breakfast. I still fancy steak for breakfast if I get half a chance, but I think that the last time was in 1974 when travelling on the Indian-Pacific railway from Perth to Sydney.

2

All Change

1933-1942



*A Home in Perth – Family Tales – The Premier’s Son –
After the Hockey Game, New Direction – The Civil Servant Signs On*

Our life as a family in Carnarvon only lasted about six months before we headed south, as my father found he needed to live in Perth for the business of Parliament. He would then drive north the 700 miles to his constituency once the session ended.

After we arrived in Perth in 1933, we moved five times more before I graduated from high school. We lived first in the suburb of Mount Lawley, then at 14 Vincent Street, Nedlands, followed by 81 Broadway. At Nedlands School I met Jim Wilson, still my oldest friend.

Dad was keen for me to develop a sense of business awareness in return for my pocket money. He would buy cauliflower and other choice vegetables at market, then I would be despatched to hawk them around the neighbourhood. Once, without realising what I was doing, I found myself ringing the doorbell of someone I knew from school. When he answered, to hide my embarrassment, I pretended I was calling to see him.

This was at least a step up from my moneymaking ventures at Mount Lawley. There, I used to go around the suburb shovelling up manure left on the streets by the horse-drawn milk carts. I’d load it into an old pram, and sell it for a shilling a bag. There was quite a market for it!

While at Nedlands our grandparents came to stay, en route from Queensland to visit England. The trip across Australia was 3,000 miles

alone. Wanting to take them out for a drive, my father ordered me to check the car's oil, petrol and water before they set off. The petrol gauge was broken, and you had to use a stick to find out how much was in the tank. I was pretty annoyed at the way I'd been commanded to do this, so in a fit of pique – and despite my sisters' yelling and entreating me to stop – I actually topped it up with water rather than petrol. Undeterred, my father simply unscrewed another cap under the car and separated the water out from the petrol by filtering it through a felt hat.

Once a year we sailed from Fremantle to take our family holiday on Rottnest Island, an unspoiled swimming and fishing paradise, for a month after Christmas. For a modest rent you could take an old colonial cottage at the early settlement there, which we would share with another family. It had become something of an island playground for Perth. I noticed that every morning when you came out, the ground was littered with beer bottles from the holidaymakers' festivities the night before. I began to collect them, and stacked them along the low wall at the back of the cottage. When I had enough, I'd sell them off to a local named Tiny – so called because he was so big. He'd pay fivepence per dozen, then ship them back to the mainland and collect the deposit. I eventually made enough money to upgrade my bike.

It was 1 Rosser Street in the seaside suburb of Cottesloe that became our final family home. For years after I left I used to describe its position with pride: 100 yards from the football field, a quarter of a mile from the tennis courts and half a mile from a sandy beach that stretched for miles and miles along the Indian Ocean.

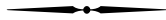
Dad had the house built in 1938. It was the first home he owned, and having little capital it was on a very long mortgage. His parliamentary salary was only about £480 a year, and not that much more even when he made it to Cabinet. My father so liked the house we'd rented at 166 Stirling Highway in nearby Claremont that he hired the same builder to replicate it, but this time all on one level. (In Claremont I had the whole upper floor to myself.) We used to go over in the evenings to inspect progress. It was a well-planned, cool bungalow, with deep eaves and a verandah. The hallway, living room and

dining room were panelled with beautiful Queensland woods that Dad selected. There were four bedrooms, the fourth being set aside for our Italian live-in maid, Carmel Pola. That room later became Dad's study. My room looked out towards the Indian Ocean, and I could see the Rottneest lighthouse flashing on my wall as I lay in bed.

Although I only lived there for four years, as I was well up in my teens by the time we moved in, 1 Rosser Street became the backdrop to many a family tale. My father, never shy of giving orders, once peremptorily asked me to take the rubbish out after the end of a meal. Grumpily, I went outside and confronted the bins, declaring, 'I do all the work around here.' A loud guffaw of laughter emerged from the kitchen window above me, from where I realised the rest of the family was looking on. From then on after, this became known as 'Gordon's Address to the Rubbish Bin'.

There was a good-sized garden at the back which my father, with his agricultural expertise, put to good use as a very productive fruit and vegetable plot, interspersed with brilliant perfumed flowers and trees. My sister Una became a marvellous gardener herself, and when she had her own home they would vie to outdo each other.

Another of my chores was to mow the front lawn and take my turn in watering the garden. I used to do this with the sitting room windows open in order to be able to hear Bing Crosby and Fats Waller on the radio. The radio had to be quite loud, of course, to be heard over the noise of the lawnmower. My father would regularly turn it down, bellowing, 'I don't mind paying the radio licence, but I object to paying for one for the house at the bottom of the street!'



I was close to my mother. She was a gracious, buoyant lady, very loving, energetic, and an ardent bridge player. She also smoked cigarettes, unusual for a woman in those days. I collected cigarette cards of film stars and cricketers and rather encouraged her to buy fresh packets. Of course, this was long before we knew about the connection between smoking and lung cancer. She also seemed to have an extraordinary streak of luck in competitions. Within quite a short

space of time, she won a gold watch, a refrigerator and a car. (The fridge was the first one we ever owned, having used a 'Coolgardie safe' until then – wet cloths laid over a wooden frame which was set up in a shady and breezy place.) It was a little embarrassing for my father, for at times she was actually drawing the raffle herself, as the dignitary's wife! But my father wasn't averse to a bit of a flutter either. He and my mother used to go to what was known as 'the trots' at Gloucester Park with their great friends, the Urens. This was a form of horse-drawn chariot racing, with drivers in little buggies behind the horse.

I do remember being jealous of my sisters as a little boy, but at the same time I felt something special about my relationship with my mother. I can remember waiting for her at the tram stop when she returned from some shopping, just to see her. And until I was about eleven she would pray with me each night.

As I could not enjoy my Saturday roast dinner before playing afternoon sport, she would keep my delicious plateful, including roast pumpkin, warm for me to eat on my return. I also remember her pumpkin scones and 'Washing-Day Pudding', with currants and raisins, which she always produced on a Monday night. She taught me how to make scrambled eggs, and creamed mushrooms on toast – my wife Marjory now says it's the greatest compliment when I say she's prepared them 'just as Mum used to!'

My mother was a very placid person and patient with my father, but I would aggravate him. However, once when he was reprimanding me she most surprisingly threw a loaf of bread at him – which missed. I can't remember what I had done on that occasion, but I was a difficult son and teenager and often managed to provoke a reaction from him. I'd then accuse him of dramatizing a situation, when in fact it was, I realised later, the other way round. More than once I ended up being beaten across the backside with a leather razor strap. When I was in hot water with my father I used to ask my mother to be an intermediary, as I found her easier to talk to.



Two years after entering Parliament, my father was made Minister for Agriculture by Labor Premier Phil Collier. Labor was at that point in office from 1933-47 and my father held a variety of cabinet posts – twelve in all, as I recall – culminating in the Premiership of the State between 1945 and 1947. He succeeded John Willcock, having been acting premier for some time when Willcock fell ill. He declined to take over in his own right until it was apparent that Willcock could not return, and Dad's election was unopposed. The government fell in 1947, when voters around the world seemed to want a change after the war years, but Dad kept his seat as Gascoyne's Member of the Legislative Assembly.

However, the Federal Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, asked him to become Administrator of the Northern Territory – in the time before it was a state itself, and reported directly to Canberra – even more of an honour as Menzies was very much of the opposing political party. Dad threw himself into the role with great passion, moving his family to Darwin and championing the territory's interests, sometimes to Canberra's chagrin. While there he also befriended the noted Australian artist Albert Namatjira, who as an Aboriginal and, under the laws of the time, a ward of the state, was technically in his care. When the Queen visited Australia in 1954, he took Namatjira to Canberra to present him to her. One of Namatjira's original watercolours hung in the family home for years to come.

But they returned to Perth in 1951 following Dad's diagnosis with diabetes. He declared, 'If the Federal Government won't give me the necessary resources, I'm not going to ruin my health.' However, he went on to secure a seat in the Legislative Council (the West Australian upper house), representing the north west, and was reappointed to the cabinet when Labor was returned to power. By the time he retired in 1971 he had led both the upper and lower houses and was Father of the House. It's a record that has never been equalled.

I was proud to be his son. And when a schoolboy I discovered there were a few perks to being so. On my own merits I had won an open scholarship to the leading government Secondary School, Perth Modern, for my last four years, but I found it did no harm at all to

have in addition a father who was Minister for Education. Whether or not because of family connection, I was a class prefect each year, and a school prefect and editor of the school magazine in my final year, 1940. Una also won a scholarship and followed me there three years later, while Shirley went to Presbyterian Ladies' College.

I was also in the school athletics team for 1939-40, the football team (First XVIII, Australian Rules) for 1939-40, and the hockey team in 1940. After leaving I did competitive amateur athletics, played some A-grade hockey and was an instructor and Patrol Captain in North Cottesloe Surf Lifesaving Club. Parliamentary connections did help my recreational life too, though, when I found that my father had a double pass to the best seats in five movie houses. Even though it said 'strictly personal and not transferable' it helped my social calendar become pretty full – with Jean and Judy and Lorna. My mother liked musicals, so I would take her occasionally.

Jim Wilson and I used to go for long bike rides in the school holidays – first 150 miles, next time 300, then 500 and 700. He had also gone on to 'Mod'. We once set fire to the chimney of a roadhouse for passing travellers – it was cold, and we'd heaped too many logs on to the fire in our room. I always meet up with Jim when I return 'home' and we reminisce endlessly. He says that I taught him to smoke behind the bicycle shed at school when we were eleven and only in recent years did he kick the habit – one that I never did adopt myself. I had another particularly close friend, Mick Wright, a brilliant fellow whom I lost touch with until just a few years ago. He said to me, 'Yours was the first mature friendship I had.' An archaeologist of international reputation, he lives in Provence.

I spent most of the rest of my spare time on the beach, usually on duty as a lifesaver, and enjoying it. While on patrol one weekend, we were directed to some women in difficulties. A mate and I swam to their rescue. I was teased at school on Monday when a news item in the *West Australian* referred to the rescue, saying, 'While Duffield went to the assistance of the older lady, Wise swam out to the young woman' – suggesting I had deliberately swum past the older one, leaving her to drown. Neither did drown.

We didn't pay much attention to sharks in those days – I was meant to, as I was often on lookout, but I never saw any. I am told they were there, just beyond the breakers. Now spotter planes fly overhead, and a siren clears the beach when the alarm is raised. But the odd one still gets through.

In my teenage years I had paid a good deal of attention to my clothes. In those days, you could have a suit made up at a reasonable price and my father allowed me to go to his tailor. I won a scholarship sponsored by Shell – you had to write an essay about the petroleum industry – which paid £10 a year for five years. Although the idea was probably to use this to buy books, I spent some of the money on a tailor-made burgundy jacket with green and gold stripes, cloth-covered buttons, a half belt and pleats at the back and side. I proceeded to wear this to school in lieu of a blazer. I also had a fancy taste in neckwear, and my father would sometimes scratch his head when he saw ties on his store account. 'Better to be notorious than obscure,' I said.

My father used to drop Una and me off at Modern School on his way to his office at the Treasury Building. One morning we were late, and annoyed with waiting for us to be ready, he simply drove off, leaving us to get to school ourselves. I decided I was better off cycling to school. I took to propping a book up on my handlebars as I rode, learning all manner of quotations by heart – Tennyson's *Morte D'Arthur* and Shakespeare being favourites. I can still recite 'The quality of mercy is not strain'd,/It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven/Upon the place beneath' from *The Merchant of Venice*, Polonius's advice to his son from *Hamlet*, and 'The Seven Ages of Man' from *As You Like It*.

As soon as I turned 17, I took my driving test. My father had been very decent about giving me lessons, despite my ruining the gearbox of one car. Once I had my licence, he let me use his own car for school dances and the like. Twice I had accidents, once backing into a lamppost and another time hitting a petrol pump on one side and another car on the other. The latter led to a police enquiry, which was embarrassing for my father. When he was Minister for Police, the

Commissioner arranged for me to have boxing lessons, which I did not greatly enjoy. The Commissioner had hoped I would become a police cadet.

I respected my father for his personal qualities. He led by example. One evening when he was driving home from his office, he saw a commotion at the river's edge. He stopped to enquire. A young policeman on a motorbike moved him on rudely without answering his question as to how a car had ended up in the river. Nettled – and he could get nettled – my father said, 'Go to hell, then,' and drove off. The policeman gave chase and flagged him down. As he strode back self-importantly with his notebook open, Dad wound his window down and said, 'I suggest you do not proceed in this way.' The young officer demanded his name and address. 'You are sure that you want to know?' he asked. 'All right, Frank Wise, Minister for Police, Parliament House.' A jaw was dropped. 'I'm so sorry sir.' My father responded, 'What I am concerned about is the way you treated a man whom you thought was an ordinary member of the public wanting to help.'

Some time later the same policeman escorted the State Governor to Parliament House for the opening of Parliament. When the Governor had entered the House the policeman, now an officer, came to Dad and said, 'Thank you for teaching me a much-needed lesson.'

After a late night out, I would turn off the lights and engine of Dad's car just before reaching the garage, which was under the house – and directly under my parents' room – and coast down the slight slope before braking fully. Then I would take off my shoes and creep into the kitchen. Before I could open the fridge door, my father would call out, 'Is that you Gordon?' 'Yes Dad.' 'What time is it?' 'Er, it's after midnight.' 'Well, hurry up and get to bed.' But he never asked awkward questions.

The habit of saying my prayers before going to sleep stayed with me, though church-going had not. My mother had begun to worry about my teenage escapades, and I expect was praying for me herself. I don't know whether it was due to her prayers or my prayers but in my last year of High School there was what I later came to see as a

spiritual intervention in my life. There was not, however, a particularly propitious spiritual start to it all.

My girlfriend at the time was Jean. She, like me, was a prefect. Another boy, Alan Rutherford, was, to my way of thinking, a little too friendly with her. When one Saturday in the changing room after a game of hockey Alan said to me, 'I'll be seeing Jean on Monday,' my gut reaction was, 'The hell you are!' But what I actually said was, 'Oh, where?' Alan said 'It's an MRA house party.' I thought this must be a house-warming party, which sounded fun, and as the address was a short walk from my house I decided to dress with casual smartness (as usual) and stroll over.

To my embarrassment there was a meeting going on, with a well-known clergyman, one Canon John Bell, talking on 'absolute surrender to God' – somewhat over my head at the time. To heap on the awkwardness, Jean seemed not at all pleased to see me, and she and another girl walked off after the meeting with a chap from school whom I cordially detested, Jim Coulter. He had always thought I was the pits, loathing in particular my flamboyance, and I had always been delighted to reciprocate. Jim's father was a theatre manager, and used to complain to Jim because I turned up on the opening night of a new movie with a different girl each time, and expected the best seats and free admission, using my father's pass. And Jim, to me, was a loud-mouth and a show-off. Both of us were right in our diagnoses, but the cure had to wait a while.

I walked a decent distance behind the trio and said to a chap who was telling me how his life had changed, 'It is all very well, but if I ever tolerate Jim Coulter, there must be something in this MRA.' I learned that the initials stood for 'moral re-armament' – an uncomfortable-sounding concept, as I knew that even at the age of 17 I was living well below what might have been termed 'moral standards', and was not particularly drawn to the idea of pursuing a course that required me to measure up to any. Altogether, it was not a happy encounter. But, in a convoluted way, lest anyone thought that Jean had ignored me, I went over the next day simulating an interest to hear more. Jean was absent, but Alan Rutherford quietly touched me by

telling me how his change to a God-led life had helped save his parents' marriage.

As I spent more time with these people, I came to see that Moral Re-Armament was something quite special. Those of my contemporaries who began to talk about their new discoveries of faith seemed to be finding a relationship with the Almighty. Now, this was of more than passing interest to me. I personally felt at a dead end in that regard, but they seemed to be on first-name terms with Him, and with a real quality of inner life unknown to me. I was on the outside having a good time, but had more than a nagging feeling that inside I was less than I should be.

The dynamo – for such he was – responsible for this house party was a man in his thirties, Jack Watts, a Christian lay worker. By the end of the week, I was telling Jack in private that I would like to find the reality of knowing God. He told me that the one way to build this relationship was to examine our lives by four absolute moral standards – honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. I learned that this idea had been inspired by the experiences of an American Lutheran preacher, Frank Buchman, who had highlighted these for himself as the essence of Christ's Sermon on the Mount: to live by these standards was like finding a pathway to His leading. I poured out to Jack and filled reams of paper with notes of everything I was ashamed of – dishonesties like stealing from shops, selling my father's books and keeping my mother's loose change (she used to leave it in the kitchen and I would put a cup over it; if it was still there after a few days, I would pocket it); impurity – the usual teenage explorations; cheating and lying to masters at school also came into it.

Jack made the suggestion that in order to overcome my sense of shame, I could kneel down and ask for God's forgiveness. I wanted to do this, and move forward. I had the thought to turn over all I knew of myself to all I knew of God.

After doing this, I began to feel on top of the world. I found the courage to make restitution – paying back money, for instance to the railways for ticketless travel and owning up to the local stationmaster to whom I had mentioned my father's position when he apprehended

me. The shopkeepers were understanding, my mother also – she wept a little, I wasn't sure whether it was for relief or shock.

My father was harder to talk to so I didn't persist, and it was 15 years before I had the idea to write to him in detail – by then I was living away from home, in another state. He never replied, and when asked said, 'We all do such things when we are young. It's not good to look back too often.' I guess I was even self-centred about clearing my conscience about my shortcomings, for I later wrote again and said that in my youth I was often afraid of him and blamed him for it, but I had come to realise that I had not given him the love of a son. But on that occasion he wrote me back very warmly.

There was a good deal of religious living practised at our home anyway, and my mother and sisters began coming to MRA occasions, including house parties at a place called Log Cabin in the hills above Perth, and met my new friends and their friends. I think my mother was pleased; I often feel that the dramatic changes in my life were the result of her prayers for me. But she also warned, 'Don't be too wrapped up', and quoted the maxim 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof' – in other words, being supportive but advising me to temper my natural over-keenness. I did take it all very seriously at this stage; indeed, a lot of what I suddenly saw as sin even Jack considered to be more like curiosity. He and I used to meet up every morning before school in a nearby park, to exchange insights.

As a prefect and editor of the school magazine, the *Sphinx*, I had certain responsibilities, but I came to feel that I hadn't been particularly responsible about the way I had carried out my duties. The Deputy Headmaster, Charlie Sharp, was meant to see the magazine material before it was printed; I used to pretend I didn't know the meaning of some of the thinly-disguised crudities that found their way into the first edition. I had also lied to him when he called me in after a girl's mother complained about an incident I was responsible for at a school dance. For a prank I had dropped a light bulb from the balcony on to the dance floor, and I claimed that it had dropped unaided. I went to see Charlie to come clean about these things. He was decent about it all, as were the three other teachers to whom I felt

I should apologize for answering back and making rude comments from the back of the classroom, among other things. They must have been pleased that I had begun to toe the line; I was glad to be able to clear the decks, becoming free to move on.

In the course of Jack's fascinating meetings, I heard stories of other people's change from across the world. Jack was not long back from a house party in Oxford, England, from which he had endless evidence of transformations in lives that were affecting their communities and even international situations. I wanted to be part of this. It came about that a number of us that year were to embrace the ideas of MRA as a result of encountering Jack, including the concept of quietly seeking God's guidance each day and sharing those thoughts with others. We became a band of friends, even a fellowship, you might say. All of us wanted God's best use for our lives, and we had learned from Jack that we could listen to Him to seek His leading. We wanted to be effective in bringing change where we thought it was needed, which meant both at school and beyond. Quite a group of us met in the library before school started to give each other support, and when I get to a class reunion, over six decades later now, MRA is still a topic of conversation.

Jean was always part of the circle but the relationship we had had fell away. She now lives in the United States, and I still get wonderful letters from her. Another girl from the group, Joan Smith, ended up in England, and for a time in recent years we lived near her.

When one of the prefects, Ian Ingle, wrote a verse for each of his colleagues in the *Sphinx*, it began:

Among the pres. at Modern School
Is an argument every day,
Whether one should stand alone
Or join the MRA.

And my verse read:

In G.S. Wise a change is seen,
No longer young and blasé.
His morals have a firmer trend,
His jokes are now not risqué.

But that for my best friend in the form, who was less embracing of my new-found beliefs, asserted:

Wilson regarded this new craze
 With adversity seeming fierce,
 And he defied the saints around
 His unhealthy soul to pierce.

But Jim Wilson and I formed a mutual respect, and we have maintained a close and affectionate connection. Four of us from Modern School at that time felt called to work full-time with MRA for the rest of our lives.



When I left school, I wanted to be a politician – inspired by the example of my father, and a journalist – because writing was my best subject at school. My father did not want me to be either: he knew that politics was a risky business, and he didn't approve of the anti-Labor *West Australian*, which would have been the paper to work on – and which was a bit precarious in itself. Instead, he persuaded me to take a vacancy in the State Treasury Department (a lot of staff were being called up to serve in the military). He said he could give me a helping hand in the Civil Service. It was not my aptitude, but together with Jim Coulter I started accountancy, shorthand and typing, at night school. In a gesture of fellowship and eager to put our good intentions into action, we took our nice shorthand teacher, recently widowed in the war, out to a movie.

By the time we left school, this Jim and I had become best friends. In the last year we had both been cub reporters on the *West Australian*, the state's main newspaper, working there after school hours ended until the paper went to bed at 11pm. My duties were to write up the shipping news, meteorological forecasts and aircraft movements. My boss was the sub-editor, Paul Hasluck, who later became Federal Minister of the Interior. His journalistic expertise improved my writing considerably.

Jim got a proper reporter's job, but I was twice passed over – probably because of the incompatibility of my connections and the paper's

editorial line, my father said (not that he'd encouraged my application!). But I also suspected that a job had been earmarked for the son of a senior executive on the paper, a year younger than us, but who left Modern School early to work there. The irony was that my father and his were best friends – and I had been assigned to teach him the rudiments of the job when I worked there on nights. However, one evening during the year that followed, the chief of staff at the *West* rang me and offered a job. I was probably the first person he ever had turn him down – I'd already started the Civil Service job, and although it was tantalizing I thought I'd better stick to my course.

One day at the Treasury I was summoned by my boss, the Under-Treasurer. 'The Minister for Lands wants to see you,' he told me. 'Are you doing anything important?' 'No,' I answered – which was true; it was not a job I found fulfilling. Now, the Minister for Lands happened to be my father. And when I reported to his office I found that he wanted me to run an errand for him, out to his farming property.

As part of my responsibility in the Treasury, I was secretary to the Bulk Wheat Handling Advisory Committee – part of the war effort, to which everything by that time had become geared. The conflict in Europe had reached out to us when Australia declared war on Germany the day after Britain did, on 4 September 1939. As young people and still at school, we had been aware of the storm clouds gathering, but hoped that if conflict did break out it would be over before we were called up. When it did happen, there were still two more years until I would turn 18 and be eligible. In any event, Germany and Japan both seemed a very long way away.

The work of MRA spread out and I suppose you could say that Jim and I were two flamboyant contributors. At meetings we had fellowship, and tried to address the issues of the world. But above all we tried to succeed in a person-to-person handing-on of our faith, and there are several with whom I am still in touch today who recall those times and would regard them as especially faith-giving experiences. One of the lively girls at our meetings was called Lorna, and we ended up going out together. This was the most serious of my pre-war affairs of the heart.

I turned 18 not long after the fall of Singapore, which had brought things much closer to home. But there was an argument about my attitude to the war going on within me for the whole of 1941. When I was called up to drive trucks by the Defence Department I had to confront the issue: every able-bodied man over 18 and under 35 was by then required either to do war work or volunteer for one of the three services. I did go to the Naval Recruitment Office, but came out quickly when I saw that I would have to wear bell-bottomed trousers.

Jack Watts, our mentor, was a convinced pacifist. But it felt too lonely a stand. We had long conversations with him about it and tried to see his point of view. But it was a conversation with my mother that clarified the issue for me. She asked me if I would stand aside if it came to Japanese threatening to kill her. I knew I could not have done that.

On January 1, 1942, aged nearly 19 and on the very day I was to report for the truck-driving job, Jim Coulter and I signed up with the Royal Australian Air Force as trainee aircrew, hoping to be pilots. I liked those uniforms, and we thought being a pilot was the most glamorous job going. As long as we passed our medical, we knew there would then be a six-month wait until we were actually called up, as there was a lack of training facilities. The young doctor administering the medical examination obviously had a hangover after New Year's Eve, but he still put us through a series of stringent tests, which we passed.

When it came to the call-up, we learned that the RAAF, in true bureaucratic style, was sending all those whose names began with the letters from A-K to Victor Harbour, South Australia, for initial training School (30 Course Empire Air Training School), and the 'K-Zs' to Clontarf near Perth. Jim and I had the cheek to ask to be kept together (mutual self-defence, I suppose), and I joined the 'A-K' group as the only 'W' sent to South Australia. It taught me that it's always worth asking if you can do something; the answer might well be yes if there's no reason to say no. We soon found ourselves on one of the long troop trains that snaked their way across the Nullarbor Plain from Perth to Adelaide. I say 'snaked', but part of the route is 300 miles without a bend.

3

Training and Action

1942-45



*Aircraftsman Second Class Survives – Crossing the Pacific Vertically –
A Cable in Brighton – Chosen for Coastal Command –
In a London at War – Lakeland Welcome –
The Sunderlands of Pembroke Dock – 461 Squadron on Patrol*

It was winter, and coastal South Australia's winter is a lot wetter and colder than Perth's – not to mention the tropics. On arrival we encountered mud everywhere, and we were quartered in tents. What's more, the drill was fearsome. We were told by the Drill Sergeant that ACIIs – Aircraftsmen Second Class, as trainee aircrew were designated – were the lowest form of animal, vegetable or mineral life and were to be treated accordingly. We realised later that those who did qualify as pilots and get their wings would not be required to march or do drill at all, so the idea was to subject us to at least an initial concentrated dose of discipline.

Jim and I were no saints, but we had decided together to draw the line at some things. A burly trainee called Kevin Beetson took it out on us, claiming we were 'goodies' who were nice to officers so we'd 'get on'. He changed his mind when we took a lonely stand against the proposition of an officer to take our cigarette ration – we'd made the point that we weren't in the business of bribing or being pushed over, and we didn't see why this officer should have more cigarettes than anyone else. While we never used our cigarette ration ourselves, it did prove useful as something to trade for more chocolate. After this, Kevin threatened to 'knock the block off' anyone who made fun of us. He was a friend forever.

At the end of the four months of initial training we were classified. Most wanted to be pilots, but only those getting top marks usually went on to pilot training. I am a funny mixture of conscientiousness and casualness, as my records from Victor Harbor show. In one navigation exercise I got 'o'. The instructor asked me if I knew why I got 'o'? 'No.' 'Because I could not give you less,' he replied. But both Jim and I did qualify for Elementary Flying School, which would be in Western Australia. Thankfully, navigation course scores weren't counted at this stage.

We headed back across the Nullarbor, stopping off en route at an Air Force Station at Port Pirie, where we were offered a flight in a Fairy Battle, an older type single-engined light bomber. Many of us had never flown before, and I was violently sick. I had to use my broad-brimmed felt hat (part of our summer dress uniform, worn with shorts) as a receptacle. At the time I found myself wishing I'd opted for ground staff.

Our Flying School was at Cunderdin, 100 miles or so from Perth, in the Wheat Belt. It was now summer, hot and dusty. Our flying began at 5am before the air currents made difficulties for our light Tiger Moths. Jim got on faster than I did – in fact, he learned to fly before he learned to drive. He did however lose a wheel on take-off when he first flew solo, as he realised when another plane flew alongside him and gestured to his undercarriage. But he managed to land and walk away. They said a good landing was one you could walk away from, but in fact the required standard was usually somewhat higher. You were not supposed to damage the plane.

I had particular difficulties in landing. I used to bounce off the ground back into the air, and the instructor would send me round again. This was called circuits and bumps – usually meant as a deliberate part of one's training, not to happen by accident. The more my instructor, Officer Walker, shouted, the tighter I got with nerves. We had dual controls and he was in the front cockpit. (A trick was for the instructor to take out the joystick to let you know that you were on your own, when in fact he had a spare one hidden, just in case.) In my case, Walker waved it at me as if to hit me. I was completely

demoralized. Jim and I went to an empty canteen hut and prayed together.

The next day I went to the tarmac to find that the Flight Commander, named Cohen, was taking me up himself. Later I realised he was assessing me as to whether I would ever make it. If I failed I would be sent to another school, probably as a Wireless Air Gunner. This usually meant being sent on to crew bombers, and the gunners' casualty rate was higher than the pilots'. Well, whether through dread of that, as a result of the prayer, or because Cohen was a calming influence, I landed perfectly. Then Walker sent me solo and all was well. In fact, I was so excited that I forgot his instruction to land near him and he had a long walk over.

I did not, however, enjoy the required aerobatics. On my first display I neglected to fasten my safety straps securely so they flew off when we were upside down, and I had to hang on to the sides of the open cockpit while the instructor was telling me it was all child's play. What was even more unnerving was that I knew my parachute straps were too loose for safety, as I had not bothered to adjust them before we took off. When we landed the instructor was horrified. 'Why didn't you tell me?' he asked. 'I was too busy hanging on,' I replied. I also used to stall the plane while upside down in a loop. Then the instructor would complain, because I'd be making him ill. Another time I lost the airfield, even though the featureless terrain made that difficult to comprehend. In answer to 'What the hell do you think you're doing?' I said, 'I can't find the airfield.' Whereupon Officer Walker grabbed the controls, pointed the nose straight down beneath us and yelled, 'There it is.' Both of us survived each other.

After Christmas, for which my father had asked permission from the RAAF to come and collect us from Cunderdin, the next stage was Service Flying Training School at Geraldton, 330 miles north of Perth. I remember a visit from my girlfriend, Lorna. It was good of her to come so far.

Unfortunately, just about that time, I had a mid-air collision when another trainee and I collided at 600 feet, luckily not head-on, but converging after take-off. There were no runways here, just a huge

grass field. The regulations were that you took off on the left of any other plane. I was in the middle of the field and didn't see a plane on my left so took off. He did not see me on his right. We were both flying Avro Ansons, obsolete bombers with two engines, and I had not long gone solo. His propeller cut away part of my undercarriage so that the brakes worked only on one wheel. I had been hoping to land unnoticed despite the damage, but as it was I did ground loops in front of the control tower until the plane drew to a halt. My undercarriage had broken his wireless aerial and dented his fuselage. We were both lucky to land safely.

When we were brought before the Commanding Officer, an old-time pilot called Group Captain Norman Brearley, I was found guilty on four charges. My logbook has an entry in red ink: 'Mid-air collision. Gross carelessness.' Brearley pointed out that there were 'plenty of trainee pilots and very few training planes, and besides you might both have been killed.' Someone was killed in a similar accident between ours and our 'trial' and, I guess, the CO had to make an example of us. I got 21 days confined to barracks, the other chap got 14. No leave, just washing pots and pans in the Sergeants' Mess, cleaning aircraft and reporting to the Guard Room a mile away, five times a day.

I decided that I could phone the Guard Room instead of taking the walk and was soon told by the Disciplinary Warrant Officer that unless I obeyed the rules, I would get an additional punishment. When after 17 days I was called in again I expected the worst, as we had been using the hose of a petrol tanker to clean the planes. The petrol quickly evaporated off leaving the plane spotlessly clean, but needless to say, it was rather hazardous and not the normal method. However, we hadn't been discovered, and instead I found myself let off the last four days. Only when I had my wings and met the Disciplinary Warrant Officer in the Sergeants' Mess did I learn that the Commanding Officer only had powers under Air Force law to give me 14 days, so I had already done over his limit. I should have taken my Air Force law studies more seriously.

I told my father in a letter that the only bright spot in standing trial before the CO was that the WAAF who had prepared my particulars was a rather nice-looking girl. Dad calmly wrote back saying, 'I was

reminded of the businessman who told his wife that he was late home because he'd stayed at work late to fix a new ribbon on his typewriter. The trouble was, the wife found out the address of the typewriter.' After the war, when my CO, Norman Brearley, had retired, he used to meet my father in the street in Cottesloe, and would often tell him how lucky his boy was not to have been 'scrubbed' as a pilot.



Although we didn't know it, we were headed for the European theatre of war, where there was a need for pilots. By the time we set off the focus for Australia had moved to the Pacific, but we had already been assigned. Suez was closed, so we would have to sail across the Pacific, travel across the United States, and then cross the Atlantic. But all we were told at the time was that we were off to Melbourne.

My mother had just had a serious operation, but she was able to come down to the quay when we embarked our ship at Fremantle. However, my father came over to Melbourne while we were doing a course on radio-controlled approach, or blind flying in fog. He hosted Jim and me for a weekend in Melbourne's nicest hotel, the Windsor, and took us to the races and to a musical, *White Horse Inn*. Perth did not have such treats in those days. He seemed in good form, and teased us when, on offering us a drink mid-morning, we responded 'cherry brandy'. We weren't big drinkers but we'd acquired a taste for it – and it was cheap in the Sergeants' Mess. I didn't know he was keeping a secret to himself.

After a few weeks Jim and I learned that we were to join a converted French cargo vessel, the *Rochambeau*, sailing under orders of the US Navy with an American crew. Bound ultimately for Britain, we were to sail to the west coast of America via New Zealand. On board were wounded US Marines being invalided home from the Pacific. The US victory in the Coral Sea naval battle and at Midway thwarted the potential Japanese invasion of Australia, and MacArthur had made his base in Queensland after the fall of the Philippines to Japan. He and the new Australian Prime Minister, John Curtin, so different in temperament, had become good friends.

I remember the relief when the first GIs had appeared on our streets in 1942. Jim, ever gregarious, asked one where he was from. ‘Connecticut,’ said the American, pronouncing it properly, without the second ‘c’. ‘Over here we call that “Con-nek-ti-cut”,’ said Jim. ‘Well, bud, you may do’, said the GI, ‘but I think we’re right.’

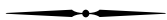
Our troop embarkation officer gave us a talk. ‘I have inspected your ship, men,’ he said. ‘Although it is of course not a passenger liner, I think you will find it reasonably comfortable.’ Well, we did not. Between Melbourne and Wellington we ran into a terrible storm. Life rafts on deck got loose and smashed through the railing; a helmsman had his arm broken. The NCOs’ quarters were converted cargo holds, with tiers of bunks in fours. Such was the thickly smoke-filled air that despite the cold weather, Jim and I had opted to sleep in bunks on the deck – not that we’d asked permission, of course. In fact, no-one noticed. If they had, we might have been warned about the impending storm. As the gale mounted in ferocity, we hung on to the sides of our bunks with an elastic strap holding us in – we hoped. Next day, we saw the mess in the hold, with lots of seasickness in evidence, and belongings scattered everywhere. But despite some inconvenience, on deck was where we and some others slept for the next three weeks, as it was just too nauseating to be inside. It was a terrifying experience. The ship apparently had a rounded hull, and rolled to its maximum. We were told that the bridge had an indicator showing how much the ship was rolling, and for the duration of the journey it was stuck at ‘Full’. Strapped into our deckside bunks, instead of looking at the waves horizontally, we found ourselves staring at them vertically as they towered over our rolling deck.

The ship’s chaplain was a US Navy padre named William T. Holt. We heard he needed help, so when the weather improved Jim and I volunteered for library duty rather than just sit around. He was also compère of request programmes for the ship’s radio station, so when we could unstrap ourselves, Jim and I became disc jockeys. Glenn Miller and Artie Shaw were favourites.

On troop ships you only had two meals a day, morning and night, such was the crowding. But Jim and I happily discerned that as we

assisted the Chaplain, we were treated as crew and were entitled to lunch as well. We would make stacks of corned beef sandwiches for our mates from the crew mess, hiding them under the chest part of our enveloping overalls, so ensuring a temporary popularity. The Chaplain gave me a book, *Mission to Moscow*, which he signed and I have kept. It was a memoir by Joseph Davies, America's pre-war Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

I remember feeling a certain sense of envy rising when I saw the handful of officers who had been chaps from our course, smoking on the after deck following a good dinner served on nice china by the ship's stewards. But of course they had higher marks during training. Ours were 'average', so we were sergeant pilots, therefore non-commissioned. To become officers we would have to earn our stripes.



The passage from Wellington to San Diego took 17 days, then we headed north to San Francisco, where we disembarked. Sailing into port under the Golden Gate Bridge was unforgettable. But there was no allowance for sightseeing. We were loaded right on to a troop train and crossed the States to New York. The only way to see America was through the carriage window. An American colonel kept us from rebelling by promising us a dance at the next stop, but the dance was a figment of the colonel's imagination. We only stopped for fuel.

In New York we were put on to buses after arriving at Pennsylvania Station and sent straight to our next troop ship, the four-funnelled pre-war Cunard liner *Aquitania*. Again, no sightseeing, except the skyscrapers in the distance. Cabins for two had become cabins for eight. Lifeboat drill was obligatory: fast ships like ours were unescorted, travelling at speed on a zigzag course, for the U-boats still took their toll in 1943. Again, there were just two meals a day. This time we didn't bother with volunteering our services to the chaplain. Instead, while others played poker, I read all the way through *Gone with the Wind*. Jim, ever gallant, enlisted me to take orders from the poker players for the canteen. I ended up \$13 short as I mistakenly gave everyone a discount rather than adding a premium for service.

Landfall was at Greenock, Scotland. We anchored offshore and went to land on smaller boats, then to another train (these ones were like toys after the giant US ones) for the last leg, all the way south to Brighton in Sussex. My first encounter with a native was when I asked a cheerful Cockney what the weather was like. ‘Last summer fell on a Wednesday and I went to the pictures and missed it,’ came the response. We were quartered two to a room in luxury hotels on the Brighton sea front – the Grand, then the Metropole – which had become staging posts for RAAF Aircrew flying with the Royal Air Force. We had our first fresh hot water baths in five weeks. Wonderful. Though severely rationed, the British food was much better than expected; we’d feared the worst, but it came as a relief after the meals we’d been served in transit, which were always meat and veg that ran into each other. However, given the rationing situation, we found that the crates full of tinned and dried goodies we bought from the ship’s canteen provided us with welcome gifts when visiting English homes.

There were lectures on Air Force structure and procedures, and drill – we marched from hotel to lecture rooms. Once I broke off to make a phone call and came in for another reprimand as the Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Eric White, had chosen to make a spot check that day. I met him in London years later when he was Australian High Commissioner to Britain and reminded him of this, but the occasion was less imprinted on his memory than on my own.

We had written ahead to the Oxford Group, the British name for the work that we had encountered as Moral Re-Armament at Jack Watts’s meetings back in Perth. A telegram soon arrived from its headquarters, sent by Major Stephen Foot, a First World War veteran. He gave us the name of a vicar he knew in Brighton, Wallace Bird, whom we duly visited. From then on we were given introductions and thoughtful kindnesses of hospitality. I am still in touch with some of those families.

My father sent me a message, via the office of the Western Australian Agent General, ‘Mick’ Troy, to say that despite her operation, my mother was again very ill. I didn’t really let the import of the message sink in, thinking that my father often dramatized problems.

But then a few days later, while on the parade ground, I was handed another cable. It simply said that she had died.

My grief was inconsolable. I loved my mother dearly. I felt so helpless, so far away – it would have been impossible to go back – and I was only 19. To compound my loss, a letter from her, written weeks before, reached me a day or two later.

If anything had been said about the gravity of her situation before I left, I hadn't taken it in, but neither had my father told me – nor her, nor my sisters – that the doctors had actually told him that she had not long to live. In the course of the operation, they had discovered that the cancer had already spread. My father's reason for not telling any of us was that he did not want my mother to know that her illness was terminal, and so did not tell us in case we inadvertently let on about her condition. He did not want to spoil the last weeks of her life, or make my departure more painful. So the shock of her passing was incredibly traumatic – as it was for my sisters back home, too, but especially for my father. He, remarkably, had carried this knowledge within himself. When I returned home after the war I saw that he had put on her tombstone the words 'Blessed are the pure in heart'. I realised then something of what my father felt about her.

Out on the verandah of our home in Cottesloe you could sit and watch the ships sail by. Years later I learned from my mother's good friend, Len Uren, that she and my mother had sat out watching our ship head out into the Indian Ocean. Len's son, Malcolm Jr, was also aboard the ship – he was an Air Force navigator. Auntie Len told me that my mother had said to her, 'There's a chance you will see your son again. I doubt that I will see mine.'



The afternoon I got the news of my mother's death, Jim and I had been invited to the home of MRA friends in Hove. I still went, but I could not bring myself to tell anyone there what had happened. Jim knew, of course, and did his best to comfort me. I remember him finding me in a nearby church, reading my mother's last letters and sobbing. It seemed that part of me was forever lost.

I sought solace with a Jewish girl, Sallie Traub, whom I met a little later at a dance. She worked in a dry cleaner's. I think I told her about my mother. Then, at another dance, I met another girl, Joan Smith. Her father was a policeman at the House of Commons, and showed us round on our next leave. She sent me a glamorous photo of herself, but I did not keep in touch with her.

In due course all of us RAAF pilots went for interview by an RAF Squadron Leader. We were supposed to express a choice about the kind of planes we wanted to fly. This 'choice' was regarded as a bit of a joke. The RAF was building up its vast squadrons, and our choice was said to be between Lancasters, Halifaxes and Stirlings – but in fact all of them were four-engined bombers. There was in Jim Coulter and me a lingering idealism, or so we saw it, that although we were pilots we wanted to save lives serving as convoy escorts rather than take them by bombing cities. Once, after all, I had nearly enlisted in the Navy – although my choice not to had of course been based on preferring the glamour of the RAAF blue and the wings to the seamen's uniform. Being ahead of me in the alphabet Jim went in, as a 'C', in the first part of the day. I went as a 'W' at the very end.

Both of us said we wanted to fly Sunderland Flying Boats, having identified them in our lectures on aircraft types, thinking, as before, that the answer might be yes if there was no good reason to say no. When my turn eventually came the Squadron Leader said, 'I had another chap in here this morning wanting to fly Sunderlands. What's your reason? If you think it's safer, it isn't. I was in Coastal Command and lost a lot of my friends in action.'

I tried to explain my thinking. Actually, I had in my heart become reconciled to being a bomber pilot, as I didn't see why I should leave others to do the dirty work. But when we were all summoned to the parade ground to be told where we were headed, Jim and I did both find ourselves allocated to RAAF Sunderland Flying Boat Squadron 461, based in Pembroke Dock, South Wales. Ours were the only names read out for Coastal Command; everyone else joined the bombers.

Curiously, a chap called Paddy Nilan who had been with us from

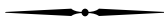
Australia, told me years after the war that he had wanted to fly Sunderlands but didn't say so because he thought he might be regarded as chickening out of bombers. He was sent to train on bombers, but unexpectedly a 'signal' came redirecting him to Sunderlands. He could never explain it. He had always respected our spiritual convictions and, according to him, we used to give 'lectures' on our beliefs in one of the classrooms back at initial training in Victor Harbour. He felt that maybe destiny had tugged at his sleeve and possibly spared his life. Years later he said to me, 'The bloke up there looked after you.' I said, 'He looked after you, too.' 'No,' said Paddy, 'I came along for the ride, holding your coattails.' Paddy died in 2002. Three of our group from Perth Modern School were killed as pilots before 1945 – Ian Ingle, Alan Rutherford, who introduced me to MRA, and Frank Spencer, captain of the school football team.

After Brighton there was Advanced Flying Training, at Kidlington, near Oxford, at a small airfield nearby at Weston-on-the-Green. This was the first English winter for us Australians, the first time we saw snow, and we gleefully pelted each other with snowballs. We were quartered in long huts with rows of trestle-legged beds and on cold nights we stoked up the coke heater until the iron glowed red. When we ran out of coke, I helped myself to some from an enclosed area reserved for officers. I rather thought that they had more than they needed.

As spring came, Oxford was a pleasant place to discover on leave days. I was even invited to lunch at the stately home of Lord and Lady Bicester – their daughter Mary had married Lord Rennell, and she and her grandmother, Lady Antrim, were actively involved with MRA, as are some of her grandchildren today. I rode up on my bicycle after flying, and after hiding it in the bushes was grandly announced by the butler, who was clearly far too old to be sent off for military service. Punting on the Isis with two WRAAF girls was also very pleasant.

I damaged another of His Majesty's aircraft at Weston. I had gone solo and was pleased with myself. After landing, I did my cockpit drill

sloppily and in error retracted the undercarriage. There was an almighty thump as the plane collapsed, the two propellers digging into the grass, motionless. Ground staff ran over as I stepped out level with the ground. The RAF's Squadron Commander was displeased, to say the least. A third reprimand on my records resulted, and three weeks of extra cockpit drill. All told, I was on nine training programmes before I joined my squadron. Just as well.



The MRA workers we met at the London headquarters in Hays Mews, off Berkeley Square, were mostly ordained clergy or, for one reason or another, deemed medically unfit for active service in the Forces. The majority of their MRA colleagues had been called up into the Forces. These people formed the essential core around which MRA's wartime activities revolved, and they were marvellous friends. Their keen intellectual ability and wisdom about the world was an inspiration. Several lived in houses nearby that had been made available for MRA's work, and served with the National Fire Service, on duty in the Blitz and through the war.

We were warmly received when we came on leave. The only snag was that as the labourers were few, we were expected to scrub potatoes, wash pots and pans and dishes and there was even a hint that Air Force chaps had a relatively comfortable life. True, we had good rations in the Air Force, though not usually well cooked. And we had time off when we were not flying on operations. But there was always the chance that we would not return from an operation. However, it's fair to say that the army chaps often had a tougher time.

As wartime diversions were few, we had treats by being invited to theatres, which remained open, and saw Laurence Olivier, Ralph Richardson, Vivien Leigh and other greats. I suppose this was compensation for all the washing-up and the absence of young female company. An unusual Englishman called Kit Prescott attached himself to Jim and me. He wore thick-lensed glasses, was a motorbike enthusiast and was also colour blind. He was well built and came from a rugby-playing family, an Oxford man who had met the Oxford Group

early on, when Frank Buchman had held meetings that were well attended by those at the university. Kit had an energetic and unconventional approach to life, which attracted our non-conformist Australian natures. When I told Kit that I had gone off to the Windmill Theatre where the revues were quite spicy, Kit didn't 'tut-tut' but wanted to know what it was like. A few years ago our son published the autobiography of Bruce Forsyth, the celebrated British entertainer who got his start at the Windmill. In his inscription for my copy of his book he wrote 'To Gordon – I last saw you in the front row of the Windmill. You didn't look at me once!'

On our first leave from Brighton we had gone to Hill Farm in Suffolk, the home of Peter Howard and his wife Doë. A top Fleet Street columnist, who had earlier captained the England rugby football team and competed in the Olympics, he had not long been involved with MRA. The man who had attracted him to its ideas, a writer called Garth Lean, had in turn been 'enlisted' by Kit Prescott. Doë – Doris Metaxa, a pre-war tennis star and doubles winner at Wimbledon in 1932 – was Greek. Hill Farm, with its picturesque Tudor farmhouse, was a working farm, and most of the workers were Land Girls, one of the essential services for wartime. It turned out that these young women had been full-time MRA people before the war. When we visited it was August, and as the sun was hot, Jim and I put on our shorts and nothing more – just as we would have done on a farm at home. Alec Porter, later to marry my wife's sister, was a farm worker and recalls our cheerful effrontery: while we hadn't bothered whether this dress style was approved or not, it had evidently raised an eyebrow or two. We worked hard on the harvest but the conscientiousness of the Land Girls earned our respect. We were glad to climb on a train back to the Air Force Station and fall asleep.

Walking across a field with Peter – he was lame but walked fast – I told him I wanted to be a writer and asked if he had any tips. 'You apply the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair and write,' he said. He was a dynamo of creativity, wrote a number of books and plays, and in years to come became the world leader of MRA.

More unexpected cultural encounters followed on other MRA-hosted leaves. Tirley Garth, in rural Cheshire, but not far from Liverpool, was a beautiful home in its own grounds made available by its owner for MRA's work. Servicemen would go on leave there too, and the gardens produced essential food for market, again thanks to Land Girls' efforts. It was a marvellous meeting place. Predictably, we helped with the wash-up. There was a rather severe maiden lady called Beatrice Burnside in charge. When Jim and I indulged in our usual banter as we worked, she said firmly: 'We find it best not to talk while we wash up.' She was Australian, but we had never heard anything like this! The English, for their part, all sounded to us like BBC news-readers.

Besides the theatre in London, I enjoyed discovering the finer things that city life could offer. When I eventually received my Flying Officer commission (having completed the requisite number of hours, passed the necessary exams and managed not to crash a plane), I was given extra clothing coupons with which to go and get my new uniform made. Rather than the RAF's normal outlets, I chose to go to a tailor in Savile Row. I thought that the usual navy blue cloth of the RAAF uniform was a bit sombre, so selected a kind of royal blue.

45 Berkeley Square, a handsome London house, had once been the home of Lord Clive, known to history as 'Clive of India'. Close to the Oxford Group offices at Hay's Mews, it had been bought before the war to be the London home of Frank Buchman, the American whose ideas had inspired the concept of moral re-armament. It was also a meeting place for those who shared his ideas and wanted to inspire others. Families up and down Britain had contributed to its purchase back in 1938. That year East Ham Town Hall, in the heart of London's docklands, had seen the launching of 'Moral Re-Armament' as an idea to embrace the work that had earlier been known as the 'Oxford Group' as a result of its following at that university. Buchman and his team stirred great interest for their ideas in the East End, as he and his colleagues had been very active there during the pre-war Depression.

We found that at Berkeley Square we were expected to go down

to the cellars when the air raid sirens sounded. Grudgingly and very reluctantly we did, although we'd have preferred to take our chance in the dormitories on the floors above; the risk didn't seem to be any greater than doing ops.

On one leave a Colonial Service officer whom I had met through MRA, Hugh Elliott, asked me to accompany him to the House of Commons to meet Viscount Hinchingbrooke, a Conservative MP. Hugh had been impressed by a speech of his, and wanted to share our ideas with him. Lord Hinchingbrooke wrote me later, asking, 'Would you care to come across for a chat and some food?' I did care, so I went and had the first of a number of cordial occasions with him, which continued well after the war. I didn't know how to address a Viscount and called him 'Sir' or 'my Lord'. After a while he coughed and said, 'Most of my friends call me Hinch, if you can bear to use the term.'

He once invited me to spend a weekend at his family home, Hinchingbrooke, an enormous country mansion in Huntingdon, near Cambridge. 'Come and join me camping out in a wing,' he had said. I'd been warned that we would dress for dinner, so I was careful to borrow an evening jacket. To my horror a manservant unpacked for me and hung up my clothes. Examining my evening dress he asked, 'No black hose, sir?' 'No,' I replied. My socks were blue, but I thought dark enough to go with a dinner jacket. Then he asked, 'No evening shoes, sir?' Again I said no, rather testily – I only had one pair of black shoes to my name, and I was already wearing them.

I sat across the table from my host at dinner. We were the only two dining, with an enormous table stretching out beyond us. I made polite conversation, at one point commenting that the dinner service was particularly beautiful. 'Yes,' said Hinch, 'it's silver. I found it in the vaults. It saves breakages.'



Two more spells of flying training were required before we could join our squadron. One was a refresher of our earlier instrument landing course, at Holme-on-Spalding Moor, an operational bomber station in Yorkshire. It was winter 1943. Each evening, the planes would take

off and fly east. Each morning fewer in number returned. One night, after the usual pre-op briefing, a crew came in to the mess sober-faced. Someone said, 'Where is it tonight?' 'The big city,' said the crewman – meaning, of course, Berlin. 'Can I have your cigarettes?' said his friend. 'Sure.' This was an agreed and practical arrangement before ops, and helped when a dead man's effects were gathered up.

Jim had a near-fatal accident there. His instructor flew into the ground in a fog, the plane overturned and Jim was trapped in the cockpit, hearing petrol dripping and fearing a fire. The fire engine and ambulance had great difficulty locating them in the fog. By the time I heard of the accident, Jim was in the station hospital. Mercifully his physical injuries were few, but he suffered from a back ailment for many years. He also benefited from some spiritual help from a nearby vicar.

I got to know a lovely girl called Sylvia and I remember eating fish and chips with her in the town square of Selby. But we were soon sent on to an eight-week course on general reconnaissance: navigation (including astro-navigation), meteorology, ship and plane recognition. As Flying Boat pilots we would have to know all these. Jim and I flew as Navigators and Assistant Navigators in turn. In a fog, the pilot asked for a course to the Isle of Man. Jim gave one. We came out of the fog with the mountains on the port side while the pilot had expected to see them on the starboard side. But at least we found the island and he congratulated Jim all the same. I remember on landing seeing my first Manx cat, which really did have no tail. And you could get bacon and eggs in the cafés.

I had my twenty-first birthday in Blackpool, on the same day and year as Paddy Nilan. We went to the theatre to see Jack Buchanan in a musical comedy and had a swim, even though it was only March. The beach was not quite Bondi.

Before we joined our squadron we were granted leave. As this was the build-up to the D-Day invasion, Jim and I figured that we might not live to see another leave so would enjoy this one, rather than going to Hay's Mews and dutifully washing dishes. Little did I know what a life-long friendship this would lead to. We wrote to a hospitality orga-

nization, and from the addresses offered we chose Keswick in the Lake District. We were invited to the home of a Mr and Mrs Geoffrey Sarsfield-Hall; he was the retired Governor of Khartoum in the Sudan, and a director of Workington Iron and Steel Works. Mrs Sarsfield-Hall met us at the station by car, as she had a small petrol ration due to her Red Cross war work. She seemed a formidable lady, and we learned she had driven ambulances in World War I. After the warm welcome to their home, while our greatcoats were being hung up, I bent over to pat a little dog I saw in a basket in the hall. Without warning, the dog leapt into the air and fastened his teeth on my nose. There had been no time to alert me about the dog's nature. I was taken in haste to the doctor to have the wound cauterised and emerged sprouting cotton wool. I still have both tooth marks as scars. Many years later I learned that the dog had to be destroyed after he bit the postman. I suppose the postman was a local, and pilots were expected to shed a little blood.

Jim's version of the story is a little different. He maintains that the incident did not take place until after we had eaten, and claims that I was attempting to distract myself with the dog to evade washing up. But even as a journalist, I am reluctant to accept that there are two sides to this particular story.

Anyway, this broke the ice, so to speak. Geoffrey asked us about MRA and his interest led him to see our friends when he went to London. Their son, Patrick, was tragically killed not long after our visit, while serving in the army in Holland as the Allies moved across Europe. Some time after the war Geoffrey led an MRA 'task force' to a number of African countries. By an extraordinary coincidence, during that mission to Africa, Geoffrey was given a lift by a British soldier driving a jeep. It turned out that this man had been alongside Patrick when he was killed.

Carol, their daughter, has become a lifelong friend. She inherited Skiddaw Lodge, the home we visited, and has been hostess to countless visitors from many corners of the earth, not least my own family. She wanted to offer the refreshment of being among the lakes and the mountains, and the lovely views from her house are as unparalleled as

her warm hospitality. After training as an actress, she herself worked full-time with MRA for a number of years before returning to Keswick to look after her parents as they grew older.



We arrived at Pembroke Dock in late April 1944. The Sunderland seemed enormous after the training planes we had flown: there was a crew of 12, three gun turrets, eight depth charges and 12 machine guns. Our standard patrol on anti U-boat search and convoy escort was thirteen and a half hours.

It was the lead-up to D-Day, though of course at the time we didn't know when the actual date would be. We could see the build-up of landing craft in Milford Haven. The Commander-in-Chief of Coastal Command, Air Vice-Marshal Sir Sholto Douglas, addressed the aircrews of the whole base assembled in a hangar, in what was supposed to be a pep talk. He said that we might lose up to 50 per cent of our crews, but we should not worry, as the aircrew strength had been doubled. He was more philosophical about this than were we. In the event, as the Allies had pretty well taken command of the air, our losses were far less, though not negligible.

The aircraft were the latest model and were equipped with Mark III Radar, technology developed by the British and unknown to the Germans. This meant that we had a surprise advantage in U-boat detection, especially at night. The Germans' U-boats had to surface at night to run an engine to charge their batteries. Our radar would pick them up and, then we would electrically ignite our million candle-power magnesium flares. A U-boat, confident in the darkness even if engines could be heard overhead, would find itself suddenly illuminated and then depth-charged.

RAF Coastal Command had a lot of success during both the lead-up to D-Day and after. On my first operational flight, 9 June – D-Day plus 3 – we were patrolling in the Bay of Biscay on an interlocking patrol with the Royal and US Navies. The flares and equipment had been tested after take-off as required. The radar operator reported what was identified as a U-boat on the surface. My job as Second Pilot

was to call for flares, which were activated by a gunner at the flare chute aft. But no flare appeared. I called again. Still no flares. Then the captain shouted, repeating my call over his intercom, as we were right over the target.

Unaccountably, the flare mechanism had failed. The Navigator above his bombsight in the belly of the plane was helpless without illumination. The blip on the radar screen disappeared. The Captain, Neil McKeogh, and First Pilot, Bob Fischer, could blame no-one. But it was an anti-climax, a mystery. Maybe this sub was caught later. Maybe, as a clear target for the sub's surface guns, we would have been shot out of the air – as happened to some on our course. However, four years later Jim met a U-boat Commander who had been on patrol in our area at that time. 'So glad we have not met before,' said the German.

There were three Squadrons at Pembroke Dock – RAAF, RAF and Royal Canadian Air Force. The water at Milford Haven was our 'runway' – Lord Nelson had sailed from Milford Haven and, we were told, had trysts there with Lady Hamilton. It was a large base, and we went back and forth by dinghy to the Flying Boats moored in the harbour, where they were served by tender for fuel, ammunition, food and, if needed, the fire brigade. For overhaul, the planes were winched backwards up a slipway, having had wheels fitted under them in the water.

They were a graceful craft, a military version of the Empire Flying Boat – the luxury way to Australia and Empire in the Thirties, when the journey took a week or so, with overnight stops for sleeping. The signs of luxury were removed when the boats were recommissioned as war planes and the RAF added gun turrets. But the dining saloon area was left as a 'ward room' for us to sit and eat in when we had a spell in rotation, with a galley fired with a primus stove. Up there, we had the best rations in the services – steak, eggs, you name it. The gunners would do the cooking, and tea, coffee or Bovril was brought round every hour as the temperature was always very low. We also had a flushing toilet.

Our schedule as pilots was an hour at the controls, an hour on the right seat as Second Pilot, half an hour on radar and half an hour off

in the wardroom. How Lindbergh managed solo, I cannot imagine. To maintain stealth tactics, we kept radio silence for the whole mission. The hardest-working member of the crew was the Navigator, who was on duty all the time. He had to rely on 'dead reckoning' – no radio aids. He would take star shots with a bubble sextant through a dome fitted into the roof of the plane. Captains were usually pilots, and expected to know enough about the engines, the guns, the radar, the radio and the navigation to take over any duties if need be, but primarily to understand what should be expected of the rest of the crew. Ours had three RAF chaps and nine RAAF. I remember our cockney Flight Engineer, Vic Ferns, sported a fine moustache, and on leave in London used to frequent what he called 'Ammersmiff Pally de Dance'. Pat Howard, a policeman both before and after the war, was our excellent Navigator.

We were fortunate in having been so long at training and travelling that we came to operational service late in the war, really because of our age at intake. Because of the Allies' air superiority by the time D-Day came, the 550 hours I spent on Sunderlands was, for the most part, boring routine. Night flying in winter at 1,000–1,500 feet, which was our patrol height, was often unpleasantly rough. You could get mesmerized by the dimly-lit instruments, especially by the artificial horizon. We had to fly dead accurate courses for the Navigator so that his calculations were exact. I marvelled at how he would get us back to base after 14 hours out in total darkness, with only his calculations to guide him. Nowadays a transatlantic navigator sets the course on a computer before take-off and the plane itself takes over the flying after take-off.

In due course, I was experienced enough to become First Pilot. This included being the only pilot on board when we went flight-testing after an overhaul, for example. I can remember vividly the first time I did this, circling over the water, testing everything in the book. When you were experienced enough to become Captain, you went on a special course and had to qualify solo for night landings and take-offs, a difficult and dangerous procedure as instead of the fixed flare-path you would have had on land you relied on flares on bobbing boats

moored in a line. There was no margin for error. However the war ended before I was sent on a Captain's course.

Our Commanding Officer was Keith Hampshire, who had been a lead swimmer in the North Cottesloe Surf Lifesaving Club when I too was a member. He had no fear and unfortunately expected the rest of us to be likewise. One night, when a savage storm threatened the moored flying boats, I believe Hampshire swam out to one and started up the engines to save it drifting ashore. On a winter's night while doing our cockpit check before take-off, we found that our de-icing equipment was defective. Our Captain for the op, Bob Fischer, was nonetheless ordered airborne despite the forecast for freezing conditions. Some hours out, our artificial horizon also gave trouble and we had to break radio silence to report this and request permission to abort the flight. This was granted and we were told later by Fischer that Hampshire expressed relief at this. He had been concerned for us, despite ordering us to fly.

On one mission I flew with a very senior pilot, Squadron Leader Richmond. Just after take-off, fully laden with 2,200 gallons of fuel, a fire broke out, apparently started by the radar being switched on while the engines were at full throttle, which overloaded the electrical system and caused a spark. Our procedure in the event of fire was to land immediately. We were over the wide mouth of Milford Haven. As First Pilot, sitting alongside Richmond, I was ordered to break the windshield to stop the smoke being drawn into the cockpit and blotting out our visibility. I was about to use my clenched fist when Richmond pointed at the Verey pistol, used to shoot distress flares. But before I could obey he changed his mind as the smoke cleared.

Normally you were required to jettison most of your fuel to avoid a heavy landing but there was no time for this. We hit the water hard and bounced across the bay with the four engines screaming and the land coming dangerously close. The waves rolling in from the open sea were preventing us from touching down. Eventually we got down, but had bad leaks due to the severe impacts. The water pump went on, the fire went out, we baled out water and stuck chewing gum in the cracks in the hull. I gave thanks while we limped back to base and

the boat was winched ashore for repair, never being airworthy for operational flying again.

We spent time in the winter of 1944 at the Sullom Voe base in the Shetland Islands, as we were part of the escort duty for the vital Russian convoys. Hitler's eastern offensive was dragging on. The weather was appalling, with an unceasing wind. There was only one tree on our island. It was so lonely for the locals it was said that during a long winter's night you would talk to the sheep in order to stop yourself going mad for lack of company. But then, eventually, the sheep would talk to you. However, the fish meals were very good, cooked by Norwegians who operated the motor torpedo boats across to their home coasts – known as 'the Shetland Bus' – ferrying Resistance fighters in and out. One day I went fishing, even though a gale blew. A week later my crewmates complained of a bad smell in the hut. It turned out to be some rotting bait under my bed. What else was there to do? Card games bored me, and they still do. But I had a book with some of the world's most memorable speeches, so I walked up and down in the howling wind, learning by heart Lincoln's Address at Gettysburg. I can still recite it.

It was unhealthy to patrol the seas off Norway. The Germans had 300 aircraft along the coast; and after detecting us by radar they could lie in wait for us. So we did patrols of an irregular pattern and kept cloud cover in sight. If we had engine trouble or our base became fogged in we could be diverted to Murmansk in Russia or Reykjavik in Iceland, although I never went to either myself. Many of the convoys were attacked, but we were not. When flying from Pembroke Dock our diversion bases in the event of fog were congenial – Lough Earn in Northern Ireland and Southampton Water, both of which I experienced. There was more food in the cafés in Northern Ireland.

We would be required to rest for some hours before an 'op'. There was always an 'aircrew breakfast' before and after, called so despite any hour of arrival or departure – bacon and eggs and toast, complete luxury bearing in mind the civilian ration of one egg per week, even without taking into account our in-flight fry-up. After our meal there was briefing about the patrol, the target if known, the ship or convoy

we were escorting or meeting. Many of our ops were at night, taking off at dusk and landing some 14 hours later. So, in winter, we did not see much daylight, returning to sleep during the following day.

For myself, I so dreaded operational flying that I never slept beforehand. This could mean no sleep for 24 hours, as, after landing, we had to clean up the boat, refuel it, go to debriefing, have the 'breakfast', take a long hot shower and then go to bed. But we always had a day off after an op and in summer we could sometimes go to the lovely resort up the coast at Tenby. I sometimes took a WAAF called Muriel. And a redeeming feature of our forces' life, on all the stations, was the base cinema. We would get the latest films and it was at Pembroke Dock that I first saw *Casablanca*, which has remained a favourite ever since. Even on the Shetland Islands we could get first release films.

Jim Coulter was with another crew on the same squadron. They were shot at by a German coastal battery when flying too close to Jersey, which was of course under Nazi occupation. But they too survived, and like me, Jim did not sink a U-boat or get shot down. We were told the most important role we had to play was 'being there'. If our presence could keep U-boats submerged, they could not overtake a convoy, as their underwater speed was slower than a convoy's speed. At the war's end I remember seeing a Flying Boat escorting a surrendered U-boat on the surface all the way back to our base.

There was a wonderful camaraderie in the crews. My best friends were Bill Steyning and Jack Auld of Sydney. They were wireless operators/gunners. For £35, we bought an old Morris Minor that had been up on blocks for five years. It was nicknamed 'the Wee Jalopy', and Vic Ferns serviced it and made sure the brakes were working. As air crew, we were entitled to petrol coupons for 700 miles, so we used a leave near the war's end to go down to Land's End and places in between. Germany capitulated while we were away, so we went to a VE Day dance at Sennen Cove, Land's End. When our coupons ran out it always seemed possible to cadge an extra gallon or two from friendly garages.

Squadron life was a mixture of nicotine, challenge, risk, fear, boredom, camaraderie and, above all, devotion to duty. Jim and I did

not now drink, despite our earlier flirtation with cherry brandy, and helped our sozzled mates into bed on occasions, for which they were truly grateful.

I don't remember any chapel-going on the squadron, but Jim and I were fairly faithful to spending most of our leaves at Berkeley Square or Hay's Mews. Towards the end of the war, we were invited on MRA expeditions to Belfast, Birmingham and other regional centres, to launch Peter Howard's latest book, *Ideas Have Legs*, which recounted the dramatic stories of those whose lives had taken a new direction after encountering the ideas of MRA. As part of this a cast drawn from those off-duty from various war services performed an excellent wartime revue, *Battle Together for Britain*. We were introduced to lots of folk, making friendships and contacts that extended for many years to come.

4

After the Storm

1945-47



*Two Suggestions, Two Prime Ministers and One Near Miss –
Churchill's Peaches – From Manhattan to Mackinac –
Frank Buchman's Whistle-stop America – Rising to the Challenge –
Home Truths – The Australian Campaign*

Our Squadron was not scheduled for the continuing war against Japan. With little to do in Britain, we were given leave. Jim and I headed back to Cornwall where the Great Western Hotel at Newquay, on a good surfing beach, had been taken over by the RAAF. We surfed and sunbathed so assiduously that I got sunstroke. I was lying in bed recovering when I heard that the Americans had dropped an atomic bomb on Japan, followed by another, and then followed the surrender of Japan. The war was over.

We were shuttled round to an Air Force base in Cornwall, then to Beccles in Suffolk, while the Air Force worked out how to get us back to Australia. Rather than waiting around, Jim and I asked the CO at Beccles for leave to help at the MRA headquarters in London. This was granted, as long as we kept in touch. Friends were envious. 'How was it that you two got leave?' 'We asked for it,' we said. Most had not thought of doing so.

When we got to Berkeley Square, Kit Prescott made a couple of suggestions for constructive things to do with our time. One was that we should ask the RAAF to send us home via the USA so we could attend the first post-war conference of MRA and receive hands-on MRA training there. The conference was to be held on Mackinac Island, Michigan, where many like-minded people had begun to

gather during the Forties from areas across the USA and Canada. Our reaction was that Kit meant well, but he just didn't understand the ways of the Air Force. Air Crew were being shipped home via the Suez Canal, not the Pacific. However, we agreed at least to ask.

We made a formal application to RAAF HQ's CO in London, Air Vice-Marshal Wrigley. But realising that we would need to muster some supporting influence, I had also written to John Curtin in Canberra, who not only knew my father well but was also well acquainted with MRA. For good measure, I wrote to the Australian Minister for Air, Arthur Drakeford, in Melbourne. Drakeford was also knowledgeable about MRA.

John Curtin was arguably our greatest Prime Minister. I met him first with my father, when Curtin led the Federal Labor Party, when Dad spotted him waiting for a bus in Perth – his home was only a street away from ours in Cottesloe – and gave him a lift. 'He will be Prime Minister of Australia one day,' said my father as we watched Curtin make his way to his own front door. I found this idea hard to grasp at the time, as he seemed such an unassuming man. At one point in his life he had to acknowledge that he was an alcoholic, and that he would have to decide between the bottle and the premiership. When he first encountered MRA he responded positively, because having gone through this decision-making process himself he felt he was meeting people who knew what they were talking about when it came to personal change.

In 1944 Curtin had come to London for an Imperial Prime Ministers' Conference, and Jim Coulter and I, happening to be on leave, had gone to Australia House in the Strand to try and meet him. His Secretary, Fred McLaughlin, said his programme was full. But as we were leaving, Curtin appeared. On seeing our uniforms, he came over. As soon as he heard my name, he said, 'Why, I've got a letter for you from your father. Jump in the car and come round to the Savoy Hotel.'

He took us up to his suite where he produced the letter, adding 'Excuse me, I'll have to change my suit and put on my formal outfit as I'm going to the Palace to see the King.' But he left the door open

between his bedroom and the sitting room so that he could continue chatting with us while he changed.

I didn't know when I wrote him that he was seriously ill, and shortly after news came through that he had died. I wrote a piece to mark his passing for *Picture Post*, paying tribute to 'an ordinary sort of bloke' (his own words) who had contributed as much as any national leader to the idea of Empire unity during the time of crisis through which we were living. In America, he was acclaimed as 'the British Commonwealth's most forthright speaker'. I was able to recount some personal anecdotes, given our families' close connection, and quote from some of his visionary speeches – which would not have been heard by the British public. (In 1999, the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Memorial Library in Perth asked me to record my recollections of him, so these stories are now in their archives and available on the internet.)

After Curtin died, Fred McLaughlin passed my letter requesting to be repatriated via the USA to Arthur Drakeford, the Air Minister – so he got two. It so happened that my father was in Canberra for a State Premiers' conference at that time. Drakeford said to him, 'I have had a letter from your son asking for permission to return home by the US. What do you think?' My father, mistakenly thinking that I might get home sooner, and also thinking that it would be a good experience for me, agreed to the idea. Drakeford told us when we saw him in Melbourne after our US visit that, 'You chaps nearly got me into trouble. I learned that our London HQ had turned down your application. So I had to give good reasons for over-ruling them. I said that it would be of value to you in your future careers to have training in MRA and that it would be of value to Australia.'

Kit Prescott's other suggestion for constructive use of our time came following recent British political developments. A few months earlier, in July 1945, there had been a General Election. Contrary to expectations, the wartime leader Winston Churchill had lost to Labour's Clement Attlee. 'Your father is the Labor Premier of Western Australia. Why don't you go to see the British Prime Minister?' asked Kit.

I could think of no good reason why I shouldn't try, and wrote and got an appointment at 10 Downing Street in early September.

I spent 40 minutes alone with Attlee. He was very cordial and we sat at the Cabinet Table and talked while he puffed on his pipe. He was a diffident sort of man, rather awkward in conversation, and yet was warm and friendly the whole time. He was obviously very proud of his four children, and spoke of his eldest daughter, a Section Officer in the WAAF, and his 18-year old son, a midshipman in the Merchant Navy who had just gone off on his second trip. He had quite a good sense of humour, and after I had told him an amusing story quickly came back with one of his own. He seemed to be a simple man at heart, happiest when talking about things he enjoyed, such as his family.

We talked about political philosophy: we were in warm agreement of the need for a recognition of the spiritual foundations of Labour and that the British Labour movement should not substitute its warm-hearted social crusade for cold theory. He said he had great faith in the British Parliamentary system as a means of ushering in a new social order, as opposed to violent measures. Attlee was quick to agree that Curtin's untimely death was as much caused by the extremist element of the Australian Labor Party as by war strain. And he strongly agreed that the battle was between those who were out for themselves on the Right or the Left, and those who wanted the best thing for their country.

I understand that Attlee himself ran the cabinet meetings like a tight ship. He would ask each person a question and then summing up would say, 'Well, we are all agreed', implementing his own previously-held view. In this meeting, I said that I felt that MRA was the hope of Australia's future.

Attlee seemed very appreciative of my wish to cement the links between Britain and Australia by taking back personal messages. As I left, his wife arrived, and he asked me to convey his greetings to both my father and to the Australian Prime Minister. He said, 'Tell your father he has a great son. I will be looking for your name with a lot of letters after it in the near future.'

Encouraged by the Attlee visit, and while waiting for word back from Canberra, I decided to try and meet Winston Churchill too. At that time, October 1945, Mr Churchill had been Leader of the Opposition for around three months, having been defeated in the General Election. Truth to tell I was more ambitious about meeting the great man than being sure what I would say to him if we did meet. I asked Lord Hinchingbrooke, the Tory MP I had met, if it would be possible to arrange an interview for me, but he said he couldn't possibly do it. 'None of us can get near him, let alone interview him,' said Hinch. So I wrote directly to Churchill by hand, asking if I could see him before I returned home, and asked if his secretary could ring and leave a message for me.

Once our US visit was approved Jim and I were told we were to be sent to RAAF Brighton to await our passage on the *Île de France*, a pre-war transatlantic liner. While we were there, our date for sailing from Southampton came. So did word from Churchill's office. I could have an appointment with him – but only at 4pm in London on the very day that we were instructed to take the Southampton train from Brighton at 10am.

The Commanding Officer refused me leave. I think he thought I was wanting to farewell a girl in London, perhaps by the name of Churchill. Knowing how the military planners operated, I guessed that the ship would not sail till next morning – the RAAF always moved you days or at least a number of hours before a departure. Jim and I arranged that he would take my trunk on the train, board the ship and make explanations for me, and I would go AWOL to London and find my way to the boat later.

Then to complicate matters further, I heard on the BBC that Churchill was confined to bed and all his appointments were cancelled. From a phone box near our hotel billet in Brighton, I rang Churchill's secretary and made a heartfelt plea to her, saying that this would be my one chance to meet him as I was sailing to the USA and Australia.

She said Mr Churchill was in bed and had strict medical orders not to see anyone for a week. She was sympathetic, however, and though

not wanting to bother her boss, said she would discuss it with him and tell me next morning. Extraordinarily, when I rang again the message was simple: 'Mr Churchill will see you.'

Then I learned that the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, was also in Brighton, in the next hotel for a few days' break following a meeting with Stalin and Molotov, Russia's Foreign Minister. With an hour to spare before my train up to London, and in the spirit of 'why not?', I persuaded his assistant that I, the son of a senior Australian Labor figure, should meet the British Foreign Secretary. I presented Bevin with Jim's tin of Australian peaches – he'd been quite good about handing it over – and learned that Bevin was already apprehensive about Stalin's post-war ambitions.

Clutching another tin of Australian peaches as a present for Mr Churchill, I went AWOL to London. Over lunch at the MRA offices at Hay's Mews I met Arthur Baker, head of the Parliamentary Staff at *The Times*. In the enthusiasm of the moment, and not having any clear idea of the answer myself, I asked him if he had any suggestions for my interview with Churchill. 'Well,' said Arthur, 'Winnie made a great mistake in the election campaign. The people didn't like it when he imputed 'Gestapo' methods to the Labour Party. He should have kept to the great themes of Empire and nation. So, he lost – I wish he could learn from this mistake.'

I decided I would tell this to Mr Churchill! I presented myself at 28 Hyde Park Gate at the appointed time and an aide escorted me upstairs to Mr Churchill's bedroom, with the strict injunction that I should not stay 'more than a moment'. Not only was Mr Churchill ill in bed, but he had one or two other people to see. The aide added that Mr Churchill's throat was bad and that I should not let him talk much.

I was announced at the bedroom door and went to the bedside. He looked very formidable, sitting up and glowering at me, his eyes red-rimmed with a cold and his face flushed, his wisp of remaining hair untidy. We shook hands and I sat down. He had a tray across his knees with several typed papers on it, and at his elbow was a desk covered with papers, a glass of whisky, cough mixture or some such and an assortment of odds and ends handy.

He said not a word, but just glared at me in a most disconcerting fashion. I put the tin of peaches down on the desk at his elbow and said that I hoped he would be able to enjoy them in spite of his throat. He neither smiled nor acknowledged them. I nervously pressed on, saying 'It is a great privilege to meet you; I have always had a great admiration for your statesmanship. My father is the Premier of Western Australia and I am about to sail for home.'

'Yes I know,' he growled, 'what do you want me to do?' His voice had an even more ferocious tone than usual.

'I wanted to tell you how much we appreciated your lead during the War.'

He growled again, almost impatiently, 'What do you want me to do?'

'When I get home,' I said, trying a somewhat precocious tactic, 'I expect to see Mr Chifley and other members of his Cabinet, and I wondered if there is anything I can take back from you to them.'

'No', he grunted, 'I have no messages for them.' I presumed this was because Chifley was Labor. Churchill then offered, 'I'll send one to your father if you like.' Before I could respond he lifted the phone, and when he didn't get an immediate answer he gave the instrument a few sharp raps. He barked at his secretary, who then appeared in the room ready to take dictation. He gave her a few lines and then told her to type it and bring it back. 'And bring down a copy of my speeches, the latest ones,' he rasped.

I thanked him for this and he sat there drumming his fingers on the bed. He looked very ill, old and tired. Several times he closed his eyes and rested his head on the wall behind him. I talked about Curtin, saying that I had known him well. He agreed that Curtin was a fine man. And then I delivered the message formulated by Arthur Baker. 'Don't you think, sir, that in the recent election it was perhaps a mistake for you to return to the party politics of pre-war rather than to speak out to the great themes of nation and Empire?' 'I disagree,' he said angrily.

I tried again with much the same message, but expressed a little differently. I told him that I was going home with an entirely new

concept of Britain and the Empire. He just grunted and told me how discouraging it was to have the wartime coalition against Hitler fall apart. I ventured that when I had come over first I was perhaps looking on Britain as some sort of 'retired burglar', but wanted to go home and do all I could to cement the links between us.

His face relaxed a little at this, but all the time he had been glaring at me. I went on to say that I had come to love Britain, and leaving now was like leaving home. He warmed up at this. 'Good', he said, 'good. Go back and give them a good report of us. Tell them all about us.'

He asked me where I came from and when I said 'Perth' he grunted, 'Black swans, eh? I brought two pairs of black swans from there and bred them at Chartwell.'

Emboldened, I persisted, 'I was recalling, sir, how much your speeches at the time of Dunkirk meant to us all.' 'That sort of thing was all right at the time, it is no good today,' he responded.

When I asked if he might visit Australia some time soon he said, 'It's a long way.' I responded, 'You can fly there in three days.' 'Huh, I'm 71, too old.'

'Well, I must admit I have the advantage of you there,' I replied with a grin. He laughed and spluttered and muttered, 'I've got a bad cold,' as if to say 'excuse me,' and reached for the medicine.

I referred to my small role in the D-Day operation and spoke with appreciation of his hand on all of that. He seemed to take appreciation as a matter of course, but it did occur to me that he might have been nettled if I had neglected to give it.

He was to have led the Opposition in a motion he had tabled on housing in the House of Commons that day, but when I commented that it must be a source of annoyance to him not to be able to speak after all he replied, 'No, I'm glad I missed it. I didn't want to speak anyway.'

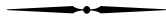
He asked when I was due to sail, and I told him that in an hour I would be catching a train to Southampton, and sailing early in the morning. 'I should be on the boat now, but felt it would be so valuable to get a few words with you that it was worth taking the risk, and

hope to be able to get on board at the last minute.’ ‘Very wrong of you,’ he said, a little less gruffly, perhaps even appreciatively. ‘Very wrong of you.’

Encouraged, I told him that my first stop on the way home would be in Canada and that the Australian Air Minister was sponsoring my attendance at the Moral Re-Armament world conference in Michigan. But I am not sure if Churchill was listening to me because he reached for the phone again as I was talking, and roundly abused his secretary for ‘taking ten minutes to type four lines’. She came in with the letter and the copy of his speeches.

He signed the letter and then took up the book, asking my name. He wrote on the flyleaf, ‘to Gordon Wise from Winston S. Churchill’. I have it on my shelf still. The letter to my father, addressed to The Premier of Western Australia, simply said, ‘Dear Mr Wise, Your son has called upon me and, as he is leaving immediately for Australia, I venture to send you a line of good wishes by him. Yours sincerely, Winston S. Churchill.’

As he presented them, we shook hands. He smiled for the first time, which transformed his face, and said, ‘Thank you for coming to see me. I promise you I’ll eat those peaches.’



I got to the port and even right on to the dock, though the taxi driver said he’d always needed a pass to get past the security gate, a pass which of course I didn’t have. When I got on board, Jim met me with two pieces of information: one, there had been a roll call, and I was missing. But Jim had spotted that the RAF Warrant Officer in charge of loading troops was an MRA friend from Hay’s Mews, Ken McCallum. He told Ken what I was doing so that when the officer called out my name, Ken said, ‘I know where Wise is, sir. He’ll be here.’ Second, Jim said, travelling with us to Nova Scotia was Dr H.V. Evatt, Foreign Minister of Australia, whom I had just previously met at the Dorchester in London, on the introduction of my father.

On the transatlantic voyage, as was usual with troop ships, we had two meals a day, but no lunch. But Dr Evatt was served an ample

sandwich lunch, and he invited us to join him each day. We did so until he succumbed to seasickness.

On our disembarkation at Halifax, Nova Scotia we were surprised to be met by an MRA friend from the RAF, Archie Wenban, who happened to be stationed there. He scooped us up and took us to tea at Government House with the Lieutenant-Governor. He had me tell him about my encounters with Churchill and Attlee.

Then we took the train to New York where we were due to report to the RAAF's US office and collect our coast-to-coast travel warrants. We learned we were to be paid in US dollars at full aircrew rates for the three months we were allowed to stay in America. The official who dealt with us, Emily Meissner, happened to know all about MRA's work, and as she knew that we were to travel to the conference on Mackinac Island she had everything arranged in accordance with the appropriate guidelines. And from then on our arrangements were in the hands of our American MRA hosts. Emily was later Secretary of MRA in the US, at the time that I joined its Board in 1976.

There was another bonus for us. Our transcontinental train journey on the way from Australia to the war in Europe had not allowed us to see anything of New York, even though we had sailed from there. This time we 'did' New York. We were taken up the Empire State Building, to a show at Radio City Music Hall, for dinner at the Waldorf Astoria and to a concert at Carnegie Hall. It turned out that even the conductor of the orchestra was involved with MRA, such was the breadth and impact of Buchman's wartime work in the United States.

Jim and I stayed in a New York East Side apartment whose owners were away. One morning we decided to have a traditional slap-up breakfast in a drugstore, about which we had heard so much. I chose a chocolate malted milkshake, a piece of chocolate layer cake and a tuna fish sandwich. Afterwards, I was so ill that we had to postpone our departure by Greyhound Bus for a day.

When we reached the shores of Lake Michigan, a journey of about 24 hours I reckon, there was a storm on the lake. It was Hallowe'en.

No boats would make the crossing to Mackinac Island so we had to stay overnight in a motel. Had I not overindulged in New York we would have been ahead of the storm.

On reaching the island we were met by Australian ladies we knew, Pat Salter and Sylvia Cust, together with Duncan Corcoran, a stocky Scot recently out of the US Army, and Cecil Broadhurst, a Canadian singer and actor who specialized in cowboy roles. There are even today no cars on Mackinac Island, so we took the horse and carriage to Island House, a resort hotel that had become a meeting place for MRA.

The high point of the arrival at Mackinac was meeting Frank Buchman, who was waiting for us at the entrance. This was an encounter that affected my whole life from then on. For the past five years I had tried to visualize what this man would be like, and now there in front of me was Frank. He was always called Frank by his associates – long before the current habit of calling everyone by their first name.

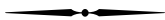
He had a ready smile and although he had suffered a stroke some years before, he seemed more alert than anyone I had ever met. He seemed to have a bigness and yet a quiet command, knowing what was going on around him. Together we walked inside where a couple of hundred people in the hall and lining the staircase burst into the song ‘Bridgebuilders’, the stirring words of which had made it something of a wartime anthem for those who shared MRA’s ideas. What a welcome! More was to come. It was mid morning, and in the true custom of our own homeland, the Australian ladies present had prepared tea and freshly made scones.

Frank put us at our ease, including us in all that was going on and showed a spontaneous sense of humour. Then we went into a meeting hall. There were just three chairs at the front. I asked Frank what the meeting was about. ‘You’re the meeting,’ he said. So we were. I recall talking in a rather self-important way about the interviews I had just had in London with Churchill and Attlee.

Neither Buchman nor anyone else commented on why we had been delayed a day. He seated us at his table for dinner that night,

which concluded with Baked Alaska, a scrumptious ice cream meringue dessert. After dinner there was an entire 'music hall' style programme. It had been especially performed at a celebration the night before, while we had been held up across the lake. When it was over Buchman, who had enjoyed it enormously, had said, 'Let's have it all over again for the Australian boys tomorrow night.'

It was all very light-hearted at first. We were very young. But it did not take long to sense Frank's depth of feeling for the nations of the world. We had some measure of that concern ourselves, but added to that in him was a detailed care for us, two ordinary Australians. He seemed something of a modern-day apostle in the line of St Francis.



As you can imagine, we were somewhat overwhelmed by all the attention, not to mention in awe of Frank as a remarkable personality. But we found his welcome delightfully natural, and he put us at our ease. Treating us as special was what he also did for so many others. And it was the trouble that he took over us that was to make me want to do the same for others as my life unfolded. There was also something very refreshing about the American fellowship of MRA. The Oxford Group's set-up in London had been quite strict about how one should behave; here, things were much more open.

The conference seemed a great melting pot of people and ideas, coming together just as the world was trying to work out its next steps forward. We met a host of fascinating personalities – Bill Jaeger from Britain, for one, who had been leading what was called his 'labour team', working with unions and management in industry all across the USA during the war. Three Swiss were there, including Philippe Mottu, part of a group from Europe who had come to discuss with Buchman their conviction to establish an MRA world centre for reconciliation in an old hotel above the Lake of Geneva. Frits Philips, later to become world President of the giant Dutch lighting and electronics firm, Philips, was also there, together with Peter Howard and other senior men we had met or heard of during our time in Britain. They were to be among those most responsible for the leadership of

MRA in the coming years. Little did we know then that they would also become our friends.

Although both of us were in our twenties and neither of us could really sing, Jim and I found ourselves invited to join the teenage cast of a musical show called *Drugstore Revolution*. Our Australian uniforms added colour to a line-up of speakers featured on stage after the show. We didn't actually participate in the show's plotline, but we were two of a dozen or so who said a few words to the audience. We spoke of how we had come to the US to be trained in MRA; my message was not particularly profound, but it was delivered with conviction.

After a week or so at Mackinac the whole assembly, casts of four specially-written plays and all, took to the road, or rather to the special train. We were to accompany them as part of the three-month training with MRA that the Air Force had granted us. First stop was Detroit, where *Drugstore Revolution* was performed for Henry and Clara Ford. Jim and I stayed with a Vice-President of the Packard Automobile Corporation, Henry Hecker, and his wife, in palatial Grosse Pointe. Joining them for a Country Club lunch certainly emphasized how the American experience of the Forties was so different from wartime Britain.

With his large-hearted, American inclusive approach, Buchman believed in 'showing folks the sights' whenever possible. So, although it was late fall and the Park was already officially closed, he arranged for our train to halt at Yellowstone National Park when passing nearby, and we all had a special visit to Old Faithful, the world-famous geyser. It was by now nearly the end of November, so we were introduced to the American tradition of Thanksgiving in Detroit with the full works – roast turkey and cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie – but a day early, as we would be travelling. However, they also served a Thanksgiving Dinner on Thanksgiving Day on the train. And when we crossed the Rockies and reached Vancouver on Canada's West Coast, our hosts, thinking we would have missed Thanksgiving, gave us another dinner. We were truly thankful!

In the cities we visited, which also included Seattle, Salem and Portland in Oregon, and San Francisco, the four plays were performed.

Before we opened in Minneapolis, Frank sat in the stalls on the morning of the show and helped each one of us who said a few words from the stage to sharpen our message. One stage personality had rather a long piece, and Buchman said, 'Let's have that last sentence.' The actor asked, 'End with that sentence, Frank?' 'No', he said, 'just that last sentence.'

Bill Jaeger, whose work was at the very forefront of MRA's mission in America then, would take me to the Labor Temples, the headquarters of the unions, in each city. We would make the acquaintance of union leaders – very powerful figures in these industrial cities, and often with national importance – or renew friendships of Bill's, and invite them to see the MRA plays and hear what we had to offer.

It was exciting and indeed heady stuff for two young Australians after the wartime privations. The USA had always captured our imagination, and we shared a similar social breadth, informality and classlessness – but the Australian way of life was much simpler in those years. During the journey we often stayed with American families, sometimes linked to the unions. It was a privileged insight into American society – and often a rather different picture to what we had seen in Grosse Pointe at the start of the journey.

After riding by car from Seattle to Los Angeles, we reached Hollywood. Our shows at the Biltmore Theater were full, and movie personalities often attended, sometimes even speaking in support of Buchman. On New Year's Day, the whole party of several hundred went to the Rose Bowl in Pasadena to see the final game of the American Football season.

In those days, you had to book an international phone call a couple of days ahead. Buchman had been lent a home in Los Angeles which he could use as his base and where he could entertain with the help of an army of devoted cooks and secretaries. Jim and I were often invited there. I asked if Buchman would be willing to put in a call to my father in Perth. He agreed, and told Dad what we were doing in the US. From my father's end, the main question was, 'When is my son coming home?'

By January our three months' paid leave in the US was coming to

an end. We had orders to report to the SS *Monterey* in San Francisco in early February. We tried some string pulling – one of our friends knew RAAF Air Marshal Richard Williams, based in Washington, DC, to whom we were ultimately accountable. We had had a discussion with Buchman and his close colleagues as to whether we should make any more efforts to extend our stay. After we solemnly declared our hope to stay longer (which I think we felt was the ‘done thing’, although I should add that we were also enjoying ourselves) Buchman said simply, ‘I think the Australian boys should go home.’ In fact, we really had no choice, short of getting the Minister for Air in Australia to intervene – an unlikely prospect. The *Monterey* was the last ship to have any places left requisitioned by the RAAF.

In the days prior to our departure, one of Buchman’s aides, a former Rhodes Scholar from South Africa named Bremer Hofmeyr, said to me quietly, ‘What do you plan to do with your life?’ I said that I would like to aim at being Prime Minister of Australia. I might not succeed, but I would at least hope to be a cabinet minister.

In response, Bremer unexpectedly said: ‘What does Jesus Christ mean to you?’ The question irritated me. I said something like, ‘Well, you can read it all in the Bible. He was the son of God, was crucified and rose again.’ Hofmeyr probably realised that this was something that I had been taught when young, but not something that had become a personal experience for me. Anyway, he simply said that obeying God and trusting Him with everything was the greatest calling a man could have. I lay low after this and Hofmeyr did not bring the subject up again. But he had sown a seed.



The SS *Monterey* of the Matson Line was more or less restored to normal passenger travel, with a number of fare-paying passengers besides the homegoing servicemen. Jim told me he had pretty well decided to resign his journalist’s job and work full time with MRA. I was not at all keen to follow suit. As I had told Hofmeyr, I wanted to go into politics. But I did agree to spend some time each day studying a collection of Frank Buchman’s speeches called *Remaking the*

World. It was the nearest thing there was to an MRA workers' manual in those days.

Our ship stopped for a day en route at Pago Pago in American Samoa, where Jim and I swam, and also in Auckland, where local MRA people met us and had an article about us written up in the paper. After sailing into Sydney's magnificent harbour we were also met by MRA people – one, who helped me with my trunk, was Allan Griffith, then a university student, later to become a distinguished advisor to several prime ministers and a good friend to me.

Ben Chifley had succeeded Curtin as Labor Prime Minister, and had kept Fred McLaughlin on as his secretary. I had brazenly told Churchill that I expected to meet Chifley but at the time this was merely youthful bravado; however, Fred made it possible, and we were presented to the pipe-smoking, former engine driver PM.

Like Curtin, Chifley had been baptised Catholic, and, along with many Australian Labor Party pioneers, had translated his upbringing in faith into the political process. We told him about our war. When Chifley asked what we were going to do next, Jim spoke up about his convictions and said he had a hunch that he should devote his life to MRA. Did the PM have any advice? Chifley took his pipe out of his mouth and said, 'If I were you, I would back my hunch and give it a go.'

Three Australians had earlier obtained Curtin's permission to travel in scarce and precious berths to attend the Mackinac Conference, prior to our being there. They were an architect, Bill Coffey, and his wife Eunice (with their baby Marion), and Oswald Spicer, a shoe manufacturer. They had returned with the conviction to launch an Australia-wide programme for MRA, centred on performances of a play called *The Forgotten Factor*, about positive ways forward for industrial relations, which they had seen performed while in America. A big ally of theirs in this was a pioneer of the Oxford Group's outreach into Australia, Ivan Menzies, the leading star of the touring D'Oyly Carte Opera Company and its repertoire of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. Menzies had met Buchman in England way back and, obliged to spend the war in Australia when it proved impossible to

return to Europe, had forged a number of remarkable friendships. This included making a great connection with Curtin, who even adjourned Parliament so that members could see an MRA revue, featuring Menzies, *Fight On, Australia*, when it came to Canberra.

The Coffeys, together with their like-minded friends, had arranged a conference at a place called Ranelagh, near Sydney, to launch this post-war campaign. Jim and I were invited. It amazes me now to conjecture how we got leave to do these things but we did, and went. Coffey and co made it plain that they hoped that we would join them full-time. I was non-committal.

Perth was still 2,500 miles away. Our passage west took us through Melbourne before heading through the bottom of South Australia and across the Nullarbor Plain. Unusually, heavy rain had washed away some of the track so we were waitlisted for RAAF places. Our priority was low. Forced to stay a while in Melbourne, we took up the invitation of Tom Uren, an accountant, and his parents, all of whom had got to know the work of MRA. It also gave us the chance to visit Arthur Drakeford, the Minister for Air, and thank him for personally authorizing our return via the USA. Air Marshal Williams, who had been the senior RAAF officer in the USA and who had responsibility for our stay there, had become Director General of Civil Aviation. We called on him, too. As we entered his office, he looked at my uniform and said, 'The colour has skidded a bit.' I probably blushed; the Savile Row royal blue had indeed lightened still further through dry-cleaning. Thankfully, he was no longer an RAAF CO.

Jim kept chivvying me about my need to come to a decision about my future. One day he said, 'You're not being honest.' Defiantly, I said I would ask God to show me where I was not honest. And He did.

That night I woke in the early hours and had a vision of Jesus looking at me, compassionately, but with a direct gaze. Then I knew that I wanted to offer my life in His service. Quite simply, when Jesus looks at you the way I saw him look at me then, you've had it. Next morning I told Jim and he remembers the conversation well. He says that I had told him that Jesus' words to me were, 'I have need of you.'

Certain episodes in wartime Britain returned to my mind, where I

had been half honest. Tears filled my eyes. I had a good deal of emotional baggage, which affected the way I handled lots of other things in life. It seemed to me afterwards that two and a half years earlier I had felt the pain of my mother's death so deeply that, unconsciously really, I decided not to be so hurt again. Fleeting affairs with girls, even if relatively innocent compared with today's relationships, helped to dull the pain temporarily.

Deciding not to feel pain has consequences, of course. You become rather unfeeling for others. I could resonate with St Augustine and his prayer, 'Lord, make me pure but not yet.' 'Someday,' I used to pray then, 'I will do as you ask. Help me to be willing though I am not now.' During those days and nights in Melbourne waiting for our train gave God the space He needed for me.

My mind was made up. No human had persuaded me. I knew I was prepared to trust God with all my future – career, position, the lot. I would resign my job, which as a secure government one had been held open for me during the war. But this also meant I would have to stand up to my father, even if he was Western Australia's leading citizen.



My homecoming was both sweet and sour. It was wonderful to have been spared in the war, and to have had the experiences we had. But my loved mother was not there. My father had, of course, borne the brunt of the bereavement. But it was hard for Una, Shirley and me, too. Added to this, my delays in coming home meant I had missed my sisters' twenty-first birthdays, which I still regret.

A year after my mother's death, my father had written to me in England and said that he wished to marry an RAAF nursing sister, Patricia McCormick, whom I had once met. But, he said, if I did not think that this was the best thing for my sisters, he would wait for my return. I was touched, of course, and cabled him my full support. My sisters were bridesmaids.

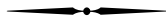
Pat was a gracious lady and a wonderful wife to my father for the next 40 years, and mother to four more of his children, my beloved

stepsisters and stepbrother. But, of course, she was not my mother. As soon as I began to tell my father of my decision to go with MRA, he would change the subject. ‘Let’s talk about that later.’ Dad fêted me at Parliament House and then took me on a tour of the southwest on the Premier’s rail coach. Pat and my sisters indicated that I was hurting my father. I was miserable but hung on.

When we finally talked about my future plans he told me that I would be throwing my life away. As an ex-serviceman I could go to university, he said, paid for by the government. ‘Think of all the good you can do in public life. I make many mistakes. For you, this idea of seeking God’s guidance for your daily life could mean that you would never be wrong!’ I said – and I remember that it was summer and we were sitting on our verandah looking out over the Indian Ocean – ‘Yes, Dad, maybe so. But the guidance I get is to devote my life to MRA work.’

Quite what devoting my life to MRA work would be like, I didn’t know. I was conscious that ‘remaking the world’, as we then felt our task to be in those immediate post-war years, demanded everything – time, energy, desires, thought of marriage, home and family. And I did find myself totally engaged in the objectives we came to address at different stages. As for financial security, I had none apart from the £150 gratuity I left the Air Force with. But my needs came to be met by the kindness and care of people who believed the work that we were doing was theirs to support. Living by faith and prayer, as we used to call it, proved to be a practical, step-by-step process, and I found that God provided in His own way. There have of course been times of concern, but I came to realise that those concerns were God’s also, and I’m moved to look back and see His faithful provision.

Jim’s father told him that my father was afraid that people would think his son had become a religious crank.



Jim and I discovered we could nominate where we would be discharged and chose Melbourne so that we could get a free ride back east to work with MRA programmes there. Before leaving Perth, I

introduced a young journalist, Peter Barnett, to the concept and practice of seeking God's guidance. He later became Director of Radio Australia. Also, Jim and I sought out a newly-elected Labor Federal MP, Kim Beazley, and told him of our ideas and experiences. I recall a sandwich lunch in Perth's Supreme Court Gardens when we did our best to convince him with our belief in the relevance of MRA.

We felt we had made hardly any impression, as Kim seemed not to register any interest. But later he told us that he had gone home and experimented with the 'quiet time' we had spoken of. The thought that he had was that despite the less favourable markets there, Australia should export rice to Asia where there was great shortage. In late 1946 much of Asia had hardly started recovery from the war. Australia was about to de-ration rice, but its need was not as great as Asia's. The Federal Minister for Agriculture, R.G. Pollard, agreed with Kim and the export policy was implemented.

As we reached Victoria we realised that our train would pass by Geelong, where the newly-formed MRA mobile force was in action with *The Forgotten Factor*. When the train slowed on a bend, we threw our cases out the window and jumped to follow them, and made our way into Geelong by foot. This saved our train fare and time doubling back from Melbourne. Later we did go to Melbourne and were officially discharged.

A campaign to build better industrial relations in Geelong came at the invitation of the US-owned International Harvester Company, manufacturers of agricultural machinery. This was the first such experience for all of us who made up Bill and Eunice Coffey's MRA 'task force'. For Jim and me, our wartime experience in Britain and our three months on campaign tour in the US were our main reservoir of illustrating MRA in practice.

I was drafted into the cast of the play in a small part – a factory worker called Mac. I had to carry the labour leader's daughter on to the stage after she had fainted in a mob scene. Shirley Weir played the said daughter, and without being too ungallant, shall I say that she was not exactly a wisp of a girl. My stage nerves made her somewhat apprehensive about being dropped.

AFTER THE STORM

As we had done in the USA, we called on and became friends with union leaders, workers and management and we were invited to stay in their homes as we travelled. As well as the play, we had a 'patriotic handbook' called *Fight On, Australia*, which had a foreword by John Curtin. Many people showed considerable personal interest. An RAAF officer, Gordon Orchard, of a printing family, became a friend of mine and told me that he had decided to ask God to direct his life. We were in the public park in Geelong and, to my embarrassment, he knelt down on the ground and I was constrained to follow suit. Spencer Nall, the Chairman of Geelong's biggest department store, also became intrigued by our work. Two of his daughters, Helen and Janet, work with MRA to this day, and are among our closest friends. Years later, they told me how amused the whole family was at my dropping in unannounced at afternoon teatime on a Sunday. It wasn't really the done thing, and they must have thought my timing was very convenient!

Jim and I were good friends but it was not all plain sailing because we were inclined to compete with each other and admonish each other in petty ways. But we worked together closely until 1947, and have remained friends for life.

It Is a Great Thing to Have a Great Aim in Life

1947



*'Come to Caux' – Bill Jaeger's Vision – Calling on the Cabinet –
Convictions and Churchill*

In 1947, after 18 months of full time work with MRA in several states of Australia, a cable arrived out of the blue for Jim and me. Following the initiative of the three Swiss we had met at Mackinac, and a number of other families from Switzerland, a new European headquarters and conference centre was established in the village of Caux-sur-Montreux. The cable, from Bill Jaeger and Kit Prescott, proposed we come to Caux and see what was going on in Europe. We were honoured to be asked, and our friends supported us. We had been living on our war gratuity as long as it lasted, but for such a major outlay of funds we were thankful for financial support from those who offered it.

It would be another parting from home and homeland, but this time there was no war to go to. My father, though still saddened that I had 'thrown away' my life for MRA, even seemed a little bit proud that I was called from overseas. This second departure from Australia was going to turn out to be the first of many more such.

This time we sailed from Fremantle directly to Southampton via the Suez Canal, a four-week trip, on a rather Spartan re-converted troop ship called *Asturias*. In London, Prescott said we should fly to Geneva, to be at Caux as soon as possible, as the second post-war assembly was in full swing.

By 1947 a group of Swiss had transformed the once luxurious Caux Palace Hotel, 3,000 feet above the lake of Geneva, from a run-down

wartime home for refugees into a buzzing conference centre. It was renamed Mountain House. We, however, were taken further up the mountain to the very top of its sister hotel, the Grand. The view was wonderful but we were an awfully long way from the dining room. Our friends indicated that we were lucky not to be halfway down the mountain like some of the other delegates, such were the post-war crowds coming to Caux from recently liberated Europe.

Encountering such a broad spectrum of Europeans was fascinating for us – our closest encounters with the Continent had been glimpsing the French and Spanish coasts from a patrolling flying boat. And the presence of Germans there, whom we had regarded as enemies just two years before, was a test of grace. Likewise, it must have been for them to meet us. And there was an extraordinary array of representatives from all five continents.

Knowing we would be meeting Frank Buchman again, we wanted to bring an Australian gift for him. Mindful of the European climate, we chose long underwear, made from Australian wool.

We arrived, and as we were introduced from the platform during the meeting that day, we approached with our gift. ‘Oh, do unwrap it,’ he said. ‘Let’s see what it is.’ We hesitated because of the nature of the gift, but did as he asked. The meeting collapsed in mirth, and Frank’s own delight was obvious. After thanking us, he added, ‘Only one pair? What do I do while they are in the laundry?’ We hadn’t thought of that.

With my own family background, I admired Bill Jaeger’s commitment to world labour, and I had long been interested in how the workforce operated in different countries. As I spent time with him at Caux, talking about my hopes for the future and his plans, I could see that he had a very definite aim in mind. One day he simply said to me, ‘I’d like to work with you next winter’. This of course was a very gracious way of asking me to work with him!

Bill had trained as a Baptist minister at Regent’s Park College in London, where he had met a man, Geoffrey Gain, whose life had been inspired by the Oxford Group and the concept of seeking God’s guidance. Bill found both his heart and intellect challenged by this

idea. His own upbringing had been in the old terraced streets of Stockport, Cheshire, during the Depression, so he knew something of poverty, struggle and idealism. Out of this grew his sense of calling to befriend the workers of the world. He found something very deep and satisfying within himself when he embraced the idea that God might lead his life. He applied this faith to trying to create a new national infrastructure, something he thought would be vitally needed after the war: sound leadership in factories, on both the union and management sides. He spent the duration of the war in America, where I had first met him, building an unrivalled circle of friendships. His 'labour team' consisted of some of the brightest personalities I had ever met.

Dipping my toe in the water, that first summer at Caux I had gone with others to the Swiss capital, Berne, to meet labour leaders. *The Forgotten Factor* was going to tour the region later in the summer, and we wanted to seek their support for the venture. From that visit I have a clear memory of meeting Otto Cadegg, Secretary of the Swiss Railway Workers' Union. He, like many others a number of us met at that time, have supported MRA's aims ever since.

So it was without too much hesitation that I accepted Bill's proposition. We travelled back to London in two cars. I drove one, accompanied by Bill's secretary, Lorna Nyberg, and the rest of our vehicle was piled with Bill's papers and our luggage. The second was driven by David Hind, who also worked extensively with Bill, bringing Bill, Clara and their baby Frederick, and Lizzie Kerr, who helped Clara with Fred.

Bill commanded tremendous respect from all he met. His keen intellect was able to identify and comment on political, social and ideological matters concerning trade unionism and labour, at national and international levels. His range of encounters and contacts was unparalleled, and he had an astonishing roll call of places he had visited to meet the union leadership. However once, when more senior and hard of hearing, he asked someone he was meeting where they were from. 'The Isle of Skye,' came the reply. 'Of course,' said Bill. 'I've been in all your main cities.'

To keep himself fully up to date, he was a prolific collector of correspondence and news clippings. In his later years, when living in a Hertfordshire village, he had a shed in the garden crammed full of these papers. Only Bill knew where to find something there, but he could unerringly put his hand on a particular paper in a matter of moments. After his death it took the dedication of several devoted friends to sort and file what he'd collected. When talking of their years travelling from one country to another, Clara used to say 'Bill went ahead: I followed with the papers.'

My years with Bill and Clara were the equivalent of a university education for me. On the one hand it was a practical education – I became driver, companion, assistant, on hand night and day. It was also a friendship with a very inspiring couple who welcomed me into their family – going with them to the movies, on holidays to Newquay in Cornwall and to Lugano in the Italian part of Switzerland, with Bill for late-night snacks at the Eat-Right diner near where we lived in Los Angeles after performances of our plays (Bill had chips with everything; I settled for a chocolate milk shake).

I had a lot of fun, but it was exhausting. I could find myself driving all day, whether in Germany, across France or up and down the Californian west coast of America, and then have a round of interviews or speeches to make. Bill would sit in the back of the car reading or napping. So as time went on I had the help of Jim MacLennan, a cheerful young American.

But the other part of it was a terrific education in world affairs. I had to find time to read and study as well. Bill and his senior MRA colleagues believed, as did many leading figures in Western public life, that one of the vital elements for the future was the rebuilding of the industry of Western Europe. Russia, of course, had control of the East. To many in the late Forties and early Fifties it seemed that international communism, which of course was strongly promoted by Russia, could well replace the ideological void left by the failure of fascism – which had dominated much of Europe for over a decade. The trade unions of Western Germany were already deeply influenced by communism. And for those who did not endorse it,

communism was perceived as the greatest threat to world order, and this had a significant influence on our work – on what we did and how we did it.

Around this time, in Oxford, I heard Arthur Koestler, a Hungarian intellectual and noted writer, speak about how he had shifted from being a convinced communist. 'Communism lies on the neglected conscience of the West,' he said. He meant that communism was a reflection of the failure of capitalism, not a viable alternative in itself. And *Time* magazine commented on the ideological struggle of the day that communism was 'a lie fighting against a half truth.'

I digested insights such as this from people I respected. My own belief was that having created the world, God must have in mind the biggest and best purpose for each of us. This was the opposite of what we saw as communism, which had evolved from Karl Marx's idealism to being an instrument of state control and an ideology that controlled people's minds, preventing an individual's development. MRA's objective was to fashion a new type of man who would, by heeding his conscience and challenging his own living with absolute moral standards, reach his full potential and make his own unique contribution to the world.

From my colleagues I heard countless stories of how both communists and capitalists had applied MRA's principles and become different people, with bigger and more inclusive aims. Over the years I came to witness many more instances of such change, with people liberated from materialism on both the right and the left.

In befriending and working alongside those who had been communists but had become convinced that the system they had advocated was the wrong one, my colleagues and I came to learn that there was indeed a real strategy for communist world domination – and the domination of such a system would leave us all in the hands of the power hungry. Communism was thus a path towards enslavement not only of the mind, but of the body: Stalin got to where he was by eliminating all opposition to his idea, and 20 million died in the gulags and through his liquidation programmes. In later years we would learn that Mao's vision for China had cost as many lives. We wanted to confront

this ideology with a bigger one – inspired not by man’s selfish needs, but by God.

Today we know that communism has been widely discredited and spectacularly rejected, especially in Eastern Europe. But in 1949 we did not know that would happen within 40 years. In a very real sense we felt the ideological struggle for a bigger and more inclusive idea than communism was every bit as real as the physical war against fascism had been.



One of Frank Buchman’s senior colleagues, Ken Twitchell, had prepared a dossier about MRA’s work since the end of the war. It contained a résumé of the activities of an international force of those working with MRA in the coal-mining areas of Britain and the German Ruhr and the steel industry in France, and other European countries recovering from the effects of Nazi rule.

This was the time, immediately post-war, that the Marshall Plan for Europe was being debated – economic relief and aid for restructuring Europe after the collapse or near-collapse of many of its economies due to the exigencies of war. Twitchell’s father-in-law, US Senator Alexander Smith, passed this dossier to Senator Styles Bridges as he left for Europe with the Marshall Plan committee to assess the situation. Having heard about MRA’s work, Bridges wanted to have Twitchell’s dossier as part of his briefing.

Bridges’ report on what he had observed in Europe was very influential in securing support for the Marshall Plan within the US. The report included mention of MRA’s activities as evidence of positive initiatives that needed supporting. Being cited in such a way meant that we had a supportive audience in many quarters, and enabled us to show how MRA’s aims and ideals could be central to the process of reconstruction.

The dossier and the report became useful documents with which to introduce ourselves and the work of MRA to political and other leaders in Britain, to inform them, and to seek to widen the sphere of our possible influence. And it was with these documents in hand that

I embarked upon a fairly intensive round of meetings after my return to London with Bill. I also had with me letters of introduction from Evatt, the Australian Foreign Minister, and the Premier of the State of Victoria, John Cain. Both were written on parchment, saying that I was coming to Europe for the Moral Re-Armament conferences at Caux, Switzerland to which world leaders were being invited. To accompany these documents I also made sure I always had a parcel of Australian food to present as a gesture of friendship, taken from a pool put together by those of us whose friends and relatives sent us care packages. In many ways, Britain's rationing felt worse after the war than it had during it – perhaps a reflection of the fact that during the war I had Air Force rations!

In eight weeks in 1947 I managed to meet ten of the Labour cabinet, often with Bill Jaeger. I had realised in the course of my extraordinary meetings with political leaders in 1945 that key to their working lives were their secretaries. Having got to know some of the British politicians' secretaries earlier proved most useful in making appointments two years later. I had got on with one of Attlee's secretaries particularly well, and I took him a carefully-prepared letter addressed to the Prime Minister, saying that I was back in Britain, out of uniform, had seen the Prime Minister and State Premiers just before leaving Australia, brought greetings from my father, and would like to call and see him and deliver a gift of food and tell him of conditions in Australia. I also wrote letters along these lines to a number of others. Each of these personal letters met with a welcome to me to call on the recipient. However, although it was richly rewarding to have the encounter, it was not always plain sailing.

Again, I saw Mr Attlee alone, and spent over 15 minutes with him at the Cabinet Room table. My first impression was that he was markedly bowed by events – and that he had even physically shrunk since my previous visit. He again seemed nervy, but pleasant in a formal way. He appreciated the gift of the food and we exchanged a few pleasant preliminaries. Then he asked, 'What are you going to do now you are out of the forces?' I told him I had been sent with other delegates from Australia to the MRA

assembly in Switzerland, and had been asked to report back on MRA's activities in Europe.

After we had a few pleasant words about his daughter being married, my family, and the efficacy of a sea-sickness remedy he had told me about before, I tried to turn the conversation back to telling him about the work of MRA in Europe, as I had witnessed it that summer. He asked me if there had been any British MPs at Caux. I showed him a selection of photographs from Caux, which he flicked through rapidly. I got the impression he would have been glad to be rid of me at that point, but I was determined to give him typed copies of the dossier given to Senator Bridges, which I did, and told him the background for the creation of the report, and how much this news had affected Bridges' conception of Europe's real needs.

It was clear that by then he had had enough and rose, saying he had better get on with some of his work. His handshake seemed limp and lifeless. As I left I mentioned *The Forgotten Factor*, which was playing in London, and which we had been invited to perform in 150 coalfields that winter. 'I do hope you can see it,' I said. He told me his wife had already seen it. I wrote him a note of thanks, and a few days later received a charming letter from Mrs Attlee, thanking me for the food parcel.

With another colleague, George Marjoribanks from Scotland, I also lunched with Mr and Mrs George Tomlinson in the House of Commons. He was Minister of Education. We had a pleasant time talking about the situation in Australia generally; he had already heard about the assembly at Caux from one of his constituents. He clearly valued America's post-war support: 'Since getting the loan we have demobilized four million people, and twelve million people have changed their jobs. Production is 120 per cent over pre-war figures, and this has been accomplished in the face of an increase in American prices of 40 per cent, which almost halves the money.' We hoped our dossier would give him some background to the Bridges report, and told him how Senator Bridges' Committee had also seen it.

George Marjoribanks and I also met Hugh Gaitskell, then Minister of Fuel and Power (he later became Leader of the Labour Party)

together, and had an illuminating half hour with him. He told us that one of the main problems with nationalization of coal was the limited number of suitable management people. Many of those qualified did not support nationalization, and the men didn't have confidence in managers who had been their former bosses. He was quite friendly in response to what we said about MRA and its recent areas of work, but we felt he grossly underestimated its significance.

At the time I felt he had been misinformed by communists, as he seemed very blind to what I thought was their strategy. Harry Pollitt, Secretary of the Communist Party, had recently stated that the communists would agitate for higher wages throughout Britain and use disruptive tactics, but would to a large extent leave the coal industry alone. This was almost certainly because the British people would not stand a deliberate sabotage of coal production, so the communists were going to play more of a waiting game. But Gaitskell had interpreted this exemption of the coal industry rather differently: that those trade union leaders who were more on the right wing would not obey instructions by Pollitt and others to cause trouble in the coal industry. 'There is a sincere effort being made all round to keep up coal production,' he said. 'Recent unofficial strikes in Scotland were very probably caused by Catholics in an attempt to smear the communists, and in some cases the communists dealt with the strikes firmly.' Which was interesting, because it was exactly the line a senior communist trade unionist gave the Coal Board when he had maliciously blamed the unofficial strikes on the Oxford Group!

Vincent Tewson was General Secretary of the TUC. A man who looked you straight in the eye as he spoke, he was interested in our reports on Australian and American labour and the issues confronting them, and carefully perused our collection of photographs from Caux, recognising some of the figures in them. He told us that his private view was that, although there was the need for Britain and America as democracies to stick together, they must not do so to the exclusion of Russia. Interestingly, he felt Britain should be a bridge between America and Russia.

Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, gave me an interview in his

vast room at the Foreign Office. I had to fill in a chit when I entered, but the lack of elaborate security methods struck me as an interesting contrast with what I had seen in the news of Molotov's six personal bodyguards when he had visited Britain. As I entered, Mr Bevin was sitting looking down at his desk, not reading anything but clearly thinking. He greeted me warmly and made reference to the parcel of food that I carried, which I duly presented to him. He seemed more relaxed than the brief meeting in Brighton two years previously. The day before, the papers had reported, he had spoken quite bluntly to Molotov. 'The Russians are very difficult,' he told me. 'You cannot even say that they have the Oriental mind. It really is half Oriental and half European, with all the tricks of both.'

It seemed that Evatt had annoyed him with a statement about Palestine. 'We are not going to partition Palestine,' he said to me with considerable emphasis. 'I will oppose it.' He also spoke quite a bit about how the government had nationalized banking and how he had advised Herbert Morrison, whom he called 'the chief cook and bottle-washer of the Labour Party', to take public opinion into consideration and avoid over-centralization.

I spoke to him about the Caux assembly, and that I had had the support in going there of several leaders in Australia. I told him how Frank Pakenham (later to become Lord Longford), the British Minister for Germany, had arranged with General Lucius Clay, his American equivalent, for a group of Germans to have special dispensation to attend the Caux conference, and how the two things that the Germans were most interested in securing for their country were food and an alternative to communism. Bevin had spoken with the Bridges Committee while they were in Europe, so I showed him the Bridges Report. He asked to keep it. He seemed interested in all the photos from Caux – of Italians, Norwegians, Burmese, Dutch and Indonesians, Americans, Swiss, French. I also had time to invite him to *The Forgotten Factor*, and he sent a representative.

Lord Woolton, who had built up the firm of John Lewis, had been a member of Churchill's War Cabinet. At the time I met him in 1947 he was directing the Conservative campaign to raise a million-pound

fighting fund for the next election campaign. He was less keen to hear about our work than to talk of himself. (I had heard that even one of his friends had said, 'He loves the applause he gets and is always thinking three cheers ahead.') He only looked at three photographs from Caux before he stood up to terminate the interview, saying 'Yes, I know there are many such personalities in Moral Re-Armament.' I nevertheless presented the dossier.

Tom Williams was the Minister of Agriculture, and said he had seen *The Forgotten Factor* in Doncaster, where his constituency was based. I was impressed when he said, 'My home is in Doncaster; London is only my workshop and I will always regard it as such.' But Bill and I had an even more positive half hour with Aneurin Bevan, Minister of Housing. Later seen as the father of the National Health Service, his eyes burned with passion when he spoke for ten minutes about his housing projects, illustrating his points with a wall map covered with different coloured markers. When we gave him the Bridges reports on MRA he looked from Bill to me and back again with a deep new interest, as if light was dawning as to what we were about. Similarly encouraging was our meeting with Sir Stafford Cripps, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer.

George Isaacs had been responsible for recently introducing what was called 'Direction of Labour' – the constructive deployment of a newly demobbed workforce. A Londoner by upbringing, when I talked about Australia he told me that he had been in the same Sunday School class as the High Commissioner for New Zealand. He had a statesmanlike conception of the British Commonwealth, and said he had heard of Caux from a Belgian trade union official.

In previous public comments he had denied that MRA had any effect in British industry, but over lunch he seemed to me to have a completely open mind, and indicated that he understood very clearly the communist intention to control the trade unions. With this political leverage they would be able to force the government to accept a rigid social and economic programme, and align Britain with the Soviet Union. I made the point several times that MRA was trying to nurture alternative routes to the communist one, by

supporting other strands of leadership among the trade union men. I said I felt that a new moral impetus needed to come into the movement as a whole, to restore the faith and fire of the labour pioneers. In turn, he spoke at length about the work he was doing in introducing displaced persons from Europe into British industry. And he told me proudly of his two grandchildren and his adopted son. Before we parted he asked me how long I would be in Britain. 'Over the winter, working with MRA in the Midlands,' I replied. 'I would like you to look me up again some time when you have seen more,' he said.

I met Herbert Morrison, Home Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister, at 11 Downing Street. We had a warm 20 minutes together but my impression was that he was prepared to scheme. 'To beat the communists,' he said, 'Labour needs to conspire. I don't like to use the word but somehow we have to work harder and use such methods.' He knew of a constituent of his who had been at Caux.

A British friend, Garth Lean, and I met Lord Nuffield and some of the executives of his big Morris Oxford motor plant at Cowley. He was then an old man, but still had a good grasp of the administration of his organization. The stories of the effect of *The Forgotten Factor* in the coalfields held his interest more than anything else, and he had already heard about the play.

With John Roots, an American colleague, I met Sir Hartley Shawcross, the Attorney-General, who had taken a leading part in the prosecutions at the Nuremberg trials. He was apparently interested in hearing about the visit of the Germans at Caux. We gathered that he had seen the MRA musical revue, *The Good Road*, in America. He also knew Dr Evatt.

Over the course of the narrowly-made encounter with Winston Churchill two years earlier, I had had a fair amount of contact with his secretary. She had very graciously farewelled me after my visit, saying that she hoped I would catch my ship. The friendly relations stood me in good stead when I wrote asking for another meeting.

When I was presented, Mr Churchill was sitting in the drawing room of his London home, smoking a cigar and with a whisky and

soda at his elbow. He greeted me warmly and the butler asked me if I would like a whisky and soda too. I accepted a lemon squash.

Mr Churchill said he recalled that I had been to see him on the eve of my departure in 1945, and as I gave him the new parcel I couldn't help but refer to the tin of peaches. When I told him that the political scene in Australia had changed considerably since my last visit, he said, 'Yes, there seems to be an improvement.' I tried to give him a thorough picture of the political situation in Australia, including the communist influence in the unions and the battle for power in the labour movement around the world.

He spoke about his hatred of totalitarianism, whether it be fascism or communism. 'The conditions are just as bad at the North Pole as the South Pole; if you were not aware which one you were at, you would be none the wiser.' I suggested that perhaps the communists would prefer to have Menzies back as Prime Minister of Australia, as they would use more disruptive force to oppose him. He said, 'That's so. They would try and cripple the government by strikes.' But when I later said that I thought that there seemed to be a lot of Marxists in the British trade union movement, which could be damaging for a free society, he replied in contradiction, 'There are very few.'

The butler entered the room and announced that a certain general had arrived; Churchill indicated that he should be shown into the other room. Clearly time was short, so I began talking with more vigour, and showed him my letters of introduction – the one from Evatt having clearly typed on it that I was a delegate to the world assembly of MRA. These interested him. And I managed to show him a number of the photographs of participants in the Caux assembly, which included the President of the Swiss Senate speaking at a dinner before a performance of *The Forgotten Factor* in Berne. He kept putting his hand out for another one, getting, I hoped, a new concept of the stature of the people we were working with. I pointed out Frank Buchman in one picture, and a little later he recognised him in another. I also told him that Senator Bridges had asked for a report of the work of MRA in Europe and the coalfields. Thinking on my feet, I said I was going to report back on my trip to my Prime Minister,

and that all this was the most significant discovery I had made in Europe. Seeing the papers I had with me he asked, 'Are these for me?' He then thanked me, got up and walked down the room, clearly beginning to think of his next meeting, but asking after my father. I had hardly touched my squash, so thought I'd better drink it swiftly!

I heard him asking what my father did, exactly. I told him he was the Leader of the Opposition in Western Australia. Then he said, 'What is the government in Western Australia?' I responded that it was a coalition of Liberal and Country Party. 'Then your father is opposed to them?' 'Yes, politically he is,' I had to admit, adding, 'For myself I believe people must rise above the point of view of one class or one party, and do something for the good of the nation.' But he was already railing against the Australian Labor Party, saying that it had retarded the population for 40 years. He believed there should be competition in the labour market, rather than the protectionism of the 'white Australia' policy – introduced to safeguard local workers' rates from being undercut by immigrants.

But when he opened the door for me, it was in no great haste, and he remained in the passage while the butler helped me on with my coat. As Attlee had done, he too asked, 'What are you going to do now?' I said I would be in the coalfield areas with MRA workers during the winter.

He said, 'You know, I have been against the Oxford Group.' I said 'Is that so? I didn't know.' 'Were you in the Oxford Group when you called to see me before?' I said, 'Well, at that time I was weighing in my mind just what it would mean for me personally and for my country. After leaving you and going to America, what I saw there convinced me that this was something to which I wanted to give my whole life, and I am doing so.'

He retained his warm smile and said with great sincerity as he looked me in the eyes, 'It is a great thing to have a great aim in life. Thank you very much for coming to see me.'

Some time later when I visited Robert Menzies, the former Australian Federal Premier, with my father during a trip to Melbourne, I was reminded of Churchill's warmth of character.

Menzies told us with great amusement how, on visiting the Churchills at Chartwell, Dame Patti Menzies had asked if she might take a picture as a souvenir – meaning, of course, to snap a photograph of them all together. Churchill said, ‘Help yourself’ – but rather than posing gestured to the great array of paintings on the wall! She chose one, naturally, and Menzies showed it to us, hanging in the room in which we were talking.

With Eric Bentley from Canada, another senior colleague of Buchman’s, I had a rollicking time with Anthony Eden, Churchill’s deputy and later Prime Minister. His secretary had said that he was so busy that even the King could not see him, but the mention of my proffered Australian food parcel seemed to open the door to his home in Chesterfield Street. He was boisterously friendly, offering us Turkish or Virginian cigarettes and sherries, which we declined in warm ‘not now’ fashion. I wore my best suit to prove I was Conservative-friendly. He was interested in turn in everything we had to say – and had heard of *The Forgotten Factor* – and when I mentioned the recent political changes in Australia he said, ‘Yes, you are certainly doing well out in Australia.’ I didn’t enlighten him that ‘doing well’ meant that my father had lost his government. He said to me, ‘You are too young to be an MP.’ I made a suitable reply along similar ‘not now’ lines – he perhaps thought I was a Conservative looking for his endorsement.

He was a charming man and made us feel quite at home, despite being called to the phone twice during our visit. One of his phone calls was to his speechwriter, and whilst we were in the room he outlined the speech that he would make in the House in answer to Bevin’s statement on the Foreign Ministers’ Conference. He even helped us on with our coats downstairs and came out to the front door to say goodbye.

Although, as I had told Churchill I would, I went to the coalfields, my plans for the rest of the winter changed unexpectedly. Bill Jaeger asked me to accompany him to the United States where Frank Buchman had asked him to ‘come to America for the Christmas holiday.’ I had a long conversation with Bill about what this actually

meant. It transpired that Frank's idea was that Bill would meet with the American trades union leadership in the wake of a national tour of *The Good Road*. When Frank 'invited' you like this, you couldn't really say no. And Bill wanted my assistance.

6

At Bill's Side

1947-52



*Germany Rebuilds – Arthur Horner at Home –
Striking Out for Something Different*

I followed Bill to New York, this time by air, arriving on Christmas Eve 1947, and went on by train to Los Angeles for what proved to be eight months. Often we travelled and worked with a larger group, which from time to time included Bill's wife Clara and young son.

The Good Road, a panoramic musical that drew much of its colour from the many traditions of Europe, and featured a chorus in national costumes, was presented nightly in the Biltmore Theater in Los Angeles. Most nights, Frank would come to the show to meet the personalities attending, including some of the Hollywood stars. A couple of us attended a meeting of Hollywood actors' unions, chaired by Ronald Reagan, whose political career began as a union representative. A rather different labour leader I met during this time was Harry Bridges, the communist leader of the dockers on the West Coast. He was Australian so I found it natural to make a date for Bill and me to talk to him about what we were doing. He drank milk for his stomach ulcers, but I imagine he himself would have been giving ulcers to the employers!

We were invited to a number of social events, including cocktail parties. One of our group, Elizabeth Salter from Adelaide, said one day, 'How can you go to a cocktail party and not drink alcohol?' She had recently decided that she wouldn't drink alcohol any more, as indeed had many of us. We felt we needed to keep clear headed in meeting the calibre of people we were amongst. Elizabeth was puzzled

how to fit in at a cocktail party if you weren't drinking. She herself had developed a taste for ginger ale as a substitute for the cocktails that she might have enjoyed earlier in her life, so she decided, when asked what she would like to drink at the party, to respond brightly, 'I have a passion for ginger ale.'

So this she did. And halfway through the party she wanted a refill and found that the ginger ale had run out because so many people had heard her request, wanted to try it, and far more of it was drunk than usual.

Because I was Bill Jaeger's driver and aide, I would go with him to confer with Frank and a small group of the senior MRA men on many occasions. In my mid-twenties, I was the youngest but was included in a natural way. And Frank was always accessible if you wanted to see him to discuss a matter.

The Caux assembly was to resume in the summer of 1948 and I returned to Europe to participate. Bill and I drove from Paris to Switzerland with another colleague, Stuart Smith – Bill himself didn't drive. (He had passed his driving test and was given a licence, but the examiner issuing it had told his college friend, Geoffrey Gain, 'Don't let him use it!') To break the journey, somewhere in France we visited a restaurant off the beaten track for our meal. The lady of the house, who was no doubt cook, housekeeper, hostess, everything, and dressed in black from top to toe, came from her kitchen with her hand on her hip and said, 'Which gentleman ordered the pot of tea?' Bill rather meekly put up his hand and said, 'It was me'. She said then, 'You may have your cup of tea before the meal, or you may have your cup of tea after the meal. But you may not have your tea with the meal.' Stuart translated all this from the French, and Bill just had to accept it.

During our many summers at Caux together – we were often there for a four-month stretch – Bill would sometimes decide at short notice to go to a café in Montreux for lunch to get a break from the bustle of the main dining room. I'd duly drive Clara and him down the mountain to his favourite spot. We knew the menu so well that Bill would simply say to the waiter, '*La même chose*' – the usual. This consisted of mushrooms on toast and steak and chips for three.

The 1948 conference was particularly remarkable for the attendance of a number of Germans, who invited us to bring *The Good Road* to war-shattered Germany. Buchman had a real love for Germany. He even spoke a German dialect as a result of his Pennsylvania immigrant background. Before the war he had hoped – controversially – to bring change to some of those rising to power there, but these hopes were of course dashed and with the onset of the Second World War the Oxford Group/MRA was banned by the Gestapo. On returning to Europe in 1946 Buchman and senior Swiss working with him had immediately reached out to defeated Germany, asking for Germans to come to Caux, the place where he believed Europe could be rebuilt. For a new Europe would have to include Germany.

I saw Buchman's deep and genuine conviction in action when we went from Caux, in a cavalcade of cars and coaches, from one end of Germany to the other. After a month *The Good Road* went on to Holland and Britain, but a group of us returned and continued to tour Germany with a panel of speakers. This included Bernard Hallward, a Canadian industrialist; Duncan Corcoran, who was a skilled shipyard worker from the Clyde in Scotland; and a French Socialist Women's and former Resistance leader from Marseilles, Irène Laure, whose family had suffered greatly in occupied France. She would speak powerfully about how she had come to forgive Germany's actions, and to ask for forgiveness from Germans for her hatred. She had come to realise how Germany herself had suffered. It was a magnificent reaching-out, and few who heard her did not respond. Those of us who witnessed these encounters knew that it was with this spirit that Europe could be rebuilt. The full story of Irène Laure is well documented in Garth Lean's *Frank Buchman – A Life*.

In Munich I stayed in the home of Hans Lehman, editor of *Neue Zeitung*. At breakfast one day he asked me, 'What do you like most about Germany?' I said, 'Music.' He asked what music I liked most. Thinking quickly – and rather too quickly – I stumbled out the words 'The Horst Wessell Song'. The man looked amazed and said, 'But that's a Nazi song.' Mortally embarrassed, and conjuring words from

the air, I replied, 'Yes, I know, but it has a good tune.' His jaw nonetheless remained dropped. I have to admit that my cultural education was lacking!

I made about 100 speeches over the time I spent in Germany in 1949. These were to all sorts of meetings arranged by Germans who wanted the help of MRA in reconstructing the spirit of the country. So we were on the shop floor of steelworks and with the coal miners; we were at city council meetings, and all sorts of local groups. I was always the last speaker and I always had to tell how my life had changed. It was written out freshly for every meeting. I had to work very hard on my enunciation of the English language for the translator's sake. Martin Flütsch, our skilled Swiss-German translator, used to stop and say, 'What?', and then I knew I had to be clearer and slower, cutting out my Australian idioms so that he could understand what I was saying. Duncan's instruction to us was to speak up so that the man in the back row could hear. There were often 500 people present, but by keeping this injunction in the back of my mind I never had any trouble making myself heard from then on.

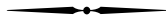
After one meeting of industrialists, I was present at a conversation with Heinz Gross, a life-long Marxist. He said to Bill Jaeger and me in amazement, 'You say the same thing to these industrialists as you said to us workers.' This underlined to me how universal our message was. Referring to perhaps the biggest issue of the day, Bernard Hallward, a paper manufacturer, used to say, 'If you want to understand communism, look in the mirror.' Of course this applied to either audience, and indeed he could have said the same about capitalism. We were trying to encourage individuals to examine their own lives, and see that what needed to change in society was perhaps also what needed to change in themselves.

Through arrangements made in Washington DC it was agreed that some of us should go into Berlin, which was then divided into zones, each controlled by one of the former Allies, but landlocked within the much larger eastern zone of the country that was controlled by the Soviets. In 1948 the Soviets blockaded Berlin. Seventeen of us, including Victor and Irène Laure, joined the Air Lift (in German, the

Luftribrücke) coordinated by the western allies to take supplies of food and other necessities in to West Berlin. It was thought that what we would offer would be an essential ingredient in helping rebuild the spirit of the people of Berlin.

Irène was deeply moved at the sight of chains of women working to clear the bomb rubble with their bare hands, and seeing the destruction wrought on Berlin by Allied bombing made an indelible impression on me. I had been trained only three years before to destroy the submarines of these people.

Our visit also took us to Austria. Walking in the palace of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, I fell behind the others as I was accompanying Victor Laure. He said, 'I feel ill.' I expressed concern and asked, 'What's the trouble?' His reply startled me, 'All those pictures of the Cardinals in their red cloaks. They make me feel ill.' But Victor was to return to the Roman Catholic faith, and a few years later he and Irène had a church wedding. He was a great companion, and often charmed with his humour. When meeting the Minister President of one of Germany's regional governments, he spoke of how MRA believed in 'these four absolute moral standards', listing three – honesty, love and unselfishness. The minister asked, 'But what is the fourth?' 'Oh, I forgot: absolute purity,' replied Victor. 'You must forgive me, but I was a seaman.'



In the Ruhr our group had met Willi Benedens, a former communist miners' leader from the Ruhr. Willi had been totally convinced of the need for class war in order to secure justice for workers, but through encountering the ideas of MRA had radically changed his approach to that of a more inclusive philosophy. He would say that instead of setting out to liquidate capitalists, he would now set out to change their hearts.

After I had returned to Britain, Willi came to visit, and it seemed natural to try and get an appointment for him with Arthur Horner, the General Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, and a member of the Communist Party's National Executive. He was a

national figure, and perhaps the most important of the communists in the British trade union movement.

Arthur Horner welcomed the idea of a meeting, and his warm-hearted response turned out to be the beginning of a solid friendship. As Willi's English was not fluent Geoffrey Daukes, a talented linguist who had worked with MRA in Germany over the previous four years and knew Willi well, translated.

Arthur showed us much consideration in the midst of a busy day. Willi told him about the new spirit of unity that had come into the workers' movement in the Ruhr through, he said, the spirit of Caux and MRA. What was more, management had also been affected by this, and now wages were one and a half times what they had been, and workers were given Christmas bonuses and paid holidays. Arthur listened carefully and added that he believed that nationalization was the best way of dealing with the coal industry. His survey of the British coal industry was brilliant. As we left, Arthur invited me to come out to his home in the London suburb of Wembley the following Sunday.

When I phoned Mrs Horner to accept, she invited me for lunch. She said she would have to go out, but that I could have a yarn with Arthur and look at the television. Arthur met me at the door and was most cordial. Mrs Horner and he both came from near Merthyr Tydfil in Wales, and had been married 35 years. After lunch she duly set off, first to visit a friend in hospital and then to speak at a Communist Party rally.

As Arthur and I sat in the sitting room by the fire before lunch he drank several beers and they hunted me up a lemon squash. My non-smoking, non-drinking left its mark and was the subject of comment once or twice. We ate in the kitchen and talked about Australia, and I was given the feeling of being warmly included in the family circle. As Mrs Horner left she asked me what work I was doing and I told her I was working with the international force of Moral Re-Armament. She just said, 'Oh yes.'

For several hours Arthur and I sat by the fire and talked. He was restless and would get up and show me round the house, pointing out

different gifts, for example from the miners' union, and from the miners of Czechoslovakia. At one point he said, 'I wish I had never left Wales. I have never fitted in here in London.' He showed me the view from the upstairs window, and after one disappearance came back with what looked like a stiff brandy.

We were talking about the question of war and peace. He was outspokenly against war. I agreed with him that war was a terrible thing. 'That was how I was interested in MRA in the first place – after being in the last war I wanted to find a way of building a permanent peace in the world,' I said. He said that despite all we had told him, he didn't like MRA, because it was out to abolish the class struggle, and how else was society going to become fairer? I told him that I had learned from my father the need to fight to change social conditions in the world, but that I felt we could only build a new system and institutions if we were men of character, so we had to build absolute moral standards into the new society. He was quick to agree with the need for moral standards and told me the reputation he had for honesty in negotiations. A little later, when the question of unselfishness came up, he said that Australia was a selfish country, with which I agreed.

Until it was five o'clock and time for tea, we discussed many subjects. He told me he was 56, how he had been a boy preacher and had been converted to Marxism. 'You know,' he said, 'I didn't need to go into the pits. I was earning £10 a week and my father was earning £3, but I wanted to get to know the men. I was an idealist like you.' His father was a railway inspector and had had 17 children. He asked what my own training was. I told him about my previous job in the Treasury and how I began to work for MRA. I told him that I had found a new force which had come into my life and that I could get direction from the Almighty. I spoke of sound home life as being the foundation to build on.

He listened in silence to much of this, and then told me that he had already tried that road and then taken another. He found a great camaraderie in the Party. But he said he also knew there were some sincere idealists in MRA. I had referred to John Curtin, former Australian Prime Minister, and said that MRA had meant a great deal to him

personally. This seemed to ring a bell with Arthur. I told him how, after the war and having met Frank Buchman myself, and seen his work in America, I had decided to give everything to this work although I knew it could mean possibly never having a permanent home and never having a regular salary. I told Arthur my father had been against it, but in my heart I knew it was what I was called to do.

We spoke about what a tragedy it was that the world should be divided into a conflict between East and West. 'It is a conflict of systems and not of geography,' he said. He said that people who claimed they could predict – this was 1950 – what the ultimate system would be were foolish. 'I don't think communism will be the ultimate system, but we shall go on beyond that to something greater. The Labour Party in this country will become like the Liberal Party was – a party of reform – and the Communist Party will be the government. It made me laugh,' he said, 'to see that when everybody was making a fuss about the Berlin Air Lift, which was really only propaganda for America, we won a whole country, China. I have lived my life and I suppose few men have seen as many of their hopes fulfilled as I have.'

He got out a large box of photographs, going back many years. Many were family pictures and others were of his time in Moscow. He'd actually lived there with his wife and daughter for a year just prior to the Second World War, while in charge of the Miners' International Section of the Profintern, the trade union counterpart for the Komintern. A photograph of Lenin hung in the kitchen.

He told me of an occasion when he was invited to dine with Lord Beaverbrook in Park Lane just before the 1945 election. Beaverbrook, who was then Minister for Aircraft production and a confidant of Churchill, gave him champagne and asked him how many Party candidates were running in the election. 'About 200,' Arthur replied. 'Oh, you should have many more,' responded Beaverbrook. Two more people dropped into Beaverbrook's during the evening and made the same point to Horner. Arthur said to me, 'I got pretty tight that night, but not so tight that I couldn't go into the office at 8am to change our policy and run five candidates instead of the 200 in the election. Beaverbrook has never spoken to me since.' Horner had

realised that Beaverbrook and his Conservative friends only wanted a large number of Communists to run in order to take away Labour votes.

I also heard how he had been sent to prison four times. The first was in 1919, when he was drummed out of the army for 'incurable conduct', for making speeches to the men against the Allies' intervention in the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. He got a two-year sentence for that. On a later charge in 1932 connected with social unrest he was sent 1,200 birthday cards from Party members all over Britain. However, although he remained wary of authority, things had now changed. He had an invitation to speak each year at the Imperial Defence College on communism, and the previous year Field Marshal Slim had been in the chair. He was also invited to visit America in the late Forties, on a special State Department invitation. Whilst he was in Washington the State Department called him up every day to make sure that the FBI were not making life awkward for him.

Before she left, his wife had invited me to come again and next time, to bring a friend. Arthur even told me I could come and stay if I liked because there was always a bed in the house. So the following Sunday a Finnish colleague, Kirsti Hakkarinen, and I joined the Horners for tea. It was quite a family occasion, with Mr and Mrs Horner and their daughter and teacher son-in-law, both communists, their daughter's eight-year-old son and another woman, who was also a teacher and a communist. After a while the son-in-law asked us what we did. We told them, and about the current events that MRA was involved in, from a meeting in East Ham to news from Japan and Caux. When we went into the kitchen for tea there was a lively discussion. Arthur had been watching TV with his grandson and came into the middle of it. The son-in-law, Bert Lofts, told us he was President-elect of his local branch of his teachers' union, and asked 'What is MRA?' The Horners' daughter said to her husband, 'You are the only one who has had the courage to ask. Mother asked me and I didn't know and I said we should ask Bert.' We told them of Frank Buchman's philosophy of the complete dimension of change, of the need to change people as well as social conditions.

Lofts then asked about how we were financed. And there was a spirited back and forth with questions including whether you could change capitalists; what use had the Church been over the course of 2,000 years; what we did at Caux and whether our programme of changing people was meant to be an alternative to changing the system. In our replies we made it clear that if the Church had perhaps not always done its job in the world it might be because people had not lived its tenets fully, and that the ideas of Christianity, if radically applied on a world scale, would be effective. We also said that we felt MRA was not an alternative to changing the system, but that any changes in the system not based on changed people would be inadequate – whatever you did with the structure, you still had to deal with fear, greed, lust and ambition, which weakened the Labour movement irrespective of the activities of the capitalists.

In the middle of this Mrs Horner asked her husband what he thought about all of this. ‘Let them talk,’ came the response. When we spoke of people’s sacrifice in taking on this voluntary work and, even when they couldn’t always afford it, giving very generously to it of their own free will, she said, ‘That is what the communists are doing.’ We told her that we felt MRA was not an organization, but a new way of living. I said, ‘I am not giving my life just to preserve the status quo, but to remake the world.’

Kirsti told them stories of Finland and of walking 200 kilometres, leading a cow, when she had to leave her home. They asked her why she had done that and she said simply, ‘The Russians came.’ They received this in silence.

We spoke about how we experimented with a truly classless society at Caux – all the 1,200 conference delegates joined in shift work to run everything from the kitchens to the gardens; I myself was coordinator of the wash-up team. We also talked about how a couple of labour leaders who had met MRA had apologized to their wives for their long absences from home and family life. When she heard the phrase ‘trade union widows’, Mrs Horner’s daughter Vol exclaimed, ‘That’s what my mother is!’ We left them with a copy of Frank Buchman’s collected speeches, *Remaking the World*.

Three weeks later it was Christmas Eve, and Kirsti and I received another invitation to tea. We met Arthur just as he was going out to see his 82-year-old father, and we spent the time with Mrs Horner, her daughter and grandson and another communist woman. They had baked special mince pies and cookies for our visit. Kirsti told the boy, Julian, the story of Christmas in Finland, and also told Mrs Horner how the spirit of MRA and Caux had helped her resolve her bitterness towards the Russians who had taken her home. Mrs Horner gave Kirsti a small Christmas present as she left.

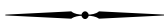
On a later visit in mid-February Arthur was in bed with a streaming cold, or he would have been on the platform at the Haringey Communist Party rally that evening. Grandson Julian was also there, together with his mother, Vol. After an anti-American outburst by Vol, young Julian said to me, 'Are you against Americans?' I said, 'I have a number of friends who are Americans.' Vol told her son, 'He isn't against anyone.'

I had a few minutes with Arthur by his bed, and gave him another book about MRA's work, *The World Rebuilt*, telling him that the first chapter was about Wales and the miners. Mrs Horner said she was going to buy some coffee and send it to Kirsti's sister in Finland, because coffee was still rationed there and she realised that Kirsti couldn't have had much money to send things home.

A few weeks later I accepted another invitation from them, together with Jim MacLennan, an American colleague. Arthur himself was away but we had a great time with Mrs Horner and the others in the house. It was my birthday, and she gave me an American tie. Jim was telling her about the average American family's life, which was a completely new concept of America for them.

'It sounds as if you lot could do a lot of good in the world, but isn't it a very big job to get it across to people?' asked Mrs Horner. We agreed that it was a big job, but that it was worth sacrificing for, and again she said that she understood sacrifice. We told her that she should read *The World Rebuilt* when Arthur had finished with it. She said that he had read it already and, she thought, had given it to someone else.

Rumours began to circulate that Arthur Horner had left the Communist Party. A press reporter rang one of his union colleagues to ask for confirmation that Horner was in disfavour with the Party, and then another paper carried a statement denying the story and saying that he was a most loyal member. Eventually one of the Sunday newspapers published an article stating that Arthur Horner had indeed left. When I heard about this I had gone on to India. I wondered if the contact we had with him and his family and our conversations about different ways to bring about change in the world had played a part in his decision – like many such encounters, you always hoped that you'd been part of effecting what you believed was a positive outcome.



Britain's post-war economy was very vulnerable, and spates of strikes would repeatedly paralyse the country. Disputes would often start as something very petty, but the Marxists would use them as leverage to cause wider disruption. A number of us who were involved in the industrial scene in London at that time used to visit the dockers' leaders – both official and unofficial. One well-known strike leader was Albert Timothy, Secretary of the Port Workers' Committee in London. He was known as 'Timmo'. He was part West Indian, part gypsy and part Irish and Kitty, his wife, was Welsh. Short and powerfully built, Timmo was known as 'the pocket Napoleon'.

In those days, you could knock on the door and say who you were and if people were interested you would be asked in. My opening line was, 'I'm visiting from Australia. I'd like to learn from you about the situation in the port.' Timmo and Kitty were very hospitable. We learned about the nature of the disputes, and they learned what we were doing.

I remember going to find him on the dockside one day with Cece Broadhurst, a Canadian I'd first met at Mackinac. Timmo was a crane driver and was at work at the time, so when Broadhurst and I arrived he beckoned to us and we climbed up the ladder into the crane to talk. After a chat he asked Broadhurst and me if we had ever had a

steam bath. There were public Turkish baths near the East Ham Town Hall. Wanting to be agreeable, before too long we found ourselves being put through all the hot and cold treatment. "Ere y'are, an 'undred-an'-twenny degrees of steam – absolute purity," he said. We noticed that he was not going into the rooms himself. We were exhausted, which was possibly Timmo's intention, given how assiduously we had been pursuing him. But after the treatment, draped in towels and stretched out on lounge chairs while we drank tea and ate buttered toast, we nonetheless talked more to him about our convictions and how they related to the labour-management situation.

One evening he invited a group of us around for a discussion. To our surprise, he had also invited Ted Dickens, a leading communist well known in the port. He was responsible for directing many of the men's thinking and allegiances, and Timmo had over the years been close to him. Ideologically we felt we gave as good as we got, and the evening ended up with something of a one-all draw!

At one point, Timmo and several of his fellow militants were arrested and charged with 'conspiring'. The trial was at the Old Bailey. A friend and I went to the trial and Timmo gave us a cheery wave from the dock. Their defence counsel, hired by the union, referred to their involvement with MRA as being a kind of certificate of good character. The bewigged judge leaned forward and asked, 'What is MRA?' The police officer intoned solemnly 'The Moral Re-Armament, m'lud.' Interestingly, they were not sentenced.

On Christmas Day I was invited to the Timothy home, and spent an hour with them in the evening. The Timothys had not spoken to one another for some months, but just before Christmas they made up their quarrel. They had a card hanging above their kitchen fireplace which read, 'Be kind to one another. Be tender-hearted and be forgiving.' Also there were two sheets of paper – he wrote on one all the things he didn't like about her and she wrote on the other the things she didn't like about him. Then they would examine them quietly. When they quarrelled before she used to pack her bags, but she told me at Christmas that this last time she did not. Perhaps heartened by the change in Timmo towards their marriage, Kitty developed a real

faith, and I even found myself godfather to Kitty's son, Bobbie. And when Timmo was involved in one dispute which looked like it would lead to a stoppage – an outcome he thought would be no bad thing – he agreed to join us in a time of quiet. His thought was, 'old yer 'orses – no strike'. There wasn't a strike, and things didn't escalate.

Another colourful character who was a friend of ours, Joe Blomberg, did go to jail. He had been caught with a number of wristwatches strapped up his arm, stolen from a cargo, and when accused had hit the policeman. When Eric Turpin, one of my old colleagues on the labour team, went to visit him in jail, Joe was very repentant, as he felt that he was bringing MRA into disrepute. Buchman's line on this was that, having had his own experience of forgiveness and redemption, no-one was beyond the grace of God.

Earlier Joe and others from the port had been to an MRA conference at Mackinac, where Frank Buchman got him to make a speech to raise some money from the audience – which he did very effectively. I can still recall his words: 'I don't want to 'ear the clink of them coins. I want to 'ear the rustle of them notes!' However, Joe got hold of a bottle of whisky and was seen outside the island's Grand Hotel, drinking. Bill Jaeger told me to go and relieve Joe of the bottle. I was nervous, as Joe was somewhat belligerent. I did get the bottle off him – but it was empty.

Our intention was to respect these men and offer them another dimension in thinking. However, it served us well to remember that this was our aim – not confrontation, or scoring points – and this did sometimes get obscured by our sense of urgency at the national situation. The friendship with Arthur Horner was always a delicate one: while warm and open to me, he also had bidding for his life and time the general secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Harry Pollitt.

There were many extraordinary friendships in those immediate post-war years. Another was with Tom Keep, who had been President of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers Union, and who was for 22 years a member of the Communist Party before changing his views about the future for society. He was a spellbinding

orator. I had an awkward time when he accepted an invitation to come to Mackinac, for we had six ex-communists from France and Britain in our group, and American legislation denied visas to communists, past or present – as it still does. I found this out too late. Our charter plane had to take us to Toronto in Canada, where we had to wait a couple of days while some friends in Congress arranged special visas so these men could cross the border.

Tom Keep and I went on to New York. His sister had married a British ex-Guardsman, and they lived outside the city. They had not seen or spoken to each other for 23 years because they so disagreed about his communist allegiance. Tom celebrated his reunion with his sister so well that our drive to the airport – as we were heading on to Miami for Tom to give a speech in the Dade County auditorium – was somewhat hair-raising.

I had a phone call one day from Eric Turpin, an Irish colleague who knew the Keeps. He said he heard that Tom was rejoining the Communist Party. We went to see him, and argued with him but to no avail: he had made up his mind. We made a second visit but Tom wasn't there; Eric and I prayed for him in his absence. Later in the evening he returned with two rabbits, saying that he had been heading to a meeting intending to rejoin the Party, but a friend had given him these two live rabbits en route. He felt he could not go to a Party meeting with two wriggling rabbits in his arms, so he had better come home. So in the end he did not rejoin the Party!

The team of us who befriended the dockers and their families were quite numerous. We used to go to London's East End night after night, reckoning between us to see each family once a week. We had our own meetings on Sundays in either East Ham Town Hall, or Canning Town Hall. Timmo and the other militants used to stand at the back of the hall, backs against the radiator (it was winter), and near the door in case the meeting became too 'hot' for them. Speeches from management who themselves had found a different motive and attitude went down well, men like John Nowell, who ran a Cheshire tannery. Other draws were sportsmen such as Essex cricketer Dickie Dodds and England rugby player Brian Boobbyer, who had very powerful

stories of the intervention of God in their lives and how they could see a changed approach revolutionizing society. It is fair to say that we made a considerable impact on the ports of Britain in those years, when strikes were common and management skills often poor. Evidence was only circumstantial, but there were definitely fewer strikes than there would otherwise have been, and when potential troublemakers like Timmo were persuaded not to stir the ports up there were fewer chances for the economy to get derailed at this challenging time.

As ever, I found I still had a lot to learn. One night, when *The Good Road* was playing in London at His Majesty's Theatre on Haymarket, Sir Will Lawther, President of the powerful National Union of Mineworkers, and his wife, Lottie, were to come to dinner with Frank Buchman at 45 Berkeley Square before going on to the show. I was to drive out to Wembley to collect Lottie, then on to collect Will at the NUM Office. But I had not heeded the weather forecast – which was for fog. In fact, it was a real pea-souper – which London would be blighted with periodically, before the Clean Air Act was passed. With visibility minimal, it took me so long to make the journey that Will was quite agitated by the time I picked him up. When we got to Berkeley Square, Frank was waiting at the door. I delivered my guests briskly. As we would otherwise be late for the play, Frank decided that we would skip the dessert and come back for it after the show. I was never reprimanded by Frank, but Bill suggested, not all that gently, that I might have allowed more time in view of the fog.

Later on, we had what we felt was a significant encounter with Jack Dash – who was leader of the Communist Party in the London docks in the Sixties. Everyone knew his name at that time, and I had long wanted to have the opportunity of meeting him. This came when Jim Beggs, from the Port of Melbourne, visited London. By this time Jim was a senior figure in the Waterside Workers of Australia, and was able to get a date to see him.

Dickie Dodds took us to Dash's home in the East End. Dash warmed to Jim Beggs as a fellow docker, but as soon as he heard reference to Moral Re-Armament he stopped short. 'You're MRA?'

There followed a ding-dong battle of views – but as tea was produced it was clear we weren't going to be shown the door straight away. Jim spoke of his first-hand experience of how changes in labour relations had been effected on the Australian waterfront through management and labour both taking an approach other than confrontation, and how he had himself successfully applied MRA's principles and philosophy. He managed to hold Dash's interest. Dickie likewise was able to tell him his stories of how personal change had changed his approach to sport, and that he had even been able to play better cricket as a result. We felt that it wasn't winning the argument that mattered here, but being able to offer a different point of view.

As the years passed, the work in the docks continued and not only in London but across Britain. It was a time of considerable change in all sorts of spheres. In 1952, when King George VI died, and Princess Elizabeth, now Queen, flew back from Kenya, I happened to be standing on the corner of St James' and the Mall as her car drove by. She was dressed in black, her face pale, looking straight ahead. It is a moment of history etched in my mind forever.

7

Buchman's World Vision

1952-55



*Frank the Man – Moral Re-Armament for India –
Sibnath Banerjee, a People's Champion – Drama in Dacca*

While in the midst of fascinating work in East London with Bill in 1952, I had a cable from Frank Buchman in India, where he was leading a group of 200 people, with stage plays, touring the country at the invitation of a committee of 18 national leaders. He wanted me and three others to join them.

My first glimpse of India was through the window of the airport bus as we drove into Bombay. It was depressing to see the very poor simply existing on the city's outskirts. How would we, how could we make a difference to the lives of such people, who could be numbered in millions? On the Air India plane I had picked up a magazine called *Blitz*, learning only later that their editorial line was favourable to the Communist Party of India. Referring to the arrival of the MRA international force, it had said, 'MRA is short for Murder, Rape and Arson'. It took me longer to get over this 'welcome' than the flight.

The four of us who flew out to join Buchman were invited to tea with him in his hotel on the afternoon we arrived. But he was obviously happy with the way the MRA campaign had begun. Throughout our months there, he expressed continual delight at the sights and sounds of India. Though without financial means of his own, he was generously supported by others with means and always left tips, knowing that staff were poorly paid – and on our return visits, hotel staff always asked after him as a result. He took a genuine interest in the humblest of attendants.

The rich experiences of these years when I was around Buchman included not only extraordinary personalities, witnessing turning-points in history, and travels I would never have dreamed I would be undertaking, but also the opportunity to work with Frank Buchman himself.

The journeying involved in the campaigns he initiated was very strenuous for Buchman, a man of over 70 who had suffered a severe stroke only a few years earlier. I recall meeting up with him once and saying, 'You look very well.' He held up his damaged right hand and said, 'But look at this.' But he was passionate and gave meticulous attention to detail. For example, in those extraordinary post-war conferences at Caux, when large groups came from all over the world, he personally checked over the accommodation list to see if each was well-suited to his room-mate, and he would go and see the rooms for himself. He would plan the menus with the cooks. He did not eat large meals, but saw to it they were perfectly cooked for his guests. A long table was set aside in what we called 'Frank's dining room' – less noisy than the main one – where very interesting guests were mingled at both lunch and supper. Whether he was present or not, he would always go over the seating plan. He was to the fore in the planning of the meetings, and at plays in the theatre would sit in a chair at the front that was angled so that he could watch the reactions of the audience. He would laugh at the jokes as if he had never heard them before.

Frank would plan for significant events like an army field marshal before a main advance. For the 1951 visit to Caux of Robert Schuman, Foreign Minister of France and a father of European unity, everyone in the assembly was to be included, from the cast of *The Good Road* to those who would meet and farewell him. It was the same when Konrad Adenauer came, before he was Chancellor of Germany. Buchman particularly encouraged these two giants of their time to meet, which eventually they did.

A number of us would go early to Frank's room, often while he was having his breakfast and before we had had our own, to evaluate the previous day and plan for the next. One morning he said that he had not slept well. 'I ate too much last night. That was my sin.' We usually

had a time of quiet and while he welcomed many ideas of others, his own convictions were quite definite. Sometimes he would say, 'No, no, no,' to a fatuous suggestion. Or, when the day before had been a notable advance, he would say, 'That was a "69 very" day,' meaning it was very good 69 times over.

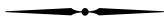
I used to enjoy going along to his sitting room at about four o'clock to share an item of news. I would be offered tea – always Earl Grey – and a slice of cake, often an orange sponge. Once, after I had imparted a particular fragment of news – and really trying to make a good impression – he said, 'You're a good boy.' Then he added, gesturing to those also in the room, 'These others are hoping I'll say the same thing about them, but I won't.' It occurred to me later that I was being teased.

It happened that Frank accepted the Jaegers' invitation for Christmas dinner one year, when I was working alongside them. We were a large party and two turkeys arrived at the table. One was put in front of Bill. In a panic – he had never carved a turkey – he passed the whole platter over to me. I had never carved a turkey either, but I began attacking the bird. Perspiration came to my brow as I felt Frank's beady eye on my amateur efforts. At last he said to me, 'Give it to the other man', who was already doing a competent job with the second turkey. Frank did not linger over the meal.

He had a somewhat ironic sense of humour. When the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohammed Ali, came to meet him with several colleagues at a Geneva hotel, the Prime Minister listened carefully to all he had to say, chain smoking. When it came time for him to speak, he said, 'Dr Buchman, do none of your people smoke?' Frank said, 'You know, I've been trying to get them to start, but I just can't.' The Prime Minister saw the joke.

But not all of Frank's preoccupations were with 'notables'. At tea with him at Caux you might meet Walter, a Swiss gardener, who also made superb yoghurt. I once asked Paul Campbell, Buchman's doctor, what he considered was Buchman's special gift. 'Introducing people to each other,' he said. And this often happened over a perfectly cooked meal.

In 1949, the whole company of MRA's full-time workers stayed on at Caux through New Year 1950. Such was the promise of a forthcoming major move in Italy, as hundreds of Italians came from industries and the ports of Northern Italy, that Frank had us all summoned to the theatre to learn Italian by Linguaphone. I can still remember such useful phrases as 'the grandfather was seated on the sofa smoking his pipe' – although I never had occasion to use it! Buchman had a passion to reach the millions with his message, and it was decided a film of *The Good Road* would be made while everyone was gathered together in Caux. Filming took place in a studio in Lausanne. In the end, the film was very disappointing and never used. I suppose you could say that this was the downside of risk-taking. I recall the morning when Frank's senior American colleague, Ken Twitchell, was really bawled out for giving a progress report that didn't spell out the problems that had arisen. On another occasion Frank said to a group of us, 'I don't say that my people lie to me. But sometimes they do not tell me the whole truth.'



In India with Buchman in 1952-53 we travelled on a special train, as we were a party of some 200, and this helped with our accommodation when we came to cities as we could sleep on the train if necessary, although we were usually given hospitality in Indian homes. (Just how far this hospitality could extend was revealed when a gentleman who had offered to house two of the company came to see the play. On being asked if everything was all right with his guests, he responded, 'But they did not arrive.' On enquiring where the two ladies in question had been staying we discovered that they had arrived at the wrong address, but had nevertheless been received as though they were expected.) In Delhi we were lent Jaipur House as our headquarters, by special permission of the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who came to tea and met many of us. Buchman had befriended him when they met in Switzerland in the Twenties. Nonetheless, he personally was wary of MRA. His own philosophy of life was agnostic, but he clearly respected Buchman.

The Congress Party government was in office. India was newly independent, and the Government Ministers, the trade union and Socialist leadership and the senior industrialists were all very accessible. Dr David Watson from Aberdeen, who had served with the Indian Army in Burma during the war and who was an early member of Buchman's pre-war Oxford Group, was a personal friend of a number of the ministers. We used together to visit several of them in their homes, early in the morning before the heat of the day and their leaving for their offices. Two of Nehru's cabinet that we met later became prime ministers.

It was quite bold to put on a play called *The Cowboy Christmas* evening after evening in Jaipur House, with carols, other songs and speaking. We had morning meetings, too, with a battery of powerful contributions from the stage. Frank himself, however, had to watch his energies. One day an Indian asked Peter Howard belligerently, 'Why is it that we don't see Frank Buchman at these meetings?' Peter replied, 'There is a very good reason.' 'What is it?' pressed the man. 'Because he is not there, so you can't see him.' The man laughed.

The impact of our work and efforts on India seemed to be considerable. Our repertoire included four plays and a fine chorus, and in each city these were programmed alongside a series of conferences and meetings. Our plays were great visual spectacles – the Indian public had very few opportunities to see public performances of any kind. The plays were also quite technically advanced and professionally presented: the lighting effect that simulated sunrise and sunset in one, *Jotham Valley*, always got applause in its own right, and was talked about for years to come. But the ideas the plays advanced, and which we reinforced with our personal encounters, also got talked about. Their impact was probably the prompting for a virulent attack by Radio Moscow's World Service. Fascinatingly, one of the architects of this counter-campaign, a journalist named Eduard Rosenthal, was to host an MRA occasion in post-Soviet Russia decades later.

Hyderabad, in the centre of India, was the home of the Nizam, reputedly one of the richest men in the world. A Moslem enclave, it had been forcibly included in the Indian union after Independence

through a so-called ‘police action’. The city and the state were run by a ‘consul’, appointed from Delhi. Such was the response of the public to our visit and events that it was decided to leave a sizeable party behind who could continue the friendships that had begun and provide focus for the new initiatives that were taking place. Buchman had decided that the very senior members of his party, a number of them ladies, would find the next city, Madras, too hot, so they would form the core of this group remaining in Hyderabad. Frank gave one, the wife of a British General, *carte blanche* to pick out who they would need to mount a continuing campaign.

I was chosen as one of the fit, younger men. Another was an Englishman, Oliver Corduroy, whom I could not find to inform him about the plan until the special train was literally pulling out of the station. He jumped off and asked who else was staying. I listed the senior personalities. ‘Good Lord,’ said Oliver. ‘Who in that lot can play squash?’ Oliver and I had found a local sponsor to make us temporary members of the Secunderabad Club which, when the British Army had been based nearby, had some fine squash courts. We used to slip off when we needed a break – shamefully leaving our colleagues still hard at work.

Such was the demand for the ideas we were talking about that the entire trainload, with plays, returned to Hyderabad some weeks later. Before they arrived, and when we were making preparations for them, we made friends with one of the Nizam’s senior advisers, who extracted a ‘purse’ for us from the Nizam of 2,000 rupees – more symbolic than substantial. We did a special matinee for him and several hundred, yes several hundred, of his immediate family.

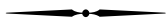
A few days before the train pulled in, we found we were lacking in accommodation for the delegation. One of our number, a formidable Dutch lady, Lottie van Beuningen, after an appointment with the State Minister of Health, returned with the keys of a maternity hospital that had just been built and was as yet empty and unfurnished. We hired all the equipment from a local contractor – beds, sheets, mosquito nets, and also moved in cooks to provide meals. When the train arrived, one of our hefty young American men asked where he was

to be quartered. We said, 'In a maternity hospital.' He thought we were kidding.

In Calcutta, one morning when a number of us went to see Frank for our daily consultation in his hotel room, we found him very serious. To his profound disappointment, one of the staff had stolen his watch. This rather overshadowed the usual lively session – and that morning a number of our Indian hosts had also joined us. When we had our usual time of quiet, Frank said 'It's strange, but my only thought is, 'Stop stealing! I suppose it is to do with my watch.' But an Indian industrialist named Singhanian was observed to slip out of the room. Later, he told some of us that Frank's thought had so challenged him that he had decided to pay some taxes he owed.

I had my thirtieth birthday in Calcutta, and shared the day's celebration with another young man who was born on the same day. Peter Howard gave a dinner for us both at the Great Eastern Hotel – a very generous thing to do, as it was the best hotel in the city. I put a blemish on the occasion by being late, having talked at length with some of the Indian audience after the performance of the play shortly beforehand. But it was a most enjoyable treat – especially to eat grilled steak, something of a rarity in India.

Following this time, we invited many from India to the next conference in Switzerland. It was a lively summer. On one occasion, word reached Frank's ear that some of the young Indians were being awkward and rebellious about the way things were run at Caux. He invited them to come to his rooms at tea time. 'I have heard what is happening,' he said. 'So I will follow the example of Mahatma Gandhi when he encountered such a situation. I will go on a fast.' This frightened the Indian rebels, who did not want to be responsible for Frank's early demise – he was, after all, a frail 75-year-old. They called off the protest. I cannot tell you whether or not Frank fasted.



One of the most interesting men I met in India was Sibnath Banerjee. In fact, as I look back on my life, he is one of the most interesting men I ever met. He looked like a Roman Emperor in profile, and with his

dhoti and a shawl draped over one shoulder was a very imposing figure. He had a good command of English and all his working life had served the workers as an advocate and negotiator. As a young man, in 1924 he had made his way overland from Calcutta to Moscow in order to attend Lenin's funeral. He was not captivated by communism as such, but he was a true champion of his people, 800,000 workers in the socialist labour movement. He was President of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, the organization of socialist trade unions of India, which had 500,000 paid-up members, and was also president of quite a few small local unions in Calcutta. He was drawn to MRA through seeing our plays, intrigued by the size of its idea. He became convinced that he should attend a conference for MRA in Caux and find out more, and train his mind on these ideas. He came back from Caux having met people and practices he came to accept, and started to apply these at home. He was greatly impressed by the story of a Canadian businessman, Cecil Morrison, who told of the transformation at his bakery when he, the boss, began to put thought for his employees before thought for his profit.

Sibnath Banerjee and his wife Probashini had become firm friends of mine when we were at Caux together in that summer of 1953. It so happened that the Secretariat of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), headquartered in Brussels, issued a report that summer that was critical of MRA. It had been prompted by a genuine enquiry for guidance about getting involved with us from Dinkar Desai, the General Secretary of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha. Sibnath had not been aware of the enquiry and was therefore very annoyed by the report, especially as he had been very favourably impressed by MRA.

At Caux some of us decided that we should ask Sibnath if he would be willing to visit a number of European trade union centres, in order to clarify the MRA-ICFTU issue. He agreed, and I accompanied him. We went to see the Swiss leadership in Berne, some of whom I knew from my visit in 1947. We also travelled to France, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Scandinavia and met many of Europe's elected trade union leaders. In Rome, we went to St Peter's, my

first inspiring experience of the immensity of the Roman Catholic Church. In Britain we attended the annual conference of the British Trades Union Congress (TUC). Sibnath made his points powerfully.

Feeling that this friendship with Sibnath was of prime importance, I returned to Calcutta, where we still had wide-ranging work. A tough city, it had heart-rending poverty alongside great wealth, and while we were there a communist state government, led by Chief Minister Jyoti Basu, was elected. I recall going to see him, probably with Sibnath.

I was working in Calcutta with quite a sizeable group. Through a British lady's contacts we were lent a rent-free office in the headquarters of the St John's Ambulance Service, of which Bobby, our friend, was the local secretary. Some services did not work in quite the way we were accustomed in Europe. I remember with amusement a Dutchman who had been trying to get the attention of the telephone operator. After some time he came back to us exasperated. It was a manual exchange and the operator had put him through to the wrong number. When he complained he was told, 'The number you wanted was busy!'

One of our Calcutta party, Reg Holme, was an experienced journalist. He persuaded T.K. Ghosh, publisher of the Hindi-language Calcutta newspaper *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, to write a special issue on MRA. This featured an article written with my help signed by Sibnath, and also our best experience of the support we had had from the labour movement worldwide. Sibnath was also willing for it to be sent with a top copy letter, signed by him, to the main office-bearers of all the unions affiliated to the ICFTU. This was a major task. Our secretary, Aileen Brown, worked especially hard.

Just at that time, a union that was led by Sibnath went on strike in a factory called Patterson's Soap Works, by then owned by a Hindu family from Rajasthan called Khaitan. We knew them and in fact several of us had stayed with G.N. Khaitan. He sent us to eat at a restaurant he owned as he felt his personal vegetarian regime at home would not nourish us sufficiently.

Geoffrey Daukes and I used to visit Sibnath and Probashini in

Howrah, Calcutta's twin city across the Hoogly River. Sibnath's home was up a lane in what we would call a slum. The narrow lanes, sometimes blocked by cows or a buffalo or children, or all three, made access eventful for a car or taxi. Sibnath himself used rickshaws, and sometimes I rode with him in one. It was a tight squeeze, for he was well built. I pitied the rickshaw-wallah, but Sibnath felt that our fare was an essential part of the man's living. We would then go with him to meet with the Patterson factory workers in an attempt to settle the dispute. The workers had been locked out because one of them, under provocation, had hit the foreman.

Sibnath persuaded this foreman to join our workers' meeting and we had a time of quiet. The worker who had made the assault apologized to the foreman for hitting him with his sandal. The apology was accepted; in return the foreman apologized for the provocation, and the Khaitans reinstated all the workers who had been suspended. Sibnath became even more convinced that the ideas of MRA worked.

One day Bobby Campbell, our British friend and Calcutta hostess, came to the office she had arranged for us to have, to tell us that Edwina Mountbatten, whose husband Lord Louis had been the last Viceroy of India, was coming to visit. She was then World President of the St John's Ambulance and was on a tour of inspection. As we had heard that Lady Mountbatten was hostile to MRA, we vacated the premises promptly. She was known to have considerable influence over Prime Minister Nehru. I knew this first hand. When I had been to Jamshedpur, the steel city practically owned and run by the Tata family, the Scottish industrialist John Craig and I were accommodated in the Tata company guesthouse. When we signed the visitor's book, we saw that the previous entry had just two signatures on the page: Jawaharlal Nehru and Edwina Mountbatten.

When we were able to return to the offices, Bobby told us that Lady Mountbatten had gone out of her way to denigrate MRA. She told us all the charges she had heard against us, including that we were in the pay of big business, and that Buchman had been close to Hitler, which were damaging but easily refutable. I wrote what I thought was a cryptic letter to Frank Buchman, then in Morocco. Buchman

replied saying, 'I read with interest what you wrote about the lady. If I were you, I would know all and say nothing.' David Watson, who was one of our leaders in the all-India work, reprimanded me for having written, pointing out that my disguise of names would be readily seen through by the Indian security service, who often opened foreign mail. We never had any repercussions, but I recall travelling on the 24-hour train journey to Delhi from Calcutta and not sleeping as a result of David's reprimand.

Geoffrey Daukes and I saw Sibnath most days. Probashini used to cook us onion omelettes, which she said would be the safest thing for us Europeans to eat in India. At Christmas of that year, 1953, Sibnath invited a couple of us to attend his annual union conference in Kanpur, and then on to the Praja Socialist Party conference in Allahabad. We travelled Indian-style with Sibnath, that is third class on the train, with no sleeping accommodation. It was rare for Indians to have Westerners travel third class with them, but it was very cheap, and how Sibnath always travelled. I suppose that these experiences, including staying in very modest Indian-style hotels, bonded us with him. Over the years we became very fond of each other. I had been given a tinned Christmas pudding, so on Christmas Day we opened it and ate it with peanuts bought from railway station vendors.

He also took us to a village outside Calcutta to meet Jayaprakash Narayan, the outstanding socialist figure of India, who had chosen to work to win land for the landless by persuading the landowners to share their land. The programme was known as Bhoodan and was headed nationally by a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi called Vinoba Bharve.

Sibnath also travelled to join us on MRA initiatives, first in Delhi, then in early 1954 he and I flew to Bangkok and Rangoon. The occasion in Bangkok was an Asian conference for MRA for which the Thai Prime Minister, Field Marshal Pibul Songgram, provided many facilities and gave a reception at his official residence so the Thai leadership and the visitors could meet. At that time, the Ministry of Culture had even allocated a budget for representatives who came to Caux and other conferences. Further, the Government three times

paid for an annual gift to Caux of five tons of rice, and the shipowner, Phya Mahai, transported it free for us to the Italian port of Genoa.

This sponsorship of MRA's work had an interesting origin. In 1949 two of my colleagues, David Hind and Bill Porter, had attended the International Labour Organization (ILO) conference in Geneva. They invited a number of the delegates to come up to Caux at weekends. One who came was Sang Pathanothai, then the General Secretary of the Thai trade unions and the editor of a newspaper. Sang took to MRA and the ideas affected his life and work back home. Sang, the son of a fisherman, had been born in a poor village (he took me there once), but had advanced his situation in life through considerable natural ability. He had become a friend of the Prime Minister, who before becoming a soldier was also from a humble background. Evidently Sang used to introduce young Thai women to the Prime Minister, and he stopped doing so after he met MRA. The Prime Minister became impressed and influenced by Sang's new convictions. Sang's life story is quite extraordinary: when he was imprisoned by a right-wing, anticommunist Thai government, Chinese leader Chou En-lai – who had great respect for Sang – 'adopted' his family and took them to Peking to protect them and educate Sang's children. It is well told in a book by his daughter, Sirin, called *The Dragon's Pearl*.

Another of Sang's friends who was impressed by his change was Phra Bimaladhamma, the Lord Abbot of the Wat Mahadatu monastery. He was a remarkable divine, prepared to listen and learn from those he met from other faiths. The Lord Abbot offered hospitality in his monastery for us visitors, so after the conference ended Sibnath and I were guests for two days. We shared the same accommodation as the monks. This included sleeping, or at least lying, on a solid teakwood bed with a block of fashioned teakwood for a pillow. Sibnath was more used to such Spartan conditions than I was.

On our way back to Calcutta we stopped off in Rangoon, where our supporter and host was the Anglican Bishop of Rangoon, George West. His residence, the Bishop's Palace, was next door to the Buddhist Aleyatala Monastery where the Abbot, Sayadaw U Narada,

had become a close spiritual associate and friend. After we left the Bishop for the airport, Sibnath said to me, 'That Bishop is a real Christian.'



While a group of us were working in Calcutta in 1954, we had an invitation to Dacca, the capital of then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, from Stephen Miles, who was First Secretary of the British High Commissioner's office. Geoffrey Daukes and I went. We paid a courtesy call on the Governor, General Iskander Mirza, who ruled on behalf of the Pakistan government as the East Pakistan Parliament had been dissolved.

The general had seen the MRA plays in Karachi in the previous year – indeed, all the movers and shakers had seen them. He said that he was concerned about student unrest. Could we bring the plays to Dacca? We had no plays on tour, we said, but we had films and people who could come with them. 'Bring them,' he said. 'Open an account with the State Bank and I will pay in a cheque for 25,000 rupees. I will provide you with transport and you can stay rent-free in the government guesthouse.'

On our return to Calcutta, we consulted with our colleagues and accepted the invitation. Two of the films available were *The Answer*, a drama made in Finland, and *The Forgotten Factor*, based on the stage play. We had to get customs clearance for our films in Dacca, but the governor was true to his word, and provided for our needs. Having put up posters all around the university inviting students to attend, we invited him to be guest of honour at our first film, which showed in a cinema we had obtained cost-free, as the owner, Mr Dessani, was the brother of one of our hosts in Calcutta.

On Sunday morning I went to the Ghulistan Cinema in good time before the showing, as I was to introduce the film. But I couldn't get in. Outside were hundreds of milling, shouting students. The outer security gates were locked. I learned that the cinema was packed out already, early, and the disappointed students were threatening to smash the gates. I had visions of a newspaper headline, 'MRA film in Dacca

causes riot'. I pushed through the crowd on to the steps and learned from the frightened manager inside the grille that he would do a second screening in two hours' time. I yelled for attention and said, 'I'm sorry, I'm an ignorant Australian and I have handled this showing very badly.' Some began to laugh, but anger did cool. I continued. 'The theatre is full but the manager will do another showing later if you come back. Kindly come back.' To my intense relief, the crowd dispersed to return later for the second screening.

8

South-East Asia's Smile

1955-58



*History at Bandung – Learning Lessons in the Philippines –
The Statesmen's Mission – Gerry Palaypay's Presidential Impact –
Japan's Restitution – Our International Outreach –
A New Colonial Legacy – The Thai Lord Abbott and the Pope –
Hope from Laos*

I was still in India in early 1955 when a message arrived from Archie Mackenzie. He was then First Secretary in the British Embassy in Bangkok and had encountered MRA's ideas while at university in Glasgow. He had become firm friends with Sang Pathanothai, the General Secretary of the Thai trades unions, as a result of his diplomatic posting. Archie informed us that at Easter there was going to be an historic conference in Bandung, Indonesia, for the leaders of the non-aligned countries of Africa and Asia to meet. Many countries had recently emerged to independence from a colonial past. The conference sponsors were President Sukarno of Indonesia and the Prime Ministers of India, Ceylon, Burma, and Pakistan.

Archie felt that MRA should be represented, and suggested that a couple of us should go in a journalistic capacity. David Channer, who had a photographer's press pass, volunteered to go with me. There was little time to get visas, but we managed; however on arrival at Bandung we found our credentials for the conference had not arrived, so we were given the papers and name tags of pressmen who had not turned up. I was given a *Newsweek* pass.

It was a fascinating week. We lined up with the delegates to greet the sponsoring heads of government. One attendee was Colonel

Nasser, who had recently assumed the Presidency of Egypt. He was charming, and we saw him being assiduously wooed by the pro-Left bloc leaders. David Channer shook the hand of Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-Lai, attending his first such conference since the communist regime was installed in 1949. We had some introductions from David's father, General George Channer. One was to Prince Faisal, later King Faisal, of Saudi Arabia. Another was to Fadhil Jamali, former Prime Minister of Iraq, who was representing his country. We met him as he was on his way to the conference hall to make, he said, 'a speech about moral re-armament' – and indeed he did, saying 'we must work on the basis of moral re-armament.' He filled out his philosophy by quoting from the Koran, 'God does not change the condition of a people unless they change from within first.' From the press gallery we saw the sharp reaction of Chou En-lai, and India's pro-communist Foreign Minister Krishna Menon, when Jamali warned the delegates, 'We must not jump out of the frying pan of Western colonialism into the fire of communist colonialism.' Jamali's words transcended the anti-colonial tirades.

David and I had conversations with many of the delegates, and cabled the highlights of Jamali's speech to the MRA team in the USA, where it appeared in the press. Frank Buchman also quoted a paragraph from it in a world broadcast later that year.

We went on from Indonesia to Singapore, the idea being to travel on to the Philippines at the suggestion of a senior US colleague, Ken Twitchell, in order to prepare the ground there for the coming of a 200-strong MRA group with a musical play, *The Vanishing Island*, about the impact of personal change on geopolitics. But before we could respond to Twitchell, we had a somewhat cryptic cable from Buchman simply saying, 'Remain Singapore'. There was no explanation, but we did what we were told. Our hosts, RAF Wing Commander Nigel Blair-Oliphant and his wife, had been introduced to MRA's ideas by a distinguished Chinese educator and politician, Dr Thio Chan Bee, whom I also knew well. We used our unexpected weeks in Singapore to meet some of Singapore's leaders, including the Chief Minister David Marshall, the head of the Chinese Chamber of

Commerce and the British Commissioner for South-East Asia, Malcolm MacDonald – son of the former British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald.

In due course, we had a cable from Manila that clarified Buchman's peremptory message to us. It was from Michel Sentis, a French Catholic colleague. As the Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country Buchman had wanted him to get there first, especially as in 1951 the Holy Office in the Vatican had issued a warning to the faithful about MRA, concerned that it was not exclusively Christian. The niceties of timing observed, Michel then asked us to join him in Manila.

The task was formidable as we knew few people there, yet we had to prepare a country to receive a large travelling party led by a distinguished group of international personalities and a fully-staged musical with massive equipment. Owing to the prominence of some of its participants, the campaign had been dubbed 'The Statesmen's Mission'.

When David and I arrived we joined Michel in the modest Luneta Hotel, just off the great Luneta Park, along Manila's waterfront. Our resources were modest so we decided that before we ran out of money we would pay our bill and move to the main hotel in town, the Manila Hotel, a vast, old-fashioned, spacious establishment on the Luneta itself. General MacArthur, US liberator of the Philippines, had made his headquarters there during the reconquest of the Pacific – fulfilling his well-known pledge, 'I will return', after the Japanese invaded. There were still wrecks of sunken ships in Manila Bay, and it was obvious that the population had suffered cruelly under the Japanese occupation.

We figured that as we planned to book rooms for the VIPs at the Manila Hotel, thus entitling us to use the hotel's conference facilities, when the crowd of 200 arrived they would have the necessary funds to pay the bills. But to be sure, we embarked upon some energetic fund-raising. Nonetheless, if anything had happened that would have meant we had to move out of the hotel we would have been stuck, as there was no way we could have paid our bills before they arrived. Fortunately, the visitors did have funds.

Our several Filipino friends included most notably Senator Ros Lim, who had encountered MRA while a delegate to the ILO in Geneva. He was a friend of the charismatic President, Ramon Magsaysay. Dr Aureo and Mrs Belen Gutierrez had also been at Caux. She was Dean of Women and he Medical Director at the Far Eastern University. It was in the FEU auditorium that in due course we staged the show, and over years to come she always extended extraordinary generosity to us in Manila. There was also Bert Oca, leader of the Transport Workers' Union and his wife Nan. Between them, they helped us to meet everyone, or anyone, including the President.

Michel was responsible for printing the programmes, and one day when he needed to go to the printer's to check the proofs, he didn't have the taxi fare. We three emptied our pockets but it still was not enough to get him there and back. 'What shall I do?' he asked. I said helpfully, 'Watch the meter and when it registers the amount you have, get out and walk.' However, it transpired that when Michel was crossing the hotel lobby, in walked a close associate, Peg Williams, Cultural Affairs Officer at the nearby US Embassy. 'I just had the thought that you might be short of money,' she said, 'so I brought some US dollars which you can change at the desk.' As a result, Michel didn't have to walk any of the way.

Senator Lim was an engaging personality, and likewise his wife Amy. As we came to know, he had a well-deserved reputation of fondness for the ladies. But he thought in bold terms. He said President Magsaysay should be asked to head the invitation committee. Then it would not be difficult to add any other public figure.

We saw the President at Malacañang Palace and he agreed to invite and also to receive the travelling company. The Senate President, the House Speaker and a list of other notables signed on, including the senior trade union leaders. Many families agreed to house visitors. We lined up the press and issued personal invitations to the national leadership as well as spreading word about the coming show to the public in general. We were also joined by several of the Mission as an advance party to help with the box office, local transport, and all else that had to be done.

We were able to reserve the auditorium without a deposit, and pretty soon applications for tickets came in steadily. These were free, as exposure to the message of MRA was the main concern. We were running up thousands of dollars of bills, but there were positive signs that it would all be worthwhile. Then on the morning before the party was due to arrive in their four chartered air planes, we opened the *Manila Times* and read a front page message to the Catholic population – over 90 per cent of the country – from Archbishop Santos, warning the faithful not to attend the play. Presumably, despite Michel having informed the Archbishop's office of what we were all about, the 1951 Holy Office reservation was being observed.

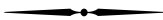
Fortunately, the Filipinos, though mostly church-going Catholics, are not ones to be whipped into line. And as the theatre tickets were free, we issued double the number of seats actually available, expecting 50 per cent wastage. This worked fine, and by the end of the run we had overflowing houses.

The opening night was memorable. Many notables came, including the Vice-President who was also Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Carlos Garcia. He was on the invitation committee, and his party occupied the Presidential box. Before the play opened one of the VIPs, Niro Hoshijima, Speaker of the Japanese Diet, stepped on stage, accompanied by Mrs Yukika Sohma, a distinguished Japanese lady who was to translate for him. I had first met her in Los Angeles in 1948.

When the audience heard the Japanese language, they booed and hissed. But when the English translation came, they realised what he had said: 'We must settle the reparations issue quickly.' There was spontaneous applause. The Japanese government had been dragging its feet over its payments to the Philippines. Hoshijima went on to express regret for what Japan had done during the war. At the interval Hoshijima and Mrs Sohma were presented to Vice-President Garcia.

When President Magsaysay received all the travelling party in Malacañang Palace, he made a point of talking with the Japanese, who included Kanju Kato, Diet Member and former Minister of Labour,

and his wife, Senator Shidzue Kato. There was a particularly poignant exchange when the President, a former Second World War guerrilla fighter and Secretary of Defence, was introduced. Later we realised we had witnessed history.



Personally, I had some roller-coaster emotions in those days. I regarded myself as totally responsible for the arrangements and so the Catholic Church's warning against us hit me hard. Then when the party arrived and reached the Manila Hotel, Peter Howard proceeded to reprimand me in front of a number of the cast. He had sent ahead some detailed 'suggestions' for our press handouts. Michel and David and I did not comply. It was an unpleasant opening for me, but Peter could be like that. At the same time, he expected you to take the corrective and still go full speed ahead, an attribute that has eluded me all my life. I did – and do – take corrective heavily.

Frank Buchman had great expectations for this visit and in many ways they were fulfilled. He had said, 'Make an early start in Baguio,' the summer capital of the Philippines. So, our preparation committee decided to take most of the party to spend a couple of nights in the delightful Pines Hotel there. Others stayed on in Manila to prepare for the play. Michel Sentis took a well-known US Catholic layman and close friend of Buchman, Joe Scott, to meet Catholic dignitaries and Senate President Roderiguez. A close colleague of Buchman, John Wood, and I travelled to Baguio in the car of the American ambassador with the then-famous and very funny Hollywood film comedian Ole Olsen. We stayed in the ambassador's Baguio residence, complete with attentive servants.

The weeks of the visit were full and fruitful. Lifelong friendships were made, leading to a continued work and leadership by Filipinos. The MRA party travelled on four charter planes, three of them at a very low price, as they were Military Air Transport Services of the US Air Force.

However, elsewhere in Washington there appeared to be opposition to what were doing. Afterwards, Peg Williams showed me a cable

from the State Department that described our mission as 'an overall net gain for the Soviet concept.' There was concern that we were too soft on communism, and not pro-American.

The next country of call was to be Thailand, with Prime Minister Pibul Songgram the chief inviting power. But as the Philippine visit was nearing its end, at a late hour word came from Bangkok that the Thai government would prefer not to receive any Africans. This posed a dilemma: we were by no means racist, but we would lose considerable face if we did not take up the Prime Minister's invitation in some form, and it was inconceivable that we could dictate to him who his guests should be, especially in an era when discrimination was entirely normal in many quarters. I was chairing a meeting of the company in the Manila Hotel's spacious Verandah Saloon when Morris Martin, one of the senior MRA 'responsibles', asked me for a word, wondering what chance there would be for friends in Singapore to host one planeload, who would go there while others of the group went to Bangkok. Thus the group for Thailand would indeed be representative, and the Singapore group would include not only Africans but also, say, Maoris and white New Zealanders, and trade unionists from various countries.

I did not feel I was in a position to challenge the decision that had been made, and it seemed a creative solution that meant we could actually increase our outreach. So I said, 'Sure, if everything we are finalizing here – including paying the bills – can be handled by others.' I would go immediately to Singapore and have two days to prepare for a visit of the same duration as the visit of the main party to Bangkok, then we would rejoin the others in Rangoon. I phoned my contact in Singapore, Thio Chan Bee, who offered to meet and accommodate me. I found that Cathay Pacific airlines had a plane to Singapore in a couple of hours – an inaugural flight – and I just had time to pack and catch it.

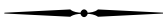
Chan Bee was a very resourceful person. He was Headmaster of the famous Anglo-Chinese school, a Member of the Legislature, a shrewd politician and a practising Methodist. Next morning he took me to meet a Chinese millionaire, Ko Teck Kin, President of the Chinese

Chamber of Commerce. He readily agreed to lay on a reception in his spacious home and invite all the leading people of Singapore, including the recently-elected Chief Minister, David Marshall, a Eurasian Socialist. We arranged other events with the unions, and there would be sightseeing to fill two or three days of the stay. All went well, building on the work which David Channer and I had put in six weeks earlier when Buchman had instructed us to stay on there.

Both groups met up in Burma after two or three days, where Prime Minister U Nu received us all and the theatre, as usual, was packed for the performances. Together with leading Buddhist monks, the Presiding Abbott, U Narada, also received the party. Most of the travellers stayed in private Burmese homes. I shared a room with a mercurial Indian from a leading industrial family, Brij Thapar, with whom I had previously travelled in India.

Our next stop was Calcutta. I took Irène and Victor Laure to the home of my old friend Sibnath Banerjee. I also took a group to Dacca. We went on to Pakistan, but when the rest of the group left for Iran I remained in Karachi to work more closely with David Watson. We accompanied a well-known Indian author, Rajendra Kumar, to Caux together.

The fact that the Statesmen's Mission was travelling in US Air Force MATS planes meant that those who criticised us in the press would link us to the CIA – Nehru's India, for example, was much more suspicious of Washington than it was of Moscow. However, in Delhi the performances were nevertheless full, and we kept the front row of the auditorium reserved for VIPs to ensure they'd be able to gain entry. Seeing a man sitting in one of these seats before the show started, one of our party approached him to let him know it was reserved for, say, members of the Cabinet. 'I know,' he said. 'I *am* a member of the Cabinet!'



Later in 1955 Frank Buchman, who had been in Australia and New Zealand and was on his way to Europe, visited Manila to receive a decoration from President Ramon Magsaysay in recognition of the work

that MRA had done there. The President's aide, Major Agerico Palaypay, looked after Frank.

In 1957, two years later, I returned to the Philippines with Bunny and Phyll Austin. Bunny had been a prominent British tennis star; his wife Phyllis Konstam was a well-known English actress during the Thirties, appearing in several of Hitchcock's early British films. Their association with Buchman went back to before the war, and they were now two of his most trusted ambassadors, with a wonderful gift for friendship and ability to stimulate some of the most interesting of our endeavours. At Buchman's request, we were en route to Japan, having worked with others to set up a new MRA headquarters in Melbourne. While we were in the Philippines, Frank had asked us to be sure to 'look up Palaypay'.

I tried hard, but the presidential palace would not give me his office number nor his home number, and in the event I could not locate him before our charter plane was due to leave. I decided to stay on to look for Gerry – as he was always known – and eventually did manage to contact him. Over coffee in a restaurant I invited him and his wife, Linda, to join us at the forthcoming Mackinac conference. They accepted. However, when we landed in Japan in order to refuel, Gerry would not leave the plane to set foot on Japanese soil because of his bitterness towards the Japanese. He had been a wartime guerrilla fighter.

At Mackinac he heard one delegate after another laying down grievances and putting wrongs right. When he heard Japanese apologizing for their wartime action, he began to think more about what he himself felt. The Filipino people had suffered atrociously, but he took courage in his hands and decided he must try to start again. So much so, that on the homeward journey he wanted to stop in Japan and meet Japanese people, and we had a very fruitful visit to Tokyo. Gerry had a winning personality and the healing he embraced at Mackinac endeared him to the Japanese.

Earlier in 1957 President Magsaysay had been killed in a plane crash, and Garcia had succeeded him as President. Garcia had retained Gerry as his aide. When on his first day back at work at Malacañang Palace

he put out his hand to greet the President, Garcia rushed by it and embraced him with both arms. 'My, Gerry,' he said, 'I'm glad you're back. I've missed you.' One of their first meetings was with a senator who promised to deliver half a million votes in the forthcoming presidential election, in return for a four million peso loan. Gerry backed Garcia in declining the offer, which would have had to be returned politically as well.

He was later surrounded by his colleagues who asked him about MRA and were incredulous when he said he'd cut out smoking, drinking and womanizing. At that moment, in came a Major Garcia, one of the President's staff, who had made life unpleasant for him in the past. At the time Gerry had insisted to Magsaysay that the man be transferred or his whole team would resign. Now here he was, back again.

Gerry said to the whole company, 'The main idea about MRA is that you begin with yourself. At Mackinac I took an honest look at myself and I saw that I've behaved like a louse to you, Garcia, and I'm sorry.' The man wept, and said where he could acknowledge that he'd been wrong also. The Palace pressmen flocked around and listened open-mouthed.

One evening, when there was a breathing space of an hour between two of the President's appointments, Gerry had the driver roll slowly up and down the Boulevard along the Bay while they discussed everything he had discovered through MRA, including the idea of seeking God's guidance in life. He described all he had seen at the world assembly at Mackinac, and had the President laughing heartily at what his own resolutions for change were, and what they had meant to him and Linda.

Garcia attended the conference we held in Baguio at Easter 1957, where he spoke in place of Magsaysay – who was killed shortly before. Garcia told Gerry he'd read *Remaking Men*, a book by Peter Howard that outlined the ideas of MRA and showed them in practice. He said how impressed he'd been by the calibre of people at Baguio. He'd heard a phrase there, 'What matters is not who is right but what is right', and asked Gerry to explain to him in detail what it meant.

Gerry said, 'You know sir, that was the late President's secret. It works like this. If someone in the party comes to you with a deal that is, shall we say, a 'little' illegal, and you say 'no' to him, whatever the consequences, he may be sore at you, but he'll get to trust and respect you, and so will the country. Or, Mr President, if you ask a girl for a kiss and she refuses, you may get mad, but you'll respect her all the more.'

'I get you, Gerry,' said the President. The over-eager naval aide who was riding in the front seat of the Cadillac piped up and said, 'Why sir, this is what you've been doing all along.' Gerry swiftly responded, 'All right, Lieutenant. We'll see you get your promotion. The point is, the President has to change here and there too.' The naval aide said, 'Where, for instance?' 'Well,' laughed Gerry, 'He ought to promote me, too.'

The President was emphatic that MRA was just the thing for the Philippines. Gerry proposed that on his next visit to the USA Garcia should go to Mackinac, and told him all about the MRA conference centre's construction, about its finance and how it was run. The President asked if a Philippines centre was in mind. 'Yes,' said Gerry, 'we'll talk to you about that later.'

I was in the Philippines off and on for quite a period of time during the late Fifties, and got on very well with Gerry. We had a lot of fun together, and he and Linda often hosted me in their home. When he wrote to Robert Menzies, still our Australian Prime Minister at the time, on official business, he referred to me as 'Curly-top kangaroo'! (My hair was then very curly.)

Two very significant events, not only I feel for MRA but for the whole of Asia in those post-war years, were the assemblies hosted in Baguio by the Filipinos. As I have said, one of the big supporters from the outset was Senator Ros Lim, who had also visited Caux after an ILO visit, and committed himself to a major redirection of his life and, like us, wanted to pass that experience on to others. He had a vision that this could happen at an international level, and as a close friend of Magsaysay was the one who had got him to agree to open our first conference.

Our financial undergirding was on a shoestring, and Ros Lim had said he was prepared for his office not only to send out the invitations for us, but for them to be on his notepaper – which of course would also secure a very high level of possible representation from Asian and Pacific countries. One morning I had a thought to make sure that the invitations from Senator Lim’s office were going by airmail. The secretaries assured me that this was so. But I still somehow felt uneasy. So I went out into the corridor and double-checked with the young man who did the mail. Yes, they went airmail, he confirmed. But I persisted, asking, ‘What value stamps did you put on?’ When he told me, I knew that our precious invitations had actually gone by sea mail and would only arrive after the conference dates.

My heart sank. There was nothing for it but to cable all the countries, which was costlier still, but the conference was due to start in little over a fortnight. In the event, we had a full attendance, and some history was made, including notable reconciliations between Koreans, Japanese and Filipinos. This era is assessed and the impact of these encounters well documented in *Japan’s Decisive Decade* by Basil Entwistle.



Prior to one return to Manila from the States, I had lunch in Los Angeles with a freelance journalist called Vicente Villamin. He referred to Japanese Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi’s forthcoming trade visit to Asia, saying, ‘It will be a disaster if Kishi talks about trade so soon after the war. He must first apologize for Japan’s aggression.’ Shortly after this I was in Tokyo and over lunch with my American colleague, Basil Entwistle, and two Japanese ladies, Shidzue Kato and Yukika Sohma, I told them of this conversation. Mrs Kato volunteered to talk to Prime Minister Kishi about it when she saw him at the next meeting of the Diet Foreign Affairs Committee. As a result, Kishi changed the whole purpose of his visit. In each of the countries on his nine-nation tour he resolved to apologize publicly for Japan’s wartime aggression. I cabled ahead to colleagues in the countries concerned to inform them, and to ask them to help facilitate the Prime Minister’s visit.

The Philippines visit was to be a major event. Owing to pressures of work however, Gerry felt he could only spend one of the two days with Kishi. To brief President Garcia a few days before the Japanese party arrived, Gerry went over a new MRA pictorial magazine with him, pointing out especially Kishi's photo. The magazine also featured Gerry's own story of reconciliation with the Japanese. The upshot was that Garcia asked him to devote himself entirely to Kishi's visit, and as a result Gerry was with Kishi from the moment he arrived until he left.

On the evening of Kishi's first day, Gerry switched on the light in the back of the Presidential limousine and showed the Prime Minister the MRA magazine, especially pointing Kishi's own photo out to him, and also showing him the text of Gerry's story, which he read. When Gerry returned home that evening he found a wire from Bunny and Phyll Austin suggesting that he do the very same thing!

Gerry found all those in Mr Kishi's party were just as responsive, and welcomed him to visit. He said to them, 'No one hated Japan more than I did, and now I've had an invitation to go there.' He showed Kishi Manila Cathedral, which was being rebuilt with Japanese cement, and expressed his gratitude for this assistance. He also mentioned to the PM how he had been invited to Japan, and that he hoped to go – 'If the President will release me', in the fond hope that Kishi would put in a word with Garcia on his behalf.

The second day they talked again. Gerry told Kishi that 'MRA is making every effort to bring a new understanding towards Japan.' He told him how when a group of Filipino students had come to Malacañang to protest against Japan, Gerry had told them, 'You were only boys when I was fighting against the Japanese. I had reason to be bitter. If I could lose my bitterness, so could you.' The students left meekly. Kishi was moved.

Gerry also mentioned that another MRA Asian Assembly was being planned at Baguio for Easter, and asked if it would be a convenient time for Japanese MPs to come. Kishi said that yes, the budget session would be over in March, and that he would encourage Japanese MPs to come. Again, dropping broad hints, Gerry said that

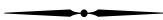
they were still trying to raise funds for it. Gerry took the opportunity of inviting the Foreign Minister, Matsumoto, and the Secretary General of the Cabinet, Aichi, both travelling with the party, there and then.

Kishi undoubtedly took to heart what Mr Hoshijima and Senator Kato had said to him about Asia's basic need being ideological as well as commercial, and that he needed to visit South East Asia on the basis of apology for past wrongs, or he wouldn't get far. In the Philippines, he did this in the course of an address to the Congress, and it was the highlight of the visit. When his tour took him to Malaya and Australia, among other countries, he reiterated his sincere apologies on behalf of the Japanese nation.

As he boarded his plane to leave, Gerry was the last to shake Kishi's hand. Kishi wanted to thank Gerry not only for all he had done for him personally, but also for all he had done towards bringing a new understanding between the Philippines and Japan. Gerry replied, 'You can count on the MRA friends here, Your Excellency.' On a return visit to Tokyo later that year, Garcia said: 'The bitterness of former years towards Japan was washed away by compassion and forgiveness.'

Vic Buhain of the *Manila Times* wrote a powerful editorial about it all – insisting that the political cartoonist of the paper redraw a cartoon of Kishi twice until it struck a positive note. The *Manila Times* was perhaps the most widely read English language paper in Asia, and the fact that it decided on a fair treatment of Kishi's visit had enormous impact. Vic himself had suffered under the Japanese, but he too had lost his bitterness at Mackinac.

When I met Mr Kishi in his office in Tokyo nearly 20 years later, I expressed keen appreciation for all he had done on that trip. He said, 'Those apologies are what I am most proud of during my time in office as Prime Minister.'



My visit to Japan in 1957 was the first of seven visits stretching over the next 30 years. It was also the cementing of a strong working relationship with an Australian friend, Stan Shepherd, with whom I not

only undertook part of the preparations for the first Baguio conference, but also had served in 461 Squadron in Wales, he as a Wireless Air Gunner.

During my first year back in Australia after the war had ended, I had been walking back after a lunch with an industrialist at a fashionable Melbourne hotel when I had spotted Stan fitting windows on a Collins Street shop. He told me later he was tempted not to let me catch his eye as he was in work clothes while I was in a suit. We had only known each other briefly on the squadron – in those days his nickname was ‘Bluey’, for some reason often given by Australians to someone with red hair. But we greeted one another, and when he asked ‘What are you doing?’ I replied, ‘Working with MRA.’ ‘What’s that?’ ‘Let’s have lunch one day and I’ll tell you,’ I replied.

I learned that he was a Barnardo’s boy. His English mother hadn’t had the means to keep him, and arranged for him to go to Western Australia in the early Thirties to Fairbridge Farm School in the rural South West. I told him about my life so far, and of the decisions I had made regarding the rest of it. He himself wanted a fresh direction, and took what I had done as the example he wanted to follow – and vigorously. He became a shop-steward in the carpenters’ union, and came to Caux in 1949 where he volunteered to look after the Austrian delegation and started to teach himself German. This led him to several years of service in German-speaking Europe.

By 1957 he had already been working in Japan for two years, the following year I was best man at his wedding (a joint one at Mackinac, with Chris and Jan Mayor), and later he spent a lot of time in the Philippines and India, with his wife Aileen Brown.

I learned a lot from Stan. On the 1957 trip to Japan, I stayed in the guesthouse of the Minister for Communications. It was a first taste of the exceptional hospitality I have always found extended in Japan. All I needed – and much more – was provided. I remember saying to Stan, who had been in the country longer than I and indeed came to know it far better, ‘Why is it that the Japanese are so courteous? After all, they were so cruel in wartime.’ Stan replied, ‘I feel that was a cultural thing, to do with having been outside their own country. At home, if

a bicycle is left on the street, it stays there. No-one would risk the criticism of their neighbours by taking it.'

We were there to gain the support of those working with MRA in Japan for the Baguio gathering in the Philippines, with its hope that it would provide an opportunity for healing hurts in the Pacific region after the war. The response from those to whom we talked was very positive, with many seeing it as the chance for a whole new Japanese foreign policy. It was also the beginning of a number of very close friendships with true pioneers in Japan, whose conviction and courage led to remarkable national and international developments.

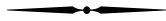
I had first met Yukika Sohma over a meal in Los Angeles in 1948. In 1949 we had met again in Caux, where she had been part of a small party of Japanese representing those keen to rebuild international relations. I took her, with Senator Shidzue Kato and Satoko Togano, members of the Diet, to Berne to meet the Swiss Finance Minister, Herr Nobs. At that time women did not have the vote in Switzerland, so it was quite remarkable for him to encounter female Japanese politicians.

Yukika was the daughter of the veteran parliamentarian Yukio Ozaki. He had taken a stand against his country's wartime aggression and his family had suffered as a result. Earlier, he had been mayor of Tokyo, and was considered 'father' of the Japanese Diet. In 1912 he had presented Washington with the cherry trees that to this day set the magical springtime scene around the Potomac River. Yukika had married another well-known figure, Viscount Yasutane Sohma, originally of Hokkaido, known as something of a playboy. A very enjoyable person to be with, he owned a number of excellent racehorses. Once Peter Howard and Paul Campbell had a wager that Yasu's horse would win a certain race. It did, and Yasu bought the MRA team a new car with his prize money.

For over 50 years Yukika followed the conviction that Japan's part in world affairs must involve peacemaking. She spearheaded endeavours with suffering peoples, such as in Cambodia, inspiring Japanese action in the form of money from both individuals and government, as well as voluntary service. With her daughter, she has run a well-

known school for interpreters, and has herself acted as an interpreter to successive prime ministers on their overseas visits. Meticulous in transmitting the messages of our gatherings over the years to Japan's leadership, she has also brought theirs to us.

From one of my last visits to Japan, in the early Eighties, I have a touching memory of Yasu and Yukika Sohma standing in front of a blazing log fire at their family home in the mountains, where they had invited all their MRA friends – and mine – to gather over a weekend. It has to be said that Yukika usually expressed big ideas, but these were always based on personal change, which was what gave her strength. But it was Yasu's sentence that day which I remember. 'Up to now I have been behind Yukika in what she did. Now I am with her side by side.' He had always implicitly supported his wife, but now felt that he wanted to share the commitment equally. Soon afterwards they came to Caux together and played a full part in the programme there.



For many years we had conferences in both Europe and America to which we invited those who had responded positively to our aims and ideas. In Europe, the regular world assembly was at Caux; in America we had developed Mackinac.

Mackinac Island, where Lakes Huron and Michigan meet, became MRA's first real conference centre in 1942. Mrs Henry Ford had introduced Buchman to the proprietor of Mackinac's Grand Hotel – known for having the longest porch in the world – and Buchman was offered the historic but dilapidated Island House hotel nearby for \$1 a year. It was here that Jim Coulter and I had come in 1945. The Fords were often thought to have given substantial financial backing to Buchman, but in fact theirs was a relationship of friendship and respect: over the 20 years they knew each other, Ford only gave Buchman \$1,000, and Mrs Ford \$2,000. I myself heard Frank say, 'Henry never gave me a blooming cent. I witnessed his will, and a witness is not left anything.' Rather, the purchasing and financing of all MRA's properties was on the basis of what Frank called 'faith and prayer'. One of our senior fellowship called it 'letting our needs be

known' – but in such a way that Frank could always say that 'the Oxford Group doesn't ask for money'. It was always given by those who wanted to give.

Mackinac ran as a world centre all summer, until the ice covered the lake and reaching the island became impossible. Delegations came from around the world, extraordinary encounters took place, training was organized for any who wanted it, and plays were produced using the barn behind Island House as a theatre. As the years passed the numbers attending the conferences grew beyond the limits of Island House itself, and we had to spread out over adjoining properties. In 1954 a whole promontory of the island was acquired for MRA's use by businesspeople who supported what we were doing, and the following year a huge construction programme began for a dedicated conference centre. Local labour was employed, working right through the winter's freezing conditions. Volunteers of my generation played a part, many skilled, but also many who gained skills through the experience. When the centre opened in 1957 it was able to accommodate 1,200 people. Like Mountain House in Caux, it was largely run by volunteers, together with those attending the conferences themselves, who also contributed what they could afford to the overall running costs. Thus were the beds made, meals cooked, tables served and services and buildings maintained.

But besides these two areas of international focus, many countries and regions of the world had their own centres for year-round MRA activities. In London alone at that time there were at least 200 resident full-time workers, as well as a number in different areas of the country. In the States, when properties in Washington, Los Angeles, Tucson and Maimi were taken into consideration, there were probably more. And in Australia, India, Japan, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, South America and many West European capitals there were dedicated premises and MRA communities.



It was the conviction of those of us working in Asia that there were a number of outstanding current and potential Asian leaders who would

find at Mackinac inspiration for new ways forward, for themselves and for their whole countries. However, a number of those we wanted to invite there lacked the wherewithal for the journey, and the countries concerned lacked an internationally-accepted currency.

At the 1957 Mackinac session after the first Baguio conference, the one the Palaypays attended, I discussed this over a meal in the conference cafeteria with Johan Oosters, a Dutch colleague. We spoke of the people we had met – not only Thais, but Indonesians (formerly Dutch colonials), Filipinos (former US colonials), Indo-Chinese (former French colonials), Malaysians and Singaporeans (former British colonials). We had the idea that we should appeal to well-wishers and supporters in each former colonial master nation to raise a fund that would enable 100 people from these countries to join us. Oosters offered to start with the Dutch. It was a bold plan – it was June, and the conference would only continue until August, so we had about a month to six weeks not only to raise the money, but find and invite the people, and make all the arrangements concerning travel permissions.

I headed the logistics side of things and Joe Hodgson from Britain, Fred Hendriksz from the Netherlands, and Stan Shepherd and Chris Mayor from Australia all volunteered to return to Asia with me. The plan was to meet people, to make the arrangements, and see what contributions some of those in the different countries might make themselves, while fund-raising was undertaken on the other side of the world. Somehow we found our own fares out there – several of us had come to Mackinac from Asia anyway and had return tickets. But we would have to find our fares back to Mackinac again, with the delegation.

To find the 100 'candidates' I and my colleagues travelled to Japan, then to Taiwan, Hong Kong and to Manila. In Taipei, after an overnight flight from Tokyo, Stan and I were received by General Ho Ying Chin, former Prime Minister of undivided China. He considered us his guests, and took us to a four-hour Chinese opera. When he noticed that we had fallen asleep, he graciously suggested it was time to leave.

After meeting up again in Manila, Joe and I set off for Indo-China, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. Our first stop was Saigon. Our associate there was a man called Tran Van Khiem, who had met Frank Buchman in Canberra the year before when he was there on government duties, and whom I had also met. His father was ambassador to Washington and his sister was married to the Minister of the Interior, Ngo Dinh Nhu, the brother of the bachelor President Ngo Dinh Diem. This was long before America was massively involved in Vietnam.

Khiem had sent a senior judge to the Baguio conference, after which Chris Mayor and I had gone to Saigon and invited Khiem himself to Mackinac. He had come, and was now immediately responsive to the idea of former colonial countries 'making restitution' by paying the fares of selected people to attend the Mackinac Assembly. As South Vietnam was a semi-dictatorship, the security police would have to clear the delegates, and in this Khiem's influence was going to be essential. We would need the approval of his brother-in-law, Ngo Dinh Nhu, for anyone to travel. He said he would talk this over with his sister, Mme Nhu, and her husband. We left this to him and we went on to Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, promising to return to Saigon by a certain date.

In Singapore, we stayed with our old friend Dr Thio Chan Bee and his wife, Hay Way. His school had trained many of the Chinese leadership there, and as a respected former member of the legislative assembly he advised us of those he thought would benefit from the experience. In Malaysia, we went to see the highly-respected former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Dato Sir Mahmood Bin Mat, in his home town, Kuantan, on the Gulf of Siam. He too liked the plan and we discussed candidates while watching a servant shin up a palm to get us fresh coconuts. In between appointments, we went for a glorious and unforgettable swim in the South China Sea. Meanwhile, Chris Mayor and Fred Hendriksz were in Indonesia similarly meeting and inviting people.

All this work and travel was done on a very slender budget. We had been donated some airline coupons, which enabled us to get air tickets, but these wouldn't be valid for the flights back to the US. We

were almost wholly dependent on being given hospitality in the homes of our various Asian friends and sometimes for transport also. Rarely did we stay in a hotel, and when we did, the rooms and meals were modest – although in Vietnam Khiem always gave me royal treatment at the Hotel Majestic alongside the Saigon River. A further complication was that I, with an Australian passport, had to get visas for most countries. The Thai authorities required four photos with each set of forms, and I reckon that there is a whole filing cabinet of my visa applications and photographs somewhere in Bangkok!

After our return to Singapore from Malaysia, Joe and I planned to fly on to Bangkok on a Friday, after a week of appointments. The snag was the only flight on that day was on a Thai Airways unpressurized DC4, which left at midnight and arrived at 5am. But we took it, as this was the day we felt we should travel. But worse, there was a heavy thunderstorm and lightning flashed on to us through the windows. I was terrified and prayed fervently. Joe slept. But we arrived in one piece.

Only slightly less alarming was the experience of a later flight over Laos. I was travelling with Pierre Spoerri from Switzerland, with whom I shared a number of these memorable journeys. We were on an internal flight, the steaming jungle laid out below. The plane was a small, single-engined one, and I was sat next to the pilot. Disconcertingly, he had a book propped up on the control panel, and read as he flew. I can still recall vividly that it was a not particularly distinguished-looking novel called *Hélène et les pirates*, or ‘Helen and the Pirates’. The plane did not have the benefit of auto-pilot, so he would simply give the controls a nudge now and then. At one point when we drew level with a mountain range, I gestured out of the window. ‘*Oui, les montagnes*’ – yes, mountains! – the pilot agreed, and returned to his book.

When Joe and I arrived in Bangkok we felt like making for our beds, but after checking into a modest hotel and showering we felt we should press on with our mission without delay, and headed out to see Sang Pathanothai in the hope that he could make a date for us with Pibul Songgram, the Prime Minister.

As we waited, in came a man who looked Thai, but who greeted us in French. When Sang appeared he introduced us to each other: the visitor was from Laos, the neighbouring country; his name was Oun Sananikone, whose family ranked second only to the royal family of the country. He was President of the National Assembly, had been a hero of the resistance against the French, and one of his brothers was the Prime Minister, while another was Defence Minister. Sang had got to know him during the Laotian independence struggle, which he had supported from Bangkok. We did our best in French to explain our mission, again describing it as a kind of 'restitution' from people of the former colonial powers. 'I like that word, "restitution",' said Oun. 'Can you come with me to Laos?' 'Certainly,' we responded, thinking he meant some time in the future. 'Well then, we'll be off tomorrow!' came the reply.

'But,' we said to Sang, 'we have come to see the Prime Minister in Bangkok.' Our carefully-laid plans seemed about to be thrown into disarray. 'Don't worry, I'll talk to him about sending a delegation of Thai MPs to Mackinac,' said Sang. 'I am playing golf with him later. You go to Laos.'

While this was going on, we had surreptitiously discovered from a map on the wall that Laos was next door to Thailand. But it still didn't seem ideal, and there were practicalities to consider. 'We have no visas,' we pointed out. 'My cousin is the consul here – there's no problem,' said Oun. So it was decided there and then that we would go. We handed over our passports to Oun, rearranged our flights and the next morning were on a flight to Vientiane, the capital of Laos. It was the first of four visits I made there.

I sat with Oun who told me he owned a small airline which operated inside Laos, as well as a night club, and that he would like us to be his guests in Laos. Joe found himself seated next to the British Ambassador. 'Your host is Oun?' he asked. 'He is terrific company.'

We were comfortably quartered, and Oun asked us to join him for lunch after we had landed. The waiter put a bottle of whisky on the table, but Joe and I stuck to the soda water, and we talked. In the afternoon we were sent off on a flight in a small single-engined plane, a

Canadian-built Beaver. The pilot was French and for his own reasons left us at a small airport while he continued to the royal capital of Luang Prabang. We were not at all sure that the plane would return, but it did. When we returned Oun was furious because the whole point of the trip was to visit Luang Prabang and see the sights.

That night Oun took us to his *boîte de nuit*, or night-club. Rather than risk embarrassment at our declining good liquor, Oun ordered tea for us. But we were offered a series of dazzling young women with whom to dance. Eventually the lady in charge came to our table and asked if the *messieurs* did not like the girls. 'They come from the best families in Thailand and Vietnam,' she said. We explained that we were appreciative and admired the beautiful girls, but we were here on a brief visit only and had some important things to discuss with Mr Sananikone – which we did, in vigorous French. We told him stories of changes that had happened in people's lives and that changes could come to regions and nations as a result.

We had just two days in Laos, by which time Oun decided to come to America himself, saying he would need to bring someone with him who would translate from French into English. In the end Joe was to arrive in Mackinac with 19 Thais, plus Oun and Oun's translator, a young civil servant called Tianethone Chantharasy, whom Oun was mentoring. I had returned separately to Saigon to see how Khiem was getting on with the Vietnamese delegation.

Khiem had done well. He and his sister and brother-in-law, working from the Presidential palace, had lined up a very representative group of 15 candidates. This was fortuitous, as in those days, if you booked 15 on Pan-American Airways, the 'tour guide' got a free ticket. This meant my fare would be covered too. The one stipulation was that the 'guide' had to advertise the tour in the local press. I prepared a simple advertisement in French and it was carried in the *Journal de l'Extrême-Orient*. Fortunately, no one applied.

Most of the delegation, but not all, were in reality being given favours by the presidential family, and included the Chief of Police of Saigon, the head of President Diem's political party in the ancient capital, Hue, the niece of the President, Trong Thi Thu-Anh, and

Nguyen Van Tan, Director of Forests. Tan became a particularly special friend, and years later, after his escape from Saigon in 1975, it was a delight to be reunited with him and his wife in Pennsylvania.

We assembled at the airport near Saigon, an excited group – for most a first foreign journey. Our common language was French. But there was a hitch: my visa was one day overdue. The immigration authorities told me I would have to go back into Saigon to have the visa extended. This was impossible, I said, as I would miss my plane. During the vigorous exchange, an inoffensive-looking little man in an open-necked shirt sidled up and asked, ‘What’s the trouble?’ The officials froze into submission. I realised I had met him before, with Khiem; he was the head of the security police at the Presidential Palace, one Dr Turen. ‘This man’s visa has expired,’ they said. The doctor leaned forward and said, ‘Mr Wise is escorting a distinguished party, including the niece of the President, to an international conference.’ And that was that.

I did my best to keep everyone good-humoured, even though there were no stopovers save for refuelling, and it was a very long, piston-engined, flight. In 1957 very few Vietnamese or Laotians had been to the USA, not to mention the Indonesians, Malaysians and Filipinos that we met up with at Mackinac. On our first day I presented them to a fascinated audience from the wide stage of the large conference meeting-hall. Frank Buchman, who was in the audience, declared ‘What you see begins to be Moral Re-Armament’ – to him, this line-up of people was an illustration of the potential for the whole concept. When I had previously arrived with the Palaypays he had said, ‘I hear that you did a good job’. His compliments were rare: although in the same company as Buchman, on and off, from 1945 to 1959, I think that these were the only two I ever received from him.

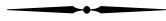
There were many rich interchanges at Mackinac that summer, and not only from our south-east Asian delegation. A hundred young people from Japan were there, representing the Seinendan, a well-known youth organization, followed by the same number of Taiwan Chinese, brought by General Ho. We saw the first performances of a memorable musical play, *The Crowning Experience*, with the

Metropolitan Opera and Covent Garden star, Muriel Smith, in the lead. It was the story of a great American, Mary McLeod Bethune, who pioneered education for black people.

Over a meal Oun said to me, 'I thought it was the Westerners who had all the vices, but when you and Joe came to Laos I found I had them all. Yet you seemed to be able to manage without all those things. So I have said to myself, if you could give them up, so can I. I have decided to stop drinking and when I get back I am going to sell the shares in the nightclub.'

Oun and two Thai MPs asked me to drive them to Washington and said they would pay the bills. I borrowed a car, and we drove to Washington in three or four days, after which they made their homeward journey. I returned to stay in Mackinac until the conference ended, and then felt I should return to Asia to see our friends again on their home ground.

In Laos I found that the change in Oun Sananikone had caused a sensation. He had indeed stopped drinking and relinquished the club. He founded a Veterans' Association, as he had felt that those with whom he had fought for Laotian independence from France were often aimless and needed a sense of purpose.



In 1958 there was to be a special conference at Mackinac to mark Frank Buchman's eightieth birthday. After the second Baguio assembly, a couple of us went on from the Philippines to strengthen links and meet new people in Laos, Vietnam, Burma, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. While in Bangkok we made our by-now usual call on the Lord Abbot, Phra Bimaladhamma. As a courtesy, I gave him an invitation to attend the Mackinac conference, never imagining that he would attend. But when we returned to Thailand after visiting Indonesia, Sang told us that yes, the Lord Abbot wanted to attend the conference, and that we should go to see him and make the arrangements.

Now this was a major matter. As far as we knew, no senior Buddhist dignitary had ever visited the West. He wanted to take a younger

monk as his translator, and a businessman would also accompany them as monks were not allowed to handle money. We would have to provide the monks' fares. We discovered that the travel from Bangkok to Mackinac was the same distance going east as going west, and the airfare the same. With a round-the-world ticket requiring very little more, we planned a whole itinerary, travelling on east to Caux after the US.

We managed to make all the arrangements in the short time available. Associates in Holland and Britain were prepared to finance the air travel. Chris Mayor, from Australia, travelled with those we had invited from Indonesia, and I accompanied the monks. Phra Bimaladhamma brought with him a gift for Buchman – a massive temple gong with a stand and a drumstick, which was a formidable item for me to carry as hand-luggage half way across the world.

Before we set off, there were all manner of essential observances to master. Women should never come close, let alone touch. No-one shakes hands, but greets with the palms folded together. The monk always has to be seated at a higher level than others, even government ministers. Buddhist monks break their fast at dawn and their second meal has to be completed before noon. Only liquids can be consumed between noon and dawn the next day. The monk eats before everyone else. There is a ceremonial way of offering food. And so on.

I had to learn all of these customs, and how to implement them in all sorts of unforeseen situations. For instance, when travelling by air, I had always to calculate the appropriate time to decide whether or not a meal could be consumed. Then when a woman flight attendant presented a tray, I would have to pass it to the abbot. He had to touch all of the items before he could eat. If I didn't formally offer something before he touched the plate, he could not eat it.

The reception at Mackinac was overwhelming. The Lord Abbot recognised a great soul in Frank Buchman. At the birthday party the gong stood at the centre of the stage, and Phra Bimaladhamma struck it four times – to represent the four moral standards that could apply in any religion.

Buchman asked the Lord Abbot to go to the East Coast, where

MRA had a play at Washington's National Theater. He addressed the audience after the show from a box, translated by the monk while I watched from behind. Then in New York we went up the Empire State Building together. At the top he met some Thais who had been to the World Trade Fair in Brussels. The Abbot immediately asked me to arrange for him to go too. He also said he would like to meet Pope Pius XII. I always agreed to his requests up front, and would later work out how to fulfil them.

In Windsor, Ontario, I noticed the Lord Abbot eating an ice cream. I said to the interpreter, 'Does the Lord Abbot realise that it is after 12 noon?' 'Yes, he does', came the reply. 'But he cannot eat after 12.00,' I said. 'The Lord Abbot regards ice cream as a drink, because left to itself it melts. So he is allowed to eat ice cream.' What more could I say!

Everywhere – New York, Washington, London, Brussels, Geneva, Rome, Paris, the Hague – we would be entertained at 11am in the Thai embassy for the main meal of the day, after which he would give some teaching. The ambassador and his wife and staff would sit on the floor as the Lord Abbot addressed them. The ambassadors themselves served the abbot and then ate afterwards.

Wherever there were MRA centres, we stayed there – in Germany this was at the MRA centre in the Ruhr, Haus Goldschmiding. Local friends arranged for him to go down a mine, and unavoidably this meant putting on safety clothes and a helmet. The Lord Abbot asked me to photograph him. I did so, unwitting of the furore this was to cause. Later, during a period of political manoeuvring in Thailand, the photograph was used to defame him – for even covering his head in this way technically broke the rule that a Buddhist monk should never wear anything other than his robes. Tragically this contributed to him being ostracized for some years: a suspicious regime had him defrocked and placed under house arrest for four years. But with the death of that prime minister and different political winds blowing he was restored to his position, and indeed was to become the country's Deputy Supreme Patriarch.

Buchman had also suggested to the Abbot that he should see Dr

Konrad Adenauer, then Chancellor of Germany, in Bonn. When Adenauer asked where he had come from, and was told that he had come from Caux, he said, 'Caux! Frank Buchman! He is my friend.'

The Abbot and I talked before we left Switzerland. He was aware that his visit to Rome was going to be groundbreaking, and also that the Thai press was reporting fully on his journey. He knew that some of the ecclesiastical cabinet were jealous of him – it was doubtless this that led to his later problems. He said to me, 'You know, when I return home I will be criticised for consorting so closely with Christians. Now, I am a Buddhist. You are a Christian. Others here at Caux are Hindus and Muslims. But I shall tell my critics that humanity is like a Swiss wristwatch. If you take the back off you see all kinds of wheels and springs going in different directions. But when you turn the watch face up, we all get the same time.'

In Rome, the Vatican had arranged that he should be seated on the main floor of St Peter's, in the front row. The public were restricted to tiered seats around the walls of the nave. From there I watched as the Pope was carried in and ascended to the throne to speak. Afterwards, he was brought to meet the two monks, who presented him with a saffron-yellow bag, one of the few possessions a monk is allowed, along with his parasol, sandals and robe. As they talked the Vatican photographer took pictures. Thirty years later when I returned with my wife and son to Bangkok I would see this historic image, framed and enlarged, on the wall of his monastery quarters, together with an album of photos and press-clippings of this remarkable journey.



On a later visit I made to Laos, Tianethone Chantharasy met us at the airport. He had been Oun's young relative and translator on the Mackinac trip, while an official in the Ministry of International Trade. After two weeks he had had to return home, as he had limited time off from his work. But he told us that he too had been inspired to start out on a new path in life. He had transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After seeing *The Crowning Experience* at Mackinac, he

had written a long and honest letter to his wife, vowing a new commitment to his marriage. His soul had been illuminated, he said. Now he was gathering a number of up and coming public servants to learn how MRA worked and how change could come about in themselves and in their country.

Over the coming years Chantharasy was sent to the Laotian Embassy in Washington, and to Canberra, where he was Chargé d'Affaires. He joined in the MRA programmes in both cities. In 1974 I met him in Delhi, by which time he had become Ambassador. By then I too was married, and my wife and I stayed in the Embassy and joined their weekend 'family conference' over the breakfast table on Sunday morning, when he and Vienxay and five of their seven children sat quietly and wrote down their thoughts and then exchanged these with each other. He also invited the Cambodian and Vietnamese ambassadors in to meet us and our party.

We were travelling as a group of six, and described to them a new MRA production that was in the making. It was a revue called *Song of Asia*, and we had just seen it at the Indian MRA centre at Panchgani, near Bombay. It was a powerful, charming and touching show, presenting music and conviction from a vast swathe of Asian countries and cultures. Two of the Chantharasy daughters actually performed in the show. Tianethone expressed his hope that it would go to Laos and her neighbours, and had given me a letter of introduction to his Prime Minister, Prince Souvanna Phouma, to aid in making the arrangements. He was keen that these other diplomats should do something similar for their countries.

We proceeded to these countries with introductions, hoping to pave the way for *Song of Asia*. The Americans had withdrawn their controversial presence in Vietnam, save for some advisors. By the time *Song of Asia* reached Vientiane, Tianethone had actually become Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and was there to receive the cast himself. The government was a coalition formed between the moderates and the pro-communist Pathet Lao party, which was headed by Prince Souvanna Vong, the half-brother of the Prime Minister.

There was great tension in the region. South Vietnam had not yet

succumbed to the forces of the communist north, and during this period of the 'Vietnamization' of the war it was possible to make these visits, so *Song of Asia* had considerable exposure there in 1974. Some of our colleagues stayed on, making an honourable presence in Saigon during that last phase, standing by our friends in government, the South Vietnamese Nationalist army, students and people in business who were bravely seeking to do their best for their nation. The following year, the fall of Saigon to forces from the north meant there was inevitable pressure on Laos and Cambodia. The coalition in Vientiane failed when the victorious Vietcong despatched 40,000 troops to occupy Laos.

One night some students came to the Chantharasy home, part of a group who had been meeting regularly with Chantharasy after seeing *Song of Asia* the year before. They had heard that the Pathet Lao military, who sympathized with the Vietnamese communist regime, were going to arrest him the next morning, and advised him to flee. Tianethone and Vienxay sought direction from their inner voice, following what he always called 'the secret' he had brought back from Mackinac 18 years before. After this reflection they were both quite sure that the whole family should escape across the Mekong to Thailand, but that first, Tianethone should make his farewells to the Prime Minister and offer his resignation. Prince Souvanna Phouma said that he wished it was not so, but accepted that Tianethone would have to leave.

The first I heard of this drama was in the home of a friend of ours in Newbury, England, where my family and I were having a short Easter holiday. Jo Lancaster, who had been part of our travelling group the year before, called me from Bangkok. The phone in our borrowed house was in the broom-cupboard under the stairs, so it was there that I heard, with intense relief, that the Chantharasys had reached Thailand safely – parents, the five children still living at home with them, and the family dog, Boo-Boo.

Vienxay had been able to bring her jewellery with her, and by selling it in Bangkok they had money with which to buy air tickets to Paris – by that time Laotian currency was no use. They owned a small

house in Australia, bought when Tianethone was head of mission there in expectation of having a home base should his children have an Australian university education. But it would have taken time to get Australian visas, and these were critical days. As France had been the colonial power in that part of the world there were easier procedures for safe passage there. French MRA friends welcomed them, and in due course the whole family was able to emigrate to Australia, where they play a vigorous role in Australian society. Tianethone is also a leading figure in the exiled Laotian independence movement.

I am always touched and honoured when, on every conceivable occasion, he pays tribute to me for being responsible for introducing him and his family to the ideas of MRA, especially the idea of seeking 'guidance' from the inner voice. It is this that he says led them to safety in 1975.

9

Conviction but Confrontation

1956-65



*Melbourne Miracle – What Buchman Believed – Batting for Australia –
To Brazil and Beyond with a Burmese Monk –
Summoned from the Waterfront – Marching with Gandhi*

While the large group of 200 of us was in Srinagar, Kashmir, during the first post-war tour of India in 1953, Frank Buchman received an invitation from a representative MRA committee in Australia to send ten people to further the work there. Typically, he selected thirteen, and I was one of them. I learned that if the extra three of our party presented any financial worries to the Australians, Frank was sending with us \$2,000 as a reserve.

Frank really believed in living by faith and prayer. He would undertake gigantic enterprises with very little assurance of financing, but I do think that he would sometimes have an idea of who might provide significant support if the aims were big and the needs made known. When some years ago I looked through some of the MRA files in the Library of Congress in Washington DC, I was staggered at the size of some of the individual gifts. But he used to say, ‘I only need personal money for haircuts myself.’

He prepared us thoroughly for the trip. He himself had been to Australia in the Twenties. ‘You’ve got to be blunt with Australians. If you hit them over the head with a hammer, they say, “Stop tickling”.’ Now, I don’t share that view wholly; there may be some truth in it, but over the years some of my friends have found me unresponsive to such a concept.

The Australian campaign was a success, to the extent that three years later in 1956, the year Melbourne hosted the Olympic Games,

a committee headed by the Chairman of the Olympic Games Organizing Committee invited Frank himself to Australia, and to bring a party. He accepted, bringing with him Bunny and Phyll Austin, Malise and Angela Hore-Ruthven, Prince Richard of Hesse and a very engaging trio of young American cowboy-style singers, the Colwell Brothers. Tom Gillespie, a Scottish pressman, and I flew out ahead from Europe; Buchman and party came by ship. This was a strenuous journey for Buchman. During a later part of the trip I remember seeing him struggle to move along the aisle of a small aircraft when we were flying in bumpy weather.

Their ship docked at Fremantle and Jim Coulter and I flew over from Melbourne to receive them and join their onward voyage. However, our arrangements for their reception did not go very well, as was subsequently pointed out to us. We hadn't consulted those arriving as to who would like to speak, and by forging ahead with our own plan we left out, for instance, Colonel Malise Hore-Ruthven – whose brother had been Governor-General of Australia – who had painstakingly prepared his speech for the occasion. A succession of ballads sung by the Colwell Brothers didn't make up for the indignity felt. When he looked at the press release we had prepared to cover the occasion, Frank said, 'Well, that's fine, but it's not what happened.' But we were forgiven in our enthusiasm and, after breakfast each morning, Jim and I would go to Buchman's cabin to exchange the thoughts from our morning guidance and to read the Bible to him.

In the capital, we accommodated Frank and his immediate group in the best hotel, the Hotel Canberra. Frank's parents had run a hotel, so he had quite exacting tastes. But in those days, our restaurants had a limited repertoire. After a few days, Morris Martin, his secretary, came to me and said, 'Frank is getting a bit tired of the food at the hotel. Do you think that anyone in Canberra would like to invite him to their home?'

I spoke to Allan Griffith, then a junior in the Prime Minister's Department. Allan shared a home with John Farquharson, Peter Barnett and Oliver Warin, all young professionals. They invited Frank to lunch in their small house. Not wanting to overtax these young

men's culinary skills, Frank asked Ella Schuman, an American and a good cook, to do the needful. He also invited Prince Richard of Hesse and a couple of others. There were not enough chairs, so Allan seated Prince Richard on a piano stool. 'Allan, you can't put the grandson of Queen Victoria on the piano stool!' remonstrated Frank.

The menu was what Frank felt would be fitting in Australia, roast lamb followed by fresh pineapple and rice pudding. At the end of the meal, Frank said, 'I enjoyed that. I'll come again tomorrow.' And so he did, every day for the next five weeks. Ella did the cooking, and the varied guests included some leading citizens of Canberra. But the menu was always the same. I had it for my thirty-third birthday.

Frank's main objective, it became obvious later, was the development of the four young men. While some of us were mainly concerned with impacting the 'national leadership' – fair enough – Frank was preparing these young men to give national leadership in the years ahead as a service to God and nation. Allan went on to become a Foreign Policy adviser to seven Australian prime ministers; John, Deputy Editor of the *Canberra Times*; Oliver became the Senior Geologist of the world's largest mining company, based in San Francisco; and Peter Barnett became Director of Radio Australia.

The world head of the Salvation Army came to Canberra at this time, and Frank took us to the reception to meet him. He said, 'It was Mrs Penn Lewis, a daughter of General Booth, the Salvation Army's founder, who illuminated the Cross for me.' In 1908 she had been giving a talk in a small chapel in Keswick, in the English Lake District, which Buchman heard by chance when he was staying there. He was at the time still smarting from a rebuff from former colleagues in his previous work: his experience in that chapel as he listened to that talk was what inspired him to start what we now participated in as MRA.

Just ahead of Frank as we passed down the reception line was the Prime Minister, Robert Menzies. Menzies had sidestepped receiving Frank officially. But Frank refused to allow someone to ask Menzies to turn round to greet him. However, a small party was invited to meet the Governor General, the British soldier hero, Lord Slim.

MRA in Australia had only a rented office, but we had been raising

money to buy a headquarters. A very handsome large house in the nicest Melbourne suburb, Toorak, came on the market just before Buchman and his party arrived. It was being sold by a successful industrialist, the combine harvester pioneer Cecil Mackay, and we took a keen interest in it. When a well-known doctor in Toorak gave a garden party for Frank and his friends, Mrs Mackay came and was enchanted.

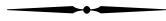
The sale of the house, Armagh, was by sealed tender, and we put in an offer for what we had been able to raise: £14,000. It was, however, far below the asking price. Astonishingly, word came back to Frank that the Mackays wanted to give the property to him for MRA – but with three conditions. One, that the gift remained confidential in Mr Mackay's lifetime, because he preferred to keep his charitable giving private. Two, that Mr Mackay would continue to use the heated pool until his own was ready in his new home. (I used to fish out the leaves and keep the changing room tidy – and swim – well before breakfast. Mr Mackay would drive up in his Bentley.) And three, that an Anglican Deaconess named Ida who lived in the cottage attached to the property could stay on for as long as she wished. Ours had been by far the lowest offer received.

The Mackays had a fine Australian art collection, and decided to leave a Buckmaster painting in the drawing room. When the moment came Frank was presented with the keys in an envelope, but was himself about to leave the country. George Wood and I were in New Zealand, and were bidden, with George's Australian wife, Pat, to return to occupy Armagh. Other than the Buckmaster picture, there was no furniture, so we slept on borrowed camp beds. Although the pool was heated, the house itself was chilly. But we were able to use some of our £14,000 to remedy that.

Buchman had been convinced that Armagh was the place for us, as soon as he saw it – well before it was gifted. He leaned on his walking stick in the spacious grounds and said, 'This will do very well.' He said to the Mackays' Italian gardener, Vincenzo Papillo, 'I want you to stay and work for us' – and this was even before we had put in our bid. Papillo did so until he retired, and became part of the 'family'. One

of Buchman's longest-standing British colleagues, Loudon Hamilton, remained to help us, and Malise and Angela Hore-Ruthven hosted the home for some time, together with their family. Wonderful gifts were made, including valuable family heirlooms, to help with the furnishing. Many a fine dinner party was given, although in the early days we had to take the sofa from one room to the next. It was broadly felt by those of us working together that good hospitality was the way to a nation's heart.

Buchman also asked Bunny and Phyll Austin to come back out from England and join us, together with their children. As well as its pool, Armagh sported a fine tennis court. For over 60 years no player overtook Bunny's record as the last Englishman to have made it to the men's finals at Wimbledon, and he was an adored player in Britain's victorious pre-war Davis Cup team. But I recall one tennis match – doubles – with Bunny and me playing against an Irish colleague, Eric Turpin, and Ted Bull, a communist from the Melbourne waterfront. My tennis was of such quality that, despite my being partnered with Bunny, we lost. This period was the forming of a life-long friendship with the Austins, and we worked together in many different places over the coming years.



In late 1959 I was working in Tokyo. Frank, then in Arizona, cabled Stan and Aileen Shepherd and myself, 'Come immediately Tucson.' No question of 'If you feel like it,' or 'Would you consider?' When we got there he outlined to us his conviction for another Australian campaign. While it was exhilarating to be with Frank, it wasn't quite what I had in mind. When I demurred this time and said I would prefer to return to Asia, he said that in that case, he would give me a one-way ticket! So I agreed to go to Australia.

Some of that time at Frank's home in Tucson was quite turbulent and really did feel more like Judgement Day than Christmas Day because I received quite a lot of correction from my elders. I understood what they were getting at, but did not – at the time – appreciate their vision for me to be a better man. Instead I felt gloomy and

full of self blame over things that had not gone well in Asia. There was in MRA at that time a climate of tough dealing, 'tough love'. But just before departing for Australia I experienced another defining point in my life. Realising my state of mind, Peter Howard and Paul Campbell kindly took me aside and suggested that we might pray together and I could say to God that I would be responsible for the whole work of MRA in the world. Inadequate hardly describes what I felt, but I did do that. I am eternally grateful to them because at a time when I felt full of self-doubt Peter and Paul showed me that they believed in me and had a vision for my life.

One morning in Tucson Frank said to us, 'I woke in the night with an idea, which could be the theme for your campaign in Australia.' We took out our notebooks, ready to write it down. 'But,' he went on, 'I cannot remember what it was.' By the age of 81, such were his difficulties that someone had to write for him. But he hadn't wanted to wake anyone in the night. 'I was too soft,' he said. That time in Tucson was to be my last time with Frank.

The Frank Buchman I knew and worked with was unexpected, innovative, visionary, risk-taking and profoundly committed to the freeing of individuals to be their very best, all the time. For all who were Christians, he longed that Jesus Christ be our best friend. But in a speech he made way back in 1948, long before today's attitudes about universality in belief, he said, 'MRA is a Good Road. Those of every faith can change and travel along it together.' Although Lutheran himself, and sure of his own faith, he was inclusive of all. He would say, 'I am not anti-Semitic. My best friend is a Jew,' and was proud that an ancestor of his, the Swiss scholar Bibliander, was the first to translate the Koran into a European language. Of his detractors, he once said, 'Stones of criticism are so bracing. They set you up for the day.' But I am sure that he was hurt by unfair attacks.

He once asked Bunny Austin to tell him what he felt was the most important aspect of MRA. Bunny said that you start with yourself, learn to pass on this experience of change to others, and set out to change the world. 'No, no,' said Frank. 'That's the little pig. You have to give them the big sow.' Bunny took it to mean the Cross of Christ.

Buchman's concept of an experience of the Cross was not a once and for all experience, but 'an endless stream of water washing over a dirty doorstep.' I find this very helpful, as my doorstep gets dirty every day without me even stepping out of the house.

Buchman read the scriptures first thing every morning. 'I would rather go without my breakfast than miss reading my Bible,' he would say. And he firmly believed in noting down the inspiration that came to him – on the back of an envelope, if that was all that was to hand. At his family home in Allentown, Pennsylvania, preserved until very recently as an historic place, you could see scraps of paper with some of his earliest scribbled notes. When a large Japanese party came to Caux in 1951, they were all issued with notebooks at their first meeting, chaired by Buchman.

He did not often chair a meeting in his latter years, but would sit in the front row or appear at the back of the room and interject if need be. He lived with the after-effects of a stroke for 20 years; even without this, some of us probably did not take enough account of the normal ageing process and left too much on his shoulders. But then, he was the founder – or the 'initiator', as he preferred.

When someone said that he must be very pleased at the success of his work, he said he never thought about success. 'Occasionally we illustrate MRA,' he said. Not long before he died, he had a visit from Jean Rey, President of the European Commission. 'You must be very proud of all this,' said Rey. 'I don't feel that way at all,' Buchman replied. 'I have had nothing to do with it. God does everything. I only obey and do what He says.'

He underwent an enormous conversion from being a somewhat embittered and ineffective young Christian minister to a radiant and charismatic personality, allowing the Holy Spirit to bring a similar experience to other people and to nations, over a lifetime. He rarely attempted to define MRA, but rather told stories to illustrate it – resisting the idea of it as an organization. 'Of course, I am not in Moral Re-Armament,' he once said. When you went to see him, after a while he would say, 'Let's listen', because he felt God's advice would be more reliable than his. He believed it was a question of following

the Holy Spirit's lead, and the Holy Spirit is often unexpected and inexplicable.

Buchman believed, as I came later to learn, that we need to live vulnerably to take risks for God. He once told somebody, 'Some people live by rules and avoiding mistakes and a damn dull job they make of it.' And he believed that our weaknesses can become our strengths. He would say, 'I don't say I am without sin, but I drive my sins like a team of horses.'



So, following Buchman's instructions, in December 1959 I was again working in Australia. I was with a party of 14 commissioned by Buchman to mount a 'campaign for renewal'. There was a play, *Annie the Valiant*, in which a number of our group acted, and we put it on in the port areas of Melbourne and in the National Theatre in Canberra. The play was based on the life and work of Bill Jaeger's dynamic little mother, from Stockport, who became as committed to Buchman's concept that 'Labour led by God will lead the world' as her son. They had worked together in an effort to bring healing and purpose among the unemployed during the Depression in East London, before war broke out. I used to introduce the play with a speech that gave a description of the world work of MRA at that time. I memorized the speech and was proud to be word perfect. But one Canberra host said to me after the show, 'Your speech was good, but it seemed as if you had learned it off by heart.' That taught me a valuable lesson.

The spearhead of our campaign in the Melbourne port was Jim Beggs, then a waterside worker with a minor union position, who like the rest of us had undergone a radical redirection of his life. Russell David, a colleague from South Wales, and I stayed with my old friend from after the war, Tom Uren, and his wife, Florence. Tom was now a company director, and the Urens were next-door neighbours with the Beggs. Jim left for work on his motorbike at 7.30am and we used to meet him before that to exchange ideas and plans.

Russell and I, both from a labour background, mixed well with Jim's union colleagues, including a Polish communist called Dave

Rubens, and a Catholic activist, Les Stewart. One Friday night after Jim knocked off work Stan Shepherd, with his Holden stationwagon, Jim and I set off for Sydney. It was a 500-mile journey, and we drove all night, taking turns at the wheel and sleeping in the back of the car, to keep an appointment next morning with Jim Healey, the General Secretary of the Waterside Workers Union of Australia.

As ever, there were lessons to learn. A pamphlet had been produced that we felt conveyed MRA's ideas as they related to the times, and the ambition was to get a copy into every home in the country. We had an introduction to Rupert Murdoch, who even then had extensive publishing and printing interests. We told him of our project and asked him to print 600,000 copies for no payment. He offered to do the job at low cost, but said we would have to change our proposed format to fit his presses. Stupidly, we declined, saying we wanted to keep the existing design. We had to pay a lot more for our print elsewhere.

Frank Buchman sent us some powerful support in the form of John McGovern, longtime British Labour MP and stormy petrel of the House of Commons, who came with his wife Mary. We had some significant appointments: when we met with the head of the massive Snowy River dam and hydroelectric project, John said to me, 'Tell them about *our* project.' In Melbourne, Jim Beggs set up a meeting for us with one of the dockers' union executives. The union leaders were mostly communists, and it wasn't long before we were accused of being fascist. McGovern answered, 'But you've got the wrong end of the stick. It was Stalin that made a pact with Hitler, not Buchman.'

Another of our major spokesmen was Chief Walking Buffalo, of the Canadian Stoney Native American tribe, with a party of six. They were quite a novelty to the Australians they encountered, not least because when he wore full traditional costume, the chief's regalia included a horned buffalo head-dress. He also had a terrific sense of humour, once telling the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, 'We are the original Stoney Indians. Does that make you the phoney Indians?' But he also expressed lessons learned through profound experience and a rich philosophy.

We also had the full-length feature film of *The Crowning Experience*, which we showed in one of Melbourne's finest theatres, and took on a commercial run to several theatres in towns of the heartland of Victoria's electric power generation, the Yallourn Valley.

One cold winter's morning when mists were swirling around us, Russell and I stood outside the gates of a huge generating station, handing out leaflets for showings of *The Crowning Experience*. The morning shift was arriving. A man came up to me out of the mist, and knew my name. I didn't remember his. 'We were together in the Sheepskins for Russia campaign during the war,' he said.

I cudgelled my memory. In Melbourne, on leave before embarking on a troopship for the USA and Europe, Jim Coulter and I had gone to a dance in the Town Hall under the auspices of the Australian-Soviet Friendship Society. Jim and I had at that time a philosophical disposition towards communism: we were egalitarian, and many considered us left wing in our thinking. The early MRA team we encountered in Perth were strong believers in social justice; it was only among MRA groups that we encountered later where we found strong opposition to left-of-centre thinking. I even had a quarrel with Kit Prescott about this.

On that wartime occasion, I danced with a nice Russian hairdresser who introduced me to an Australian communist activist, named Brian Oke. Oke invited Jim and me to his home, where they were raising money to buy sheepskins for the Russian people's winter clothing, mindful of the privations they were enduring in their fight against Hitler. Once again, on that misty morning, Oke invited me to his home. But this time we had a ding-dong argument because I had not continued along the communist road, much to his disappointment.

We wanted to show the film to the Governor-General, Lord Slim, but he was due to sail back to England having by then completed his term of office. Jim and I sent word to Frank, saying that we proposed joining him for the voyage from Melbourne to Fremantle, taking the film with us to screen for him on board. Frank cabled, 'Certainly use the film.' But in the end we found it was too expensive a trip and there

was no guarantee of Slim seeing the film. Perhaps we chickened out! But we were consoled that Frank had supported our initiative.

Our party made quite an impact on Australia, and many of the relationships we forged were to last for decades to come. Conrad Hunte, the West Indies cricketer, was touring with his team – the season of the memorable tied Test with the Australians in Brisbane in the summer of 1960-61 – when he saw *The Crowning Experience* in Melbourne as a result of an invitation from Jim Coulter's son.

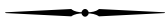
I was in Canberra, and Jim sent me a telegram asking me to look up those of the West Indies cricket team they had met. Conrad was the opening batsman. I went to his hotel, only to find him about to leave for dinner with the Prime Minister. But later that night we talked. I had had the thought to introduce Conrad to the idea of seeking God's guidance. He himself brought up the subject by asking me what two characters in the film were doing when they sat quietly, seemingly waiting for something, or listening. I told him that they were seeking God's direction for their lives. Conrad was a professing Christian, and said that he was ready to do that. I suggested that we listen individually next morning in quiet and meet again over breakfast.

When we met we exchanged the thoughts we'd had. He had noted on a piece of paper, 'Thou preacheth, but thou practiseth not.' He voiced many instances in his life that touched his conscience as he thought back. I gave him a simple notebook, like the one I had myself, telling him that my own habit was to write down thoughts such as these every day, and to act on them.

Next day the West Indies team flew back to Melbourne, then left the country. Jim says that when he went to wave them off he could see a smiling Conrad holding up the notebook through the bus window. When they reached Britain, our sporting colleagues Dickie Dodds and Brian Boobbyer looked Conrad up, and became immediate friends.

Conrad was a colourful player, making the game a pleasure to watch. Following early retirement from cricket he led work in Britain's cities at a time of deep racial tensions. I don't doubt that on occasions his

initiatives might well have averted bloodshed. He used to preface his remarks in Britain by saying ‘The British taught us to play cricket, and we are teaching you how to win!’ He inspired people, black and white, wherever he went, and perhaps never more so than when he spent seven years in South Africa developing the cricketing talents of the young boys in the townships. As *The Times* said, in the obituary that followed his untimely death on a tennis court in Australia just before opening an MRA conference in 1999, ‘He decided to devote his cricketing talent to bringing nations closer together.’ Jim was with him when he died, and has devoted a chapter to him in his book, *Met Along the Way*.



In 1961, when Malise Hore-Ruthven and his son James and I were visiting Queensland by car, Malise and I had a letter from Peter Howard, who became MRA’s world leader after Frank died earlier that year. The letter asked, ‘What about Asia?’ At the time a Japanese-led MRA play called *The Tiger* was having a major impact on South America, and this action, with a large group of people on the road, had become the current focus of our work worldwide.

The upshot was that I flew to Calcutta to meet Peter where he was with a small travelling party, and a number of our experienced Indian associates. The Prime Minister of Burma, U Nu, had offered Peter and MRA a house in Rangoon to be the headquarters for a nationwide campaign. RD and Prabha Mathur from Delhi were to host this home, and RD asked me to join them.

In Rangoon with the Mathurs, I got to know U Narada better. Peter Howard and his party went on to Tokyo and other Asian capitals, but sent word back that we should ask U Narada and a translator to come to a major South American MRA conference in Petropolis, Brazil. RD Mathur felt he couldn’t leave his responsibilities in Rangoon, so I was asked to accompany the Lord Abbott.

Thinking I was being helpful, I had sent Peter two or three cables suggesting names of people he might see in Vietnam and the Philippines. Peter took this amiss. He had his own introductions and didn’t need

mine. He cabled me back, questioning my know-all attitude. He asked me to join him in Bangkok, without the Abbot, so he could talk with me about what he considered my arrogance, and also about the trip.

He had asked me, 'Should you go?' – to South America. When I got to Bangkok I told Peter that I had passed on this question to the Abbot, who as a result was seriously reconsidering the whole expedition. Peter hit the roof, making it very clear that the doubt was about *my* going, not the Abbot's, and bawled me out in front of several others.

I had to work swiftly to get things back on track with U Narada. Communications between Bangkok and Rangoon were very poor in those days, despite the relatively small distance between them, and there was no good telephone link. I cabled U Narada to say that everything was on after all, but could only hope that it would reach him and that RD would have time to prepare him. It seemed touch and go that he could make the same flight to Paris as I would be on – which stopped in Rangoon after leaving Bangkok. Much to my relief, U Narada and a lay assistant did appear through the door of the plane as we sat on the tarmac. We flew to Paris to join a charter flight of Europeans going to the conference in Brazil.

As we left, Peter told me I was only going because someone was needed as an escort, and that after the conference I should stay in Brazil and 'learn about MRA from Blanton Belk', the talented American who was heading up that campaign. It was clear that he considered me overly self-important, and in need of taking down a peg or two.

For a lot of this journey I punished myself with Peter's charge. I didn't feel arrogant. I felt demolished. Only eventually did it occur to me that arrogance could take the form of not accepting forgiveness. The charter plane included special friends of mine, Conrad Hunte and Vaitheswaran, a brilliant intellectual and ex-communist from South India. Feeling rather small and smarting after Peter's dressing down, I took some comfort when they told me of their gratitude for my support as they first started to follow up the ideas of MRA in their own lives. Perhaps I wasn't so useless after all. It also

helped my self-esteem that I could join U Narada in the first-class compartment!

I did my best to serve the Abbot in Brazil, especially as Peter had said I should treat him as I would a cardinal. One of my tasks was to bring him his breakfast and his lunch, for which I had learned the form from my travels with Phra Bimaladhamma. On the first morning of the conference at Petropolis I arrived at about 6am with breakfast. U Narada pointed out that dawn came at 5am. So I had to set my alarm for 3.30 in order first to have my own meditation, wash and dress then help prepare the food and bring it from the kitchen.

This was not too big a chore for me, as I had got used to early starts the year before in Australia when I had tried to emulate Peter Howard's early rising regime. I learned to get up at 4.45, have my time of quiet meditation, study both MRA literature and current affairs and do my exercises before, then exchange ideas over breakfast with my host, Alan Ramsay, before he left for the printing works.

One day in Petropolis, I was watching the Japanese cast of *The Tiger* perform their show. Blanton Belk came and sat beside me. 'Why are you behaving like Mr Milquetoast?' he asked. Mr Milquetoast was an American cartoon character who wouldn't say boo to a goose. 'Has Peter been getting after you?' The short answer was of course, yes.

One of the Americans involved with the South American campaign was Dr William Close from Connecticut. He had been with MRA in a campaign in the former Belgian Congo, and later went back to spend many years there. Bill was concerned about a UN military intervention in Katanga, a mineral-rich province of the Congo, whose head of government was President Tshombe. Katanga wanted to secede from the independent Congo, and the UN had provided forces to prevent this. Bill didn't feel that this UN action was justified. The Secretary General of the UN, U Thant, had been secretary to Burmese Prime Minister U Nu, and had accompanied U Nu to Helsinki some years before to see *The Vanishing Island* after U Nu's trip to Moscow. Bill Close's idea to resolve this crisis was for U Narada to go to New York and persuade U Thant to call off the war. This was not far-fetched, as U Thant had once been a pupil of U Narada.

The snag for me was that Peter Howard had told me that I should stay in Brazil until he told me otherwise. But I decided that it was obvious that U Narada's special needs meant I really did have to escort him, and left for New York without telling Peter, who was by then back in England. If truth be told, I didn't ask Peter's permission as I thought he probably wouldn't give it. There was a nightly call with Peter, and I did go to the phone, but there were a number of my friends waiting to talk that night and I was too proud to hang about and, in front of them, ask for permission – and risk being refused.

U Thant and U Narada met, and had a long private talk in Burmese. But U Thant declined to call off the UN military offensive, saying that U Narada had been given propaganda by the Belgian mining giant Union Minière, which was behind the resistance to the UN action. It was in Union Minière's interests that Katanga seceded, but the UN believed that the Congo – later named Zaire – should be a unitary state.

We took advantage of U Narada being in New York to introduce him to a range of people supporting MRA there, to hear what they were doing and for them to be inspired by his thought and insight. One wealthy friend of Frank Buchman, John Newington, who lived in a very gracious mansion, said he would like to buy a car for U Narada, and ship it to Burma. U Narada said he was so pleased to be in the home of ordinary Americans. 'But,' said Newington, 'we are not ordinary Americans. We are rich Americans.' I worried later that perhaps we had exposed the Abbot to too much Western materialism. But I should have followed through on the matter of the car. It was a serious offer, and I'm afraid it never was sent to Burma.

U Narada returned to Burma from New York. I suppose I could have gone with him, but he had his Burmese businessman as a travelling companion and did not need me for the journey home. I remained in New York, and was happy until letters began arriving from Peter Howard lambasting me for disobeying his instructions. He quoted a hymn to me, 'Foul I to the fountain fly,/Wash me, Saviour, or I die' – saying that this was not yet my experience. I still found his charge of arrogance hard to take on board. I had the highest regard

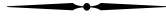
for Peter's commitment, but throughout this expedition I had been determined I was not going to quit mine. And after all, he had laid on me to take responsibility in Asia. But there was truth in the charge, and I had to recognise he wanted me to be my best. It took me time to learn what I had to learn.

With four decades' hindsight, I find myself wishing Peter could have made his points in such a way that I could have assimilated them, acted accordingly and moved on. As they came through to me, I saw myself on a cleft stick – on the one hand wondering how to obey Peter, and on the other, wanting to care for U Narada appropriately. I have often wondered what would have happened if I had stayed on in Brazil.

In New York I had met up with Alec Porter, the Irishman I had first met during the war on leave at the Howards' property, Hill Farm. Alec knew many of the union leaders in the port of New York. Among these longshoremen were a number of Mafia-linked characters, any of whom could have played the roles in the Marlon Brando movie *On the Waterfront*. At least one of our generous hosts was later jailed for corrupt practices. Another, a massive black man called Fred Small, became the senior vice-president in the Brooklyn union, and carried the values he said MRA had inspired him to discover into his negotiations. When we walked around the port with him he would point out the Mafia personalities, but added to us, 'Don't stare'. His tales over the years confirmed suspicions that the Mafia bosses were in cahoots with the police. When Fred took his own independent stance based on what he believed was right, both lots would be out to get him. At one point the FBI made a concerted effort to clean out the Mafia from Brooklyn, and Fred was hounded to 'tell all he knew'. But in the same way as he had stayed true to his principles in labour dispute negotiations, he stood his ground, and kept silent.

One day he took us to a particularly fine lunch at a restaurant called Tiffany's. I said, 'The food is great here, Fred.' He replied, 'I'll tell you why when we get out to the car park.' Once there he said, 'The reason why the food is good is because the Mafia eat here. If the meal is no good, they shoot the chef.' Fred later moved south to Florida in mys-

terious circumstances. It may be that he got out for the sake of his 'health'.



After two or three months in New York I was invited – summoned, really – to Scotland. The message came from Bill Jaeger, but it was sent on Peter Howard's behalf. It was January 1962, and I was to assist with the start of a nationwide tour to industrial cities of two of Peter's plays, *The Hurricane* and *The Ladder* – and later, *Music at Midnight*. After arriving at Prestwick on an icy-cold and snowy January morning I made my way by train to Aberdeen. I kept a low profile. No one knew when I was coming so no one met me, but I didn't know where the HQ was. I saw a poster at the station, which gave the name of the theatre where the plays were being performed, and so headed there, where I was told that everyone was at a luncheon at the main hotel, the Caledonian. I went and waited for it to end, to discover that it was a celebration to mark the engagement of Peter's daughter, Anne, to a young and attractive recently-elected Scottish Member of Parliament, Patrick Wolrige Gordon. When the lunch party came out, I was not really noticed, but found someone to tell me where I was staying.

This turned out to be a boarding house really meant for the summer trade, as it had unheated bedrooms. There was a meter into which you put a two-shilling piece for gas, but it was still freezing overnight. I had to put the somewhat dusty mat from the floor on top of my bed in order to have any hope of keeping warm. The situation was not eased by having to share the room with an old Etonian and Oxford graduate called Patrick Colquhoun, to whom I was not prepared to tell the reasons for my anguish (although we were to become, and remain so years later, good friends). Patrick seemed able to weather the cold, doubtless acclimatized by English institutions such as boarding school.

At the cast and company meeting next morning, I sat at the back. I don't think I was welcomed; if I was, it was certainly not fulsomely. I thought I should say something about being there and what I was up to, and did so. It was awkward.

There was one redeeming feature. A very attractive young rosy-cheeked woman, in a striking red winter coat and black fur beret, stood up, and in a delightful Scottish accent, told of meeting some of the women who worked in the fish market. I envied her freedom in the way she spoke. I learned that her name was Marjory Wright. I didn't know at that time that she had been responsible for the allocation of our accommodation!

Bill Jaeger, who had chaired the meeting, took me for a coffee afterwards. He said that I shouldn't feel the need to say anything at meetings for a while. Peter had evidently leaned over and asked him, 'What is Gordon talking about?'

The plan was that after Aberdeen the plays would tour south. In Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, I joined in going to invite both the union leadership and the rank-and-file to the plays. Many came. The plays we had in those days were topical: *The Hurricane* dealt with post-colonial Africa; *Music at Midnight* with the ideological challenges posed by the Cold War; *The Ladder*, which was more allegorical, underlined how personal decisions could decide the fate of nations. Such was the response in the Newcastle area that a group of us, not needed for the cast, volunteered to stay on. In my present situation, it seemed wise to choose the humble course.

With others I was to spend eight months in Newcastle and the Sunderland area, and we befriended an extraordinary cross-section of the community, including union officials in the mines and port, shipyard workers and city councillors. I stayed in the home of Alan Brown, the manager of Sunderland Football Club. Seeing the plays and the friendship extended to him by one of our team had inspired a dramatic change in his life. Alan had always hated the papers, but wanting a way forward had invited all the press men to meet him, whereupon he apologized for his threats and intimidation – which included throwing one of them down the stairs. This attracted enormous local coverage, only eclipsed when he pulled Sunderland from the Second Division into the First.

A couple of us got to know a communist miners' union branch secretary called Jim Crookes and his wife Nellie. Through a change of

heart he found himself able to work with the management for the first time rather than both working in constant opposition, and through cooperation they managed to keep Linton Colliery open for five years beyond the expected closure date.

Our 'on the spot' posse ran a small bus to London every two weeks, taking workers and their wives (each paid their own way) to see the current MRA play at the Westminster Theatre. This was a small theatre close to Victoria Station and Buckingham Palace that had been bought by a large group of people as a 'living memorial' to those MRA friends and colleagues who had given their lives in the war, with the aim of using it to promote the ideas of MRA and contribute to a new world order where conflict would be a thing of the past. So much of our work from the Forties onwards had been led by spreading word of our ideas through performance that a theatre seemed a very natural base from which to work. This was complemented by the hospitality and meeting places we could offer in large homes like 45 Berkeley Square, and countless private homes across London. We would leave Tyneside at 8am on a Saturday, taking four hours to get to London, have lunch, see the matinee, stay overnight in one of the homes and then attend a large Sunday morning meeting back at the Westminster Theatre before returning north.

The ideas expressed in the MRA plays definitely affected Tyneside in a positive way in those years. The spearhead of our action was Sir Nicholas Garrow, Labour Chairman of the Northumberland County Council, who became part of an unofficial network of people and included Harry Hammond, a former communist docker; Tom Stevenson of the Swan Hunter shipyards; Alec Clough, a miner's branch official in Ashington; and Sir Robin and Lady Chapman, active Conservatives from Cleadon. All of these people and their families became firm personal friends of mine. In the northeast, this network expanded over the years to include initiatives to encourage resolution in the sensitive area of race relations.



At the 1957 Baguio conference I had shared a room with Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson of the Mahatma. He had just come from

attending the funeral of his father in India. Devadas Gandhi was Editor of the *Hindustan Times* and Rajmohan had followed him into journalism after university. Part of his early training was on the *Scotsman* in Edinburgh, where he had stayed with a family who had a long association with MRA. The parents were doctors, and their sons were at university. There was enough in this family's commitment and way of life to intrigue Rajmohan, who saw that if you want to make a difference in the world you must start with yourself. He did this.

Some time after Baguio, Rajmohan had joined me in Vietnam for a period, and we became good companions. In the following years he worked with Buchman and Howard. Then in 1963, while I was engaged in the ongoing British industry-oriented work of MRA, an exciting letter arrived from Rajmohan. It outlined his vision for a 'clean, strong, united India', initiated by a campaign that would include a March Across the Nation, in an echo of his grandfather's action years before. I responded positively to helping him in the way he asked.

First I had the privilege of driving Rajmohan and RD Mathur from Delhi to visit the Dalai Lama at Dharamsala, to arrange for a forthcoming visit by Peter Howard as part of the whole campaign. And later, when Peter set off from Delhi to see the Dalai Lama, he handed me a letter to answer for him. It was a complicated letter from a querulous lady. I worked very hard on the answer to that letter for Peter during the time he was away, looking up appropriate references. On his return from Dharamsala I produced an aerogramme ready for Peter's signature. He read it carefully and said, 'That's perfect. If you put as much into your care for individuals as you did into that letter, I'll be more than happy.' This was warm praise, and I appreciated it after what had gone before.

To proceed with the March Across the Nation we needed funds which we did not have. Rajmohan went to Bombay to see industrialist contacts about how to raise the money for his bold venture. Their advice was to publish a 'souvenir book' with all the large firms taking out advertisements. That seemed like a good idea to me. But then

Rajmohan suggested that Chris Mayor and I should go to Bombay to execute this plan. I said, 'But shouldn't you send an Indian on a venture such as this?' Rajmohan answered, 'I think you and Chris would be ideal for the job.' I may say that those of us in Delhi then had already emptied our pockets to send Rajmohan to Bombay just a little earlier. But we did go to Bombay and set ourselves a month to raise the money, using introductions from two of India's well-known industrialists. The target was Rs 200,000. I wanted our efforts to be exhaustive and faultless. Indeed, Arundhati Nanavati, who kindly typed the necessary correspondence for us, complained until quite recently that I asked her to type one letter six times so that the recipient received a perfect one. It was a hectic month but the advertising money did come in and the booklet was published. Many of the advertisers even became our friends.

I went down to join the start of the March at Cape Kanyakumari in Kerala. Rajmohan had been lent a bus and a car, and for practical reasons the idea was that the bus would take us on our longer distances, and then as we came to each city or town we would march through with a proper parade. Then we would be picked up again by the bus at the other side of the built-up area. We were a party of 75, with many colourful international personalities. A Maori gave the ceremonial marching orders at every stop. A very impressive group of Indians, all young men with the potential to take on real leadership in India, spread the word among local dignitaries and the population of the purpose behind this tour.

Rajmohan would send people ahead each day to make the practical forward arrangements. Nothing too out of the way, of course! – for one of our stops he asked me to secure one or two colourful marching bands, if possible led by an elephant, and make arrangements for accommodation and a meeting in the stadium. This I did. In this fashion we progressed through India from Kerala in the south to Madras, Orissa, Calcutta, Bihar, through Uttar Pradesh and on to Delhi, stopping in towns and villages to address mass meetings. At each place, small or large, Rajmohan always proclaimed that to build a strong, clean and united India meant living differently, and he would

spell out honestly what that called for, describing what change he had adopted in his own life.

Peter Howard joined us with Dame Flora Macleod, Chief of the Clan Macleod from Skye in the west of Scotland, who brought even more 'colour' and music with her in the form of her personal piper. One feature of the public meetings was that there was an opportunity to contribute towards our expenses in this journey of faith. Baskets would be passed around, and I was deeply touched to see that gold watches had been donated. Another feature was that anyone could give their name and address if they wanted us to be in further touch. Hundreds responded; Rajmohan had clearly reached their hearts. And the response in Delhi to Peter Howard's *Space Is So Startling*, a musical production brought by a larger international group as a climax to the march through India, was amazing.

After a tumultuous season with the play, the cast moved on to share their personal experiences at youth training camps that had been assembled at Panchgani in Maharashtra State, Ootacamund in the Nilgiri Hills, in South India, and at Mahan, near Simla in the north, for those who applied to be kept in touch. Out of this developed the idea that there should be a permanent training place for MRA in India. I recall a visit by train with Bombay associates to see the spot at Panchgani on which was later built Asia Plateau, the conference and assembly centre that became the heart of the region's MRA activities. Some who attended the camps became the nucleus of Rajmohan's growing Indian team, and who shouldered this work in the coming years.

They were exhilarating days, and the more so when Rajmohan and a group of us decided to launch an Indian political weekly, which we called *Himmat* – meaning 'Courage'. Rajmohan was to be Editor-in-Chief, Russi Lala was Editor, and I was the first General Manager, working with Chris Mayor, David Channer and others. For funding, we followed up all the businessmen in Bombay who had advertised in our earlier publication, to seek their continuing support. The campaign had produced much to write about, and so material came in from across the country. From its first publication in 1964 *Himmat* was

to have a 20-year life span, and was one of two Indian newspapers that managed to keep its presses running during Indira Gandhi's 'Emergency'. This period was an excuse for Mrs Gandhi (the daughter of Nehru, and no relation to Rajmohan) to take semi-dictatorial powers to curb her opposition. All papers that did not support her were shut down. So *Himmat* had no guarantee of printers' services but managed to continue by buying and using barely-adequate machinery of its own. Throughout it was a remarkable effort, and involved the devoted commitment of countless seasoned writers and gifted colleagues determined to print the truth. Three of the *Himmat* staff now work on national dailies in India, and another is a major international book publisher. I myself was to write a weekly column for 14 years, never missing one, always portraying news from the country I was in, as I interpreted it.

Rajmohan and I also set out with two Japanese colleagues, Masahide Shibusawa and Toshio Hara, for Bangkok, Hong Kong, and Tokyo. Masa's great grandfather, Viscount Shibusawa, known as the founder of modern industrial Japan, had been host to Frank Buchman when he was there some 40 years earlier; Masa himself became the architect of many of MRA's intercontinental moves made from Japan.

I went on to Australia and New Zealand to raise funds for the new paper. But etched in my memory was an occasion in Perth when my father invited members of both Houses of Parliament to hear me speak in the Upper Chamber – a marked change in our relationship from his first responses to my involvement with MRA. I made a bold claim about the role of *Himmat* in the coming years in India, as a paper that did tell the truth.

IO

Like a Fresh Wave from the Sea

1965-67



*Squaring with the ICFTU – The Wright Girl – ‘No Strike’ –
A Love for Liverpool – The Wisdom of Stuart Blanch*

To join Rajmohan’s Indian initiative, I’d broken off from what remained important work in the British industrial areas. By 1965 I felt that it was time to return to London to assist in the co-ordination of what had developed in different parts of the country from the work of those who had stayed in those places, such as the North East’s shipyards and mines, the Liverpool docks, Glasgow and the Clyde shipyards and the car manufacturing centres of the Midlands, to name only a few. It was a big operation with much dedication on the part of all those involved.

One particular task was to work with Bill Jaeger in trying to rectify the whole issue of the ICFTU’s misunderstanding of MRA’s international work. We had befriended Harold Collison, who was the General Secretary of the British Agricultural Workers’ Union, and a past President of the TUC. When Bill and I sought his advice he responded warmly, and gave us introductions to leading ICFTU officers across Europe. Through personal encounters we hoped that we could set the record straight so that there would be no discouragement to labour men and women from participating with us in the future.

At that point I had a message from Garth Lean proposing that I take with me on this European trip a young American Rhodes scholar, Dick Ruffin, whom Garth had come to know in Oxford and whom I had met at Caux the previous Christmas. Dick Ruffin himself was

planning a trip – to Russia, as part of a student group. He decided to join me instead.

Through a combination of air and rail travel we journeyed to eight different cities and a number of points in between. In Yugoslavia we were hosted by Archie and Ruth Mackenzie, where Archie was then the British Consul-General in Zagreb. In Milan, we met Renato Bitossi, the President of the World Federation of Trade Unions – a body that was firmly allied to Russia. I recall Dick telling this old-time communist all about MRA's American youth movement, *Up With People*.

I agreed to address a public MRA meeting in Naples – but was somewhat surprised to see my name actually printed on the posters. While I was sharpening my speech Dick turned up, out of breath and still wearing his running shorts after taking some exercise. Evidently he'd been whistled at by the girls he'd jogged past. On that trip we also headed all the way south to Bari, on the Adriatic coast, where I tasted my first authentic Italian pizza.

The response from the ICFTU leaders we met was positive, and when later Bill and I met M. Braunthal, Assistant Secretary of the ICFTU, in Brussels, he assured us that the decision made in 1953 had been wrong and that the organization was taking steps to rescind it. The outcome was a communication from Head Office to all the world bodies of the ICFTU, saying that the strictures on MRA no longer applied.

But the climax of the journey for me came at Tirley Garth. By then Dick and I had come to know each other very well, as during much of our travels we were sharing a room. One morning I had the thought, 'This is the day Dick makes his contract with God.' He agreed: it was in his mind so to do, and he too felt that this was a moment of decision. We got down on our knees by one of our beds and he made a solemn promise to the Almighty. We have worked together for 40 years now, including 20 years that I served on the Board of MRA in America, where he became Executive Director.



There had been many girls on my 'list' over the years, but none I felt deeply enough about to want to marry, because that is an irrevocable step. I had never been immune to affairs of the heart. As a schoolboy there had been several girls, and in the following years, during my war service, there certainly were girls in towns and villages near our airfields. All lovely, but I did not fancy marrying any one of them.

However, in Britain in the mid-Sixties, Marjory Wright stole into my heart and mind. She was the girl in the red coat and black fur beret who had popped up in that Aberdeen meeting three or four years earlier, after I had arrived, cold and miserable, summoned from New York.

One day in early 1966, I was sitting in the lobby of the House of Commons waiting to see a member of parliament, when a totally unexpected thought came into my mind, as vivid as if the Almighty was sitting next to me, 'I have someone for you to marry, but I am not telling you yet who it is.' So strong was this odd thought that I wrote it down on the back of an envelope. During the next weeks, I would ask God, 'Well, who is it?' The answer was always, 'Wait and see.'

Gradually thoughts of Marjory rested permanently within me. I would see her quite often when I visited my old friend and sometime-mentor – her uncle, David Watson. In 1965 David had been diagnosed with a brain tumour and underwent serious surgery. He was convalescing at Aston Bury in Hertfordshire, the country home of his friends Paul and Madeline Petrocokino, and Marjory was caring for him. In India years before he would talk to me about his nieces, but at that time neither Marjory nor her sister was known to me. A visit to David afforded a natural chance for me to see Marjory, but she had more immediate concerns at the time. We knew he had not long to live.

When I thought of Marjory, my immediate reaction was that she was too good for me. Somehow this awareness of her in my heart was so completely different from any daydreaming I had had, during my 42 years, of any other young lady. During my travels to meet the European ICFTU officers with Dick Ruffin, Marjory was never far

from my thoughts. I recall sitting through a performance of Mozart's opera *Così fan tutti* in Italy, the whole time thinking of Marjory. But along with my growing feelings for her, self-doubts also crept in and I had to ask myself whether I really was on the right course or not. When David Watson died, the Almighty gave me my next prompt, on the train travelling from Newcastle to London to attend his funeral in February: 'At the funeral you will know.'

After the service, there Marjory was with her mother, greeting many of David's old friends in front the great Jacobean fireplace at Aston Bury. And suddenly I did know, for sure, she was the one for me. Being an impatient man I would gladly have asked her there and then. But fortunately caution won, as I thought of what her own feelings must have been at the time.

It happened that just then I was sharing a room in London with Alec Porter. He wasn't sleeping well, getting up at 3am and so on. His disquiet came from the fact that he had not had a reply to his proposal of marriage to Alison Wright, Marjory's sister, then in America. Seeing that I was also awake one night, he asked 'What are you doing?' I replied, 'Don't think you are the only person trying to marry one of the Wright sisters!'

Some time later, I found myself as a guest at Aston Bury, recuperating from an operation. Totally unexpectedly for me, Marjory came to visit my hosts one weekend, as she was making arrangements with the local vicar for her uncle's gravestone. In a jolt of anticipation I asked God, 'Is this the time to ask her?' 'No, in a week's time,' came the reply.

I took this timetable seriously, and made a plan to see her the following Friday when I would be back in London. My colleagues Leslie and Mary Fox, who were the hosts of the large MRA home I was staying in at 12a Charles Street, helped me by inviting Marjory to visit them on another pretext. They and I knew, but Marjory did not, that Mary was actually going out to the hairdresser! Leslie showed Marjory into the sitting room and retired, whereupon I arrived and sat down rather nervously. I said I had something to tell her, and something to ask her. I told her I loved her with all my heart, and that I wanted to

ask her to marry me. She was startled, and yet says she was inwardly unsurprised, because everything that had happened to her during the week before seemed to be in preparation for this proposal. Only a few days earlier she had got down on her knees, as if at the Cross, to lay down the guilt she felt about a matter that had lain heavily on her heart for some time. She had promised to love God most of all. The very next day she felt a wonderfully freeing sense of forgiveness and was ready to face the world anew. I had noticed just how happy she looked.

In answer to my question she said, 'You came into my heart like a fresh wave from the sea, last weekend.'

Naturally, as my proposal came somewhat out of the blue, she wanted time to think. I knew she would. We were quiet together. Then, to my immense joy, she told me the thought that was in her mind, 'Say "yes" to Gordon with all my heart, but firstly "yes" to God.' I retrieved the red rose I had speculatively hidden behind a picture on the mantelpiece and presented it to her.

Perhaps it says something of our life in those days that Marjory's first impression of me had also been at a meeting, in America in 1957 when she was 20. It was the year I had brought the large south-east Asian group to Mackinac. She was present in the audience and recalls noticing me, with my curly blond hair and Australian accent, wearing a light blue suit with wide shoulders, at the end of a long row of short, black-haired Asians. She was struck by the fact that I introduced all these delegates by name, without a note of reference.

While I had had time to think about this new step, and feel the growing love developing in me, for Marjory it was all very sudden. She says I swept her off her feet. However it all happened, it was, and is, a marvellous romance.

We went out to celebrate. It was mid-afternoon, and we found ourselves in a tea-room. I was so excited, I wasn't quite sure what I was saying, and the waitress looked rather surprised when I ordered 'teested toecakes' instead of toasted teacakes.

The coming weekend was Whitsun, and we were both already due to go north to Tirley Garth, the MRA centre for Britain's industrial

heartland, for a large gathering. There we met Marjory's sister, Alison, and Alec Porter, who had become engaged some weeks earlier. It seemed logical to plan a double wedding, to be held in Marjory's and Alison's home city of Aberdeen. So just seven weeks later, at St Machar's Cathedral Church, Old Aberdeen, we were married.

We were touched by the generosity of so many friends – from George and Pat Wood, now back in Scotland from Australia, who hosted the reception in their garden and sacrificed an apple tree in order to erect the marquee, to Alan Brown, my friend from Sunderland FC, who presented us with a salt and pepper set bearing the arms of Sheffield Wednesday, the club he had gone on to. At an engagement party in the northeast we were given something else that stood us in very good stead for the coming years of our marriage: a set of suitcases, some of which we still have.

Many of our gifts were provisions for the wedding reception, as this is what we had suggested if anyone had asked, and as a result a wonderful buffet was laid out. One family arrived from Perthshire with 50lbs of strawberries, ready to serve. However, a gift from a lady that Marjory had got to know in Aberdeen perhaps stands out in a special way in our memories. We'd let it be known that as we planned to head back off on the road, we didn't expect people to give us things for setting up a home. For a period of time in the Sixties there was a lot of MRA action underway in Aberdeen, including the touring plays. Both of us in our different ways had come to know management, shop stewards and representatives of other organizations across the country, and in Aberdeen Marjory came to befriend some of the women activists. One of these was a larger than life figure who arrived at the Wright home one evening before the wedding, carrying two identical parcels – one for Alison and one for Marjory. In her local accent the lady explained, 'I didna ken fit tae gie ye, Marjory. So here's somethin' flaaf for traavellin'.' Unwrapping the parcels revealed two sets of fish knives and forks. Of course, we always took them with us when we travelled!

One of the greatest delights was that Marjory's brother Donald made a dash from Bahrain on six days' unofficial leave from his RAF

post in Bahrain, and proudly gave his sisters in marriage. He walked down the aisle with Alison on one arm and Marjory on the other. On the way to the service he had revealed to his sisters that the morning suit trousers, hired at the last minute and too big for him, were held up with a few rounds of string.

This was indeed a new chapter of my life. Up to now I had been footloose and fancy-free and marriage brought many fresh considerations. We would be two from now on. I was 43 and used to being very active and devoted to the challenge of the day; Marjory was 29 and totally committed to setting up the new restaurant at the Westminster Theatre. My heart was opening in new ways. I felt different emotions and found myself expressing feelings and experiences that had not been stirred since the death of my mother. There was wonder in and a new delight to life. And of course I began to learn about the thoughts and feelings of a wife – not least when, while we were newly married, I looked after her when she was sick with appendicitis and during recovery.

But our colleagues were confident of the success of the match. A message sent to us at the time of our engagement read, ‘How Wise of Wright, how Wright of Wise’. And another, ‘Wise guy gets Wright girl’.



The flowering of Marjory’s and my romance and marriage happened in the midst of the national seamen’s strike of 1966, which Prime Minister Harold Wilson had said had ‘blown Britain off course’. Some of my colleagues and I felt we should try to address this serious threat to the nation’s economy and stability. We made it our business to befriend the leaders of the National Union of Seamen in the different ports and came to understand their grievances.

Tom Ham was President of the Amalgamated Union of Stevedores and Dockers at the time of the Seamen’s Strike, and I had first met him several years before when he had seen *The Forgotten Factor*. The dockers had been asked by the Maritime Union of Seamen to come out in support of their strike; they would likely have been followed

by the railwaymen, and then this strike could have spread to all transport workers. I wanted Marjory to meet some of my old friends, so a colleague took us to see the Hams. Tom told us that the seamen's representative had come to address a meeting of his dockers' executive that Tom was chairing. The vote for striking was 6 for, 6 against. Tom adjourned the meeting without casting his chairman's vote. They had a second meeting and the same thing happened. Before the third meeting, he told us and his wife Flo, 'You didn't know, Flo, but I got down on my knees in the kitchen and I asked God to tell me what I should do.' At the meeting he threw his casting vote against the strike.

We asked Tom how he knew what was the best decision to make on that occasion. He said, 'From *The Forgotten Factor*. I'll always remember the message.' This had been 18 years earlier.

We were also introduced to employers directly affected by the strike. One employer in particular stands out in my memory for the initiative he took in trying to better labour relations. It was at a private, off-the-record gathering of the seamen's leadership at the home of Don and Connie Simpson, friends in Rotherhithe. John Holder of Holder Brothers Shipping Lines expressed sincerely, 'The British Port Employers have been well-served by the men of the Merchant Marine.' You could have heard a pin drop. Holder went on to suggest that the unions would have a more receptive audience with the employers if they would cut some of their demands, and gave an instance of how this could be done. With management having taken a step forward, the union men present sensed a willingness to negotiate, and a new spirit entered their discussions. When Harold Wilson famously invited these same union leaders to beer and sandwiches at Downing Street, the resulting settlement was remarkably like the one mooted at the Simpson home.

Some time later, after dinner in an MRA home in Westminster, Tom Ham had an off-the-record exchange with Bill Tonge, Chairman of the Shipowners of Britain. Referring to what Tom had done at the time of the Seamen's strike, Tonge said, 'Does that man know he saved Britain? He averted a General Strike.'

We didn't disagree with the principle of the right to strike: if man-

agement wouldn't listen, or were too preoccupied with short-term aims to see that certain measures needed to be taken for the good of the whole operation or the protection of human rights, then perhaps this was the only way the labour force could get its voice heard. When Bill Jordan, later General Secretary of the ICFTU, was President of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers 1986-1996, he called for strike action in the engineering industry in pursuit of a reduced working week. Until that point, the employers would simply not discuss it. But as a result of the action, the employers took notice and constructive discussions were held. This was the only successful national dispute throughout the Thatcher era, and agreement was reached for the 37-hour week in 18 months. But where the motivation of the strike leader was not so sound or more impetuous, we felt it was right to work to avert it with whichever responsible union men or management we could. Hugh Scanlon, a predecessor of Bill Jordan, led the big engineers' strike that led Harold Wilson to say, 'Hughie, get your tanks off my lawn.' Scanlon knew he was striking at a delicate time for Britain's economic future, and hoped to further his far-left aims by holding the government to ransom.

So it was at an intense and fascinating time that Marjory plunged into my life and interests. In fact, it was during that evening with the Simpsons in Rotherhithe that I telephoned Marjory's mother, Jean, in Aberdeen to tell her that I had in mind proposing to her daughter the next day. As Marjory was of age, I didn't need to ask permission, but I wanted to ask for her prayers and her blessing. This she gladly gave.

I knew her father and mother had been separated for many years. I had met Jean in Aberdeen and elsewhere, so it was the natural and courteous thing to be in touch with her. After Marjory accepted my proposal, we called her father. He seemed pleased, and asked me if I played golf. I had to say, 'Not well enough to play with a man who asks me that question.'



Liverpool became our home early in our marriage, and there we continued our work in the industrial area, and particularly the port and

maritime industries. It used to be said that whatever way Liverpool went on a vote, the other British ports would follow. And there were many strikes in Liverpool in those years. It was our main port of export and we had had a continual work with MRA there over many years because it was clear that the nation's economy was affected by this hotbed of labour activity. I inherited friendships from Joe Hodgson, who by then knew Merseyside very well. Living there, I made friends among the dockers and their leadership, official and unofficial, and we were often invited to their homes. Nowadays, we don't talk about 'official' and 'unofficial' workers, but in those days of heavy unionization and before the modernization of the ports, unofficial leadership often held an equal influence in parallel with the recognised labour representatives. They would challenge the official union leaders as well as the employers. The notable friends I had were two unofficial leaders, Dennis Kelly and Pat Londra. Other introductions led to the port authorities and employers.

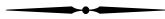
We developed an ongoing programme with plays and events, including a reception given by the Lord Mayor in the City Hall. I enjoyed the fellowship of Alfred Stocks, then the Assistant Town Clerk and later Liverpool's Chief Executive. A steady stream of younger people, you could say trainees in MRA, also came to work with us there. Much of the time we were in Liverpool Alec and Alison Porter were also hard at work there.

There was an amusing incident when the silver-haired Joe Hodgson, who looked somewhat like a senior detective, was stopped by police on Liverpool's Queen's Drive. He was speeding. Joe said, 'I'm sorry officer, I was in a hurry to keep an appointment. I know I shouldn't have been driving so fast.' The policeman looked inside the car and said 'Well sir, we should give an example to other motorists. Don't do it again.'

I developed a deep bond with Joe. An industrial chemist by training, he was a person of meticulous staying power and in-depth understanding who truly came to love the people he got to know, whether in the docks of London or Liverpool or in South-East Asia, where we worked together in 1957. At a surprisingly late stage of life, this popular

single man fell in love with and married Karen Jackson, a remarkable and gifted American artist and actress who lived in England for some years. It was a whirlwind romance and Joe was invited to work in America, where Karen lived in order to care for her ageing parents in Minneapolis, to find the places in the US industrial scene where the message of MRA was most needed and could be received. It was a field of our work that had lain fairly dormant for years, and who better than Joe to apply thinking and inspiration.

This was the late Seventies, at a time when Marjory and I were paying frequent visits to the States ourselves in order to support a new group of people wanting to apply their faith and MRA's message in post-Vietnam, post-Watergate America. Joe asked me to be his best man. A month after the wedding in Minneapolis, after Sunday lunch on a chilly autumn day while we were attending a conference at Silver Bay in New York State, Joe suffered a fatal heart attack. The deep shock to Karen can hardly be described, and for all present it was a numbing blow. For me it was both a privilege and stunningly painful to honour him, within the space of a few short weeks, at both his wedding and at his funeral. He is buried at Falls Village, Connecticut, near the home of Harry and Beverley Almond. Harry, an ordained minister, committed this outstanding man into God's safe keeping.



As our friendship with Pat Londra progressed, we would include him more and more in things we were doing, and take visitors to meet him so that he was encouraged by others, and others were helped to understand what the industrial situation in Britain was. He was giving more constructive leadership to those he had previously led into strikes. One opportunity we had was when the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Agra, India, visited us. The Archbishop was a very jovial, very warm personality, and at the end of our evening in the Londras' home he wanted to give Pat and his wife a blessing. So we knelt – Pat on one knee.

My approach to making headway in a city – as it had been in South-East Asia and elsewhere – was to meet its leading citizens, and find out

what was on their minds and think what we could offer them. Thus it was that I met and got to know Liverpool's Anglican Bishop, Stuart Blanch. I got into the habit of calling on him and giving him news of our continuing conversations and friendship with the dockers. He said it offered him insight into the city for which he had care. 'You can do so much more, as you have entry everywhere. I can't go down to the docks with my dog collar and expect to get alongside these men,' he once told me.

When visiting him one Monday I bumped into him at his gate, coming in from walking his dog. 'What are you doing here?' he asked. 'I have something of importance to talk to you about,' I answered. 'But don't you know to give a clergyman a Monday off?' he responded. I thought I had an appointment, but there had been a mix-up with his secretary. However, I knew then never to call on a clergyman on a Monday again!

In the years that followed he became Archbishop of York. We would visit him, either at Bishopthorpe or at the House of Lords, or he would dine with us in London and give us the opportunity to invite others to meet him. On these occasions he was always giving his mind to the affairs of the day, expressing his convictions and faith and pleased to meet our friends. On one occasion when the post of Archbishop of Canterbury was becoming vacant, I met him at the door and told him I had been praying he would become the next Archbishop of Canterbury. When I ushered him into the drawing room to meet those gathered for lunch, he told everyone, 'Gordon here has been playing a dirty trick on me. He has been praying for me to become Archbishop of Canterbury. I know my place is in York.'

I went to see him when trying to get the Home Office to grant permission for extended visas for young overseas people to work with MRA in Britain. He gladly gave us his backing and support. He also willingly backed us in our efforts to challenge the Inland Revenue when our charitable status was questioned. He said, 'I'll gladly join you on this issue, because if it is MRA today, it will be the Church tomorrow.' His encouragement to us was constant, and our times with him and his wife Brenda were occasions of great warmth.

A prolific writer and a great theologian of the Old Testament, Stuart was also much loved as a teacher by those who studied at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. This I learned from the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Donald Coggan, who invited me for a 'dish of tea' at the Athenaeum Club. I felt we ought to keep him informed of what we were doing and what we were aiming to do.

Before he left York we asked Stuart Blanch to address a large meeting for 700, focussing on industry. He advised that this should be at MRA's Cheshire centre, Tirley Garth – 'You'll never get the North to go to London, Gordon.' At events like these he could exchange ideas with a cross-section of Britain, some of professed faith, some not. Encountering him also often gave people a whole new attitude to the Church.

In his talks his humour would often break through. One story I remember particularly from that Tirley weekend was about his enthronement as Bishop of Liverpool. Wearing for the first time the magnificent gold cope and mitre, he processed down the great aisle with all the clergy, choir, and with due pomp and ceremony. Halfway to the high altar, a familiar face leaned out from a pew and said, 'Bishop, I want you to have this for your lunch.' It was a leg of pork from his butcher.

On the Sunday after his talk, we sat with a rabbi from Birmingham, who was there representing the Chief Rabbi. It was a very happy, jovial lunch party, and the rabbi said to Stuart, 'Well, I can say that I agreed with everything you said yesterday, Bishop, except perhaps the leg of pork!'

Our friendship was to span 25 years. It was both personal and spiritual, with many moving moments. When we spent a weekend with him at his home, after his retirement, he shared Communion with us in the Franciscan way – at the table, breaking bread together. When I saw him a few weeks before he died in an Oxfordshire hospice, I offered to pray with him. He nodded his assent, too weak to speak himself.

I I

Now We Are Three 1968 and beyond



*Expecting Something New – Tirley Garth’s Gift – Secretarial Duties –
A Family Education*

Marjory and I were very busy in the first years of our marriage, but not too busy to consider having a baby. In 1967, while staying on Loch Lomondside – what more romantic place to be – the promise of the gift of a child was given us.

In the last few months of Marjory’s pregnancy we had the pleasure of a visit from my father and stepmother, and we took them by car from London to the far north-west of Scotland, a 2,000-mile drive. In most places, we visited or stayed with friends, so that they would come to know Dad and Pat, and vice-versa, adding to the enjoyment and experience. My father, still in Parliament although aged 70, insisted on climbing into the back of our two-door car to give Marjory the comfort of the front seat.

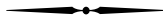
Dad particularly loved the Highlands, commenting everywhere on the stock and crops, and amazed at the great areas of unused land where there was rainfall in plenty. His early work had involved testing soil in countless barren areas of Australia, and introducing trace elements to make cultivation possible. He could also still be quite a rogue. On a remote road, he asked me to stop the car when we saw a young boy on his bike carrying a milk bucket. He asked the boy the way to Plockton, our next destination. The boy obliged. ‘Is it a big city?’ asked Dad, knowing full well it was a small village. ‘No, not very big,’ said the youngster. It turned out that the reason Dad had stopped to talk to him was simply to hear his Highland lilt.

Without at that point a permanent home base of our own, an obstetrician friend in Birmingham offered to look after Marjory in his hospital. We had been expecting to be living at Tirley Garth, but foot-and-mouth disease had broken out in Cheshire and for many weeks it was not recommended to travel around the countryside, for fear of spreading the disease further.

At the appointed time Marjory and I went to Birmingham. Gordon Scott arrived at 2am in the midst of a thunderstorm. In those days it was not customary for fathers to attend the birth, so I remained sitting anxiously in the waiting room. When Steve Lester, our doctor friend, called through to say, 'Congratulations, Gordon, you have a perfect son,' I wept. Shortly after, in the delivery room, Marjory and I gave thanks to God, with the little bundle wrapped up beside us.

Gordon brought a new dimension to our life altogether. We returned to Liverpool, as we felt that our work there had some years left to run. We had been living there with a classics teacher, Norman Gain, who had known the early Oxford Group, but his home didn't have enough room for a family. But we were invited to live in Ormskirk by another friend we had come to know well, and who supported us financially for many years. Gordon arrived in a Moses basket to a warm welcome.

We wanted Gordon to be baptised, but didn't know any clergymen in Liverpool other than the bishop. So he was christened in the Lady Chapel of the Anglican Cathedral by Stuart Blanch, and we cherish the memory of that occasion.



Our work in Liverpool and with friends in other port cities continued. Marjory's first outing from home after Gordon's birth was to Pat Londra's, where we discussed the ongoing situation in the docks and the national scene. Later, our friend Norman Gain took a sizeable flat at Sefton Park where we could live with him again, entertaining with him and inviting others to stay. However, our home for the longest period of time in the north was to be at Tirley Garth.

An imposing Edwardian country house, originally built for an

industrialist whose firm was to become part of ICI, Tirley had been offered at the beginning of the Second World War to MRA by its tenant, Irene Prestwich, whose family home it had been, to be a gathering place for people who sought solutions for their lives and places of work. She used her inheritance to buy it outright for MRA when the war ended. Irene still lived there. Situated in rolling countryside, and within its own 40 acres of landscaped grounds, it was within easy reach of the industrial cities of Liverpool and Manchester, not far from Birmingham and the Midlands, with Yorkshire just a little further.

We first came to live there because we both had flu over Christmas 1969, and to recover had to stay on longer than the period of the Christmas-New Year gathering we had joined there. Our little boy was one. Delayed by snow, his Scottish grandmother arrived at midnight to find a note from Marjory, saying that we hoped she would enjoy her room-mate's company, because, as we had flu, we couldn't keep him with us. They had a wonderful time.

Three months before, we had actually moved to London from Liverpool. During our enforced stay at Tirley, I began to feel something of a conspiracy against furthering my London plans. Marjory longed to stay on at Tirley: with a training in hospitality and catering management, she had earlier in her life hoped to see through the creation of a new and adequate kitchen at Tirley to meet the needs of a bustling conference centre, following on from helping to do the same at the Westminster Theatre Arts Centre and its restaurant in London. At Tirley, there were also other families to be alongside, and many young people whom she loved and hoped I would want to work with. She had a vision for our services in this beautiful place. Then a senior British colleague also put it to me that we had a role there, and asked if we would make it our home. I thought, wrongly, that he and Marjory were in cahoots. But we did indeed stay.

Soon, with others based at Tirley, we increased the activities we could offer those interested in MRA. We offered young people from overseas opportunities to participate in the affairs of this country by meeting and visiting people of the workforce and society at large. Much of our ever-growing household comprised young people,

because we felt at that time a particular need to establish ways to give MRA training to a younger generation. Our colleagues across the world, in India, Australia, Southern Africa, the USA and Canada, turned to us in Tirley Garth to give this.

With numerous weekend conferences Marjory, as part of an ever-changing kitchen crew, was engaged in keeping everyone fed. The children of our different families had a wonderful start in life, an in-built play school with superb natural surroundings in which to run about.

We saw the natural growth as men and women of industry gathered and met together, sometimes addressing particular national issues, sometimes for fellowship and meeting as friends – and building on the work that had been ongoing in many cities across the country. These friendships have lasted a lifetime. One we came to know well was Ted O'Rourke, a union leader at the Girling Brake Factory, Ellesmere Port. One of their strikes affected much of the British motor industry because Girling supplied car brakes. I had gone looking for him in a pub one evening: I wanted to write an article about the strike for the labour-interest newspaper, the *Industrial and Waterfront Pioneer*, and wanted his 'take' on it. We had an immediate rapport, which led to meeting his associates and family.

One unforgettable Christmas occasion at Tirley was attended by the entire, large, O'Rourke family. On the way home after the party a younger colleague who was giving them a lift in our minibus, heard Ted say to his wife, 'You know, we have talked about socialism all our lives. But that old lady lives it.' He was talking about Irene Prestwich, who had received everyone in the home that was no longer her private property, and who had spoken to them all during the evening.

Pilkington Glass at St Helen's was another factory with problems during those years. A colleague and I, driving home from Liverpool one day, decided to drop in to St Helen's and look up Bill Bradburn, the union leader. We learned at first hand the background of the strike, and invited him to Tirley with his wife. After hearing the experiences of others there, Bill took some fresh thinking to the board of Pilkingtons in London. Then one day Lady Pilkington was brought

to Tirley by the Bradburns, and later Lord Pilkington received me at his London home to hear more about what we were trying to do for his company.

The strong friendships created at Tirley Garth with the men from the engineering unions in Birmingham gathered momentum. Terry Duffy, who often attended our events at Tirley or in London, became the President of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union. He was closely followed there by Bill Jordan, who then became the General Secretary of the ICFTU, the most responsible union position in the world. To our great delight, some years later in 1997 Bill Jordan responded to an invitation to visit Caux. On behalf of the International Confederation of Free Trades Unions, with affiliates in 137 countries representing 125 million trade union members, he delivered a lecture during an industrial session of the Caux conference. We had come a long way since the ICFTU ruling body's criticisms of the Fifties.

With less than an hour's drive to Liverpool, Tirley was practically only a boat-trip from Ireland. In 1971, when the Troubles were in their early, very bitter, stages, we had several forays across the Irish Sea at the invitation of our many colleagues there. On one of these forays we invited over a good cross-section of Irish life, both from the Republic and from the North to visit Tirley, believing that perhaps coming together in a different setting might offer the opportunity for a new approach to the situation. Included in the party was Jim MacIlwaine, a strong-minded Ulsterman, and the President of the Irish Senate in Dublin, Senator Cranitch. A Catholic priest from the North was standing talking to MacIlwaine at tea on arrival. It was difficult to drink tea and hold the plate with the cake on it at the same time, so the priest, who had had his cake, offered to hold MacIlwaine's plate, and then began to chuckle. 'What are you laughing at?' MacIlwaine asked, suspiciously. 'Well, it's the first time I have had a Protestant eating out of my hand!' the priest replied. They both laughed.

At the end of one very turbulent morning session, when a Chief of Police, a Catholic lawyer from the North, a shop-steward from

Tilley Lamps, another from Harland and Wolff shipyard, and countless individuals of different backgrounds, each had their say, I gathered them for a follow-up lunch on the Sunday, taking care to put MacIlwaine next to Senator Cranitch. One upshot was that MacIlwaine – the Ulsterman – was invited to the Irish Parliament by the Senator. With great courage, he did indeed visit Dublin.

As the years went by, some of these people and others found a way to work together, and make their contribution to peace-building and understanding.

Later, but as part of the same initiative, Paul Campbell, the Canadian who years earlier had been Buchman's physician, and I were invited to lunch at the House of Commons with the Ulster Unionist leader, Reverend Ian Paisley. It was December, and we were served a Christmas dinner. I might say, we hadn't gone for the meal! Paul was a marvellous raconteur with a great memory for detail, and between us we gave our best shot at outlining the way we believed all sides in Northern Ireland could realise a common vision – through God. To be fair, Paisley gave us the opportunity to give him a great deal of evidence of changes in attitudes and reconciliations in places every bit as divided as Northern Ireland. But we couldn't help but be reminded that he was the arch-Protestant spokesman when he declared, 'I'm not anti-Catholic. I'm against the Pope.'



I was asked to become Secretary of the Oxford Group, as Moral Re-Armament in the United Kingdom was still formally known, in 1971. I had only been on the Oxford Group's Council of Management for three years when its serving Secretary, Roland Wilson – who had long led the work in Britain – retired. So I was surprised that my colleagues nominated me.

On the face of it, the Secretaryship of the Oxford Group was not anything other than a legal requirement for a charitable body. But in fact it had for many years been the role undertaken by one of the de facto leaders of MRA in Britain, with considerable influence beyond Britain's shores, and required a 365-days-a-year dedication. In a way

it provoked something of a crisis of identity for me – it was more than an ‘add-on’ to what I was already doing in terms of outreach into industrial and other areas of British national life. It would mean a complete redirection of my life and the sort of work I did. It was a huge add-on.

Roly, my predecessor, was an Oxford graduate with many attainments. I was from Australia and had no university degree, yet would be expected to engage with British society at many levels more than I already had. Relations with our work in America were tense, unfortunately, and I could see that it would come to me to pilot a course forward and bridge the gap. It would mean coordinating a range of our administrative activities, ensuring that we complied with our charitable and company status, encouraging, formulating, even spearheading a number of new initiatives within and without our work, and maintaining contact with our other international associates, and having an address book with literally hundreds of names in it.

In consultation with Marjory I agreed to take on the task, but we both knew there would be a deep personal cost. I still remember feeling overwhelmed – as though the world was falling on my shoulders. At the same time I felt an extraordinary sense of commission from God that I should lay down my life for the MRA fellowship I was being called to serve.

The buck would also stop with me in many ways that were yet unknown. I felt out of my depth, but was given the promise of support at each step. I had to trust that I would be given what was needed as things unfolded.

But to start with I was in well over my head. At my first meeting with our Council’s lawyers to discuss the by-then sensitive issue of our relations with the American branch of work, I became so engrossed that I completely forgot a lunch meeting with the director-general of Britain’s military intelligence that a colleague had arranged. Of course, the senior fellowship of men I had come to know and had worked with, in many cases over the course of 30 years, remained close associates, and their wisdom and experience was gladly offered and gratefully received.

I continued in this role for eleven years, and was also appointed to the Boards of Management of MRA's work in the USA, Nigeria and South Africa, as well as Australia, on which I'd served since its inception.

My keenness to keep up the links with our work in industry, training the next generation, and with the countries I had been privileged to work in earlier, was always on my mind, but I have to admit much of this was neglected when I became engrossed in our administration. All this, of course, was lost on Gordon Scott, who in 1972 was four years old. In conversation with a friend of ours one day, he said, 'My daddy has two secretaries. He keeps them in the loft.' We did, indeed, have a loft office at Tirley, and under the beams, Nada Middleton of Western Australia and Jean Sutherland of South Africa supported me with my workload through those busy years.

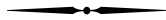
The work entailed spending a lot of time in London, where many of our Council of Management were based, as well as our lawyers and accountants. I would travel down several times a month. One of my ways of relaxing was cleaning and tinkering with our family car at the weekends, when there weren't other demands on my time. Thus was sparked another tale from our family annals, a report of a conversation between Irene Prestwich and Gordon Scott when Marjory and I were away. Irene evidently asked the little fellow what he would like to do when he grew up. 'I want to do what my daddy does,' came the reply. 'And what does your daddy do?' 'He goes to London, and he washes the car.' The memory of him at Tirley Garth, running along the top corridor from where the children had their tea, to leap into my arms when I got back from a long day in London, lives with me yet. What more could a father want? There are countless memories of his childhood that we cherish.

Several particularly joyful occasions when we were at Tirley were when we were able to host members of my Australian family there. After a visit by my father and stepmother and half-sister Rose in 1971, we accompanied them to Heathrow to see them off on their return trip. Dad still held public office, and we were shown into the VIP lounge until the flight was called. Rose came up excitedly. 'Look

who's over there!' she said. 'It's Bing Crosby.' There he was indeed, reading in a corner. We all went over and my father said, 'We've been putting up with you for a long time.' Bing smiled tolerantly and replied, 'And I hope you'll be putting up with me for a good while longer!'

In 1973, before setting off with several others on a visit to a number of Asian lands where I had worked, Marjory said to me, 'I will come with you on this journey as long as you don't expect me to speak at public meetings.' I had said, 'Of course you won't have to do that.' But one of our early encounters in India was in Agra, where the Archbishop who had visited us in Liverpool invited us to his college. And there we were asked to speak – there was no doubt that we were all expected to speak. I started off. Marjory followed, giving something she had very carefully prepared about the life we lived at home, and the purposes of Tirley Garth, the handsomeness of the grounds, Irene Prestwich's gift, and its ongoing mission. The other younger members of our party followed. At the end of the proceedings the Principal of the college, in his vote of thanks, said, 'Thank you; we enjoyed very much what Mr Wise had to say, but I would say that I enjoyed particularly what Mrs Wise had to say about the beautiful garden.' It was a speech that went down well at many future stops on our journey.

So Tirley had a very special place in our lives – its function, its hard work, the many friendships we made there, and of course the setting, a constant joy for those who came to seek food for the soul. But after four years at Tirley, the demands of the Secretaryship were such that we decided in 1974 that we would have to move our family base to London.



We gave a lot of thought to the education of our son, and I remember vividly taking him to Utkinton village school, near Tirley, on his first day, when he was very shy. In London, by which time he was six, we chose a Catholic primary school next to Westminster Cathedral that had been recommended to us. In the course of his year there the

teachers, who were very solicitous, advised that the time he had spent in a small class at a Cheshire village school had given him such a head start that they doubted they could keep up his rate of progress. Thanks to the generosity of several friends who had an interest in our family's welfare and in particular his future, we found the funds for him to attend the prestigious Hill House preparatory school for three years. But we agonized about the next step, because we hadn't the money for the senior schools that Hill House prepared its boys to go on to, even after making enquiries about scholarships. He was not incapable of winning the scholarships, but despite the generous contribution they would make to the fees, the remaining gap was still too great for our slender resources.

Someone suggested we make enquiries about Christ's Hospital, a school in Sussex with a charitable foundation, and to our delight found that Oliver Williams, the son of two close colleagues, was also applying for a place there. Olly had lived with us at Tirley Garth for eight months while his parents were working abroad, when he and Gordon Scott were two years old. They both achieved places and a presentation at this remarkable, historic school, founded in 1553 by Henry VIII's son, Edward VI.

The only snag was that it was a boarding school. It was hard to think of our beloved child leaving home when we believed so much in our responsibility for the good influence of home life. But we believed, and Gordon Scott himself confirmed it, that this seemed to be the right plan. And it was a comfort to know that he had a friend there. I was always proud of him, not only because of his achievements, but also his readiness to tackle difficult things and his sense of service to his school. However, when he left for his first term there, at the age of 11, I could not bear to go into his empty bedroom in London. He was never out of my mind.

Marjory and I have always found Gordon Scott to be a marvellous companion, and this continues till today. As it happened, we had one child, not two or three as might have been the case, and so we found we became each other's pals, riding around Hyde Park on bicycles on a Saturday morning, going to the swimming baths at Marshall Street,

Soho, and buying Italian ice-cream on the way home, in his young days. Marjory and I have often said to each other, ‘What did we do to deserve such a wonderful boy?’ He seemed to make up for the others we might have had. Our family holidays were always highlights of the year, sometimes to a fascinating historical place like Assisi, or the beach in Jersey, very often staying with friends who were very kind to us.

One year, when he was a teenager, we went to Scotland for a number of weeks. While staying in one Scottish glen, we used to get a fishing licence from the local publican and climb to the hill lochs where we could fish with worms and use spinner rods – not on angling waters, where only fly-fishing was allowed, and for which we had neither the knowledge nor the equipment. On one particular Sunday there was deer culling, so we could not buy a licence because we couldn’t get entry to the hill areas where we usually climbed. In that part of Scotland you are not allowed to fish on the Sabbath, but the publican told us where to find a loch where we wouldn’t need a licence.

We drove, we climbed, we fished in the said loch, but to no avail, not even a bite. Then while walking back to the car, a Land Rover drove up with a family aboard. They had been further along the loch looking at some cattle. The driver stopped in front of us and came over to chat. ‘Caught anything?’ he asked. ‘No,’ I responded. ‘Does anyone ever catch anything here?’ ‘Oh yes, some of the men on the estate do.’ Then, as he had a kind of proprietorial air about him, I said, ‘Is that your boat pulled up on the shore?’ ‘No,’ he said, ‘it belongs to one of my staff. But it’s my loch, and it’s my fishing.’ Fortunately, he saw us for what we were, ignorant visitors, and did not set the water bailiffs on us.

If Marjory and I had to be abroad, we carefully planned school leave days and half term holidays with friends or family, always hoping and praying that Gordon would not feel neglected. Looking back into family letters, I feel reassured to see that he often commented on, or enquired into, our activities as well as telling of his own. But of course there have been times when we wished we had been there for him. And these we have talked about openly, and we believe we have been forgiven.

He did join us four times for school holidays in America, during our spells there. And although it occurred to us later that he would probably have preferred to venture forth alone during his gap year between school and university, we spent a year in Australia as a family and en route he was able to discover something of my earlier life in Asia, with stops in Delhi, Bangkok, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Hong Kong, Manila and Tokyo. During that year in Australia we also had a long car trip to Darwin and back, sharing the driving. Some years before we had visited the place of my birth, Atherton in Queensland. I feel lucky to have been able to take him to the places of my childhood and many of my far-flung places of service. And he knows people I know in all these places.

After the year in Australia he started off in Edinburgh on his own. University brought real independence. This can be a difficult time for a father, and I was no exception. Some of his choices were not what I wanted for him, but I knew that it was his life, and I am now reminded of my relationship with my own father. When I was clear about my choices, my father resisted and was hurt. This happened to Gordon and me, too. But time and prayer and acceptance have restored the father-son relationship to a level beyond my dreams. His sensitive concern for us moves me deeply, and his generous ways are far beyond a father's expectations. His sobbing on my chest when I was stricken with a stroke, and his daily support for Marjory during my illness and rehabilitation, come to mind.

He is a gifted young man, making his way successfully in his chosen profession of publishing, and I am proud. An enormous surprise was when he offered to throw an eightieth birthday party for me. We celebrated in style, with a selection of friends, old and new, and some family members, including Gordon's partner, Michael, a literary agent with one of London's leading agencies for film, television and theatre.

When Marjory's beloved sister was killed in a road accident a few years ago, Marjory, Gordon and I sat by her coffin, and prayed together with much emotion. We felt the closeness of heaven and earth, life and death, with the Spirit between us. We belonged as one.

A Long Journey

1973-74



*Retracing Steps – The Songs of Asia – Discoveries Down Under –
‘You’ve Been Away a Long Time’*

Marjory had never been to Australia, and by 1973 it was nine years since I had been myself, and a decade since I had visited the extraordinary network of friends in any of the Asian countries en route. It seemed a good and timely idea to undertake the trip, and we had the intention to assemble a small group to go with us. The trigger had been an encounter at Caux that summer. Madame Tao, a lively Vietnamese lady, spoke to the heart and pleaded with us to come to Vietnam as she described the agony of her people. I had long been thinking of those I had lost contact with there, and wondered if it was wise or even possible to go, but the idea began to develop for a visit that could bring hope and support to those we knew there and in other countries, and valuable experience to some of our younger Australian colleagues who had been working with us in Britain, but would now be returning home.

However, this sort of protracted journey was quite out of the question for Gordon Scott at five years old. He had made a good start at Utkinton School, near Tirley, and the headmaster was supportive of our plan to leave him in the care of Marjory’s family and a close friend from our Liverpool days, Pauline Strongman, who volunteered herself. Pauline was an experienced teacher and we knew we could trust her care and wisdom. Marjory’s mother had moved to a town nearby, and with his aunt Alison, uncle, cousins and the many friends he had lived among for three years, we felt there was a great deal of

care for him. But however thoughtful the plans, it was hard on the heart to think of parting from him for six or seven months.

It was a great step in faith to trust that such a venture could be financed. It was only countless gifts that made it possible, with the feeling of many friends alongside us as we ventured forth. One evening not long before departure we were on our knees saying our nightly prayers with Gordon Scott, at his bedside, when the phone rang. It was a dear friend in St Andrews, who had just returned home from Africa to find a letter from me outlining our plans and hopes for the project. 'How much do you still need?' was her question. '£2,300,' I replied. 'I'll do that,' she said. When we told Gordon Scott and resumed our prayers he said, 'We'll have to tell God not to send any more.'

So we set off in October, a party of eight. Each of us was given a very fat envelope containing eight to ten tickets, to cover the various legs of our journey. First stop was India – the MRA centre at Panchgani – and then Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta.

On first stepping out of the plane in Bombay, Marjory remarked on the heat of the jet engines. I told her 'That's not engine heat, this is India.' It was her first tropical venture. For me Bombay was returning to my old stamping-ground from when I worked on the production of *Himmat* and with trade union people. We saw old friends and learned what they were doing in this great, milling city.

The MRA conference centre at Asia Plateau was all we had heard described and much more. I marvelled at the oasis Panchgani had become since the wells that had been bored had produced water for agriculture and gardens. Trees, rice, flowers and Jersey cows were all growing and grazing on what had been a dry mountainside nine years earlier.

The young cast of the new musical, *Song of Asia*, welcomed us at Panchgani with song late in the night. It was moving to behold the next generation of Asians inspired by the same work as we had committed to. A truly spectacular revue, the group meeting there at Panchgani had woven together gems of experience and culture from many countries including India, Japan, China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Turkey, New Zealand and Nagaland, the northern

war-torn area of India. There was humour as well as artistry in word, song and dance, and it was a delight for the eye and ear as well as touching to the heart. The essence of Asia's riches, even from the poorest settings, was a gift offering to the world.

Two of Tianethone Chantharasy's daughters were in the cast, and Rothay, the eldest, told her father of our arrival. He was then the Laotian Ambassador in New Delhi, and he promptly invited us to stay. There he hosted a morning reception for the Heads of Mission of Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand, hoping that invitations to their countries for *Song of Asia* would ensue. He envisaged our going ahead to meet the Heads of State in each of those neighbouring countries to pave the way. And so spreading the word about *Song of Asia* and what we felt it could do for this troubled region became part of our journey's mission.

In Calcutta, uppermost in my mind was to see Sibnath Banerjee and my spirits soared as I saw him enter the back of a crowded meeting room when we were all on the platform. He appeared with full beard, satchel on shoulder and long dhoti, for all the world like one of the ancient prophets. At the end he embraced me saying, 'Gordon, where have you been?' which I took to be a rebuke. He insisted on coming in to town to take Marjory and me to his home next day, as he didn't want us to make our way to Howrah alone. There was a Howrah taxi drivers' strike, and as our Calcutta driver bravely took us over the Hoogly River bridge the picketing strikers began to batter our car with their fists. But words from Sibnath, the revered trade union leader, got us through safely. On through those narrow streets I remembered of old, past all kinds of sights and animals, we made our way up the narrow lane in which he and Probashini lived. Her warm welcome and onion omelette, which she knew I loved, bridged the years.

Some of the party stayed longer in Calcutta, where other associates with whom I had reconnected included our hosts, the British Deputy High Commissioner, Stephen Miles, and his wife Joy (the last time I was their guest was in Dacca in the mid-Fifties), and Satya Banerjee of the Railway Workers Union.

Marjory, Jo Lancaster from Melbourne and I had secured four-day visas for Burma. At Rangoon airport, while our bags were being meticulously examined and my portable radio confiscated until departure, an official informed us, 'There's a monk outside waiting to see you.' This was unusual; monks usually get seen off themselves, but are not in the habit of meeting people at airports.

The only monk I knew in Burma was U Narada, Presiding Abbot of the Burmese monks and of Alaytula Monastery. And there he was outside with his two nieces, with a beaming welcome. It was an extraordinary, touching and brave encounter: he was a revered leader, and we were very obvious foreigners in a closely-monitored society.

I had written him of our intention to visit but his reply had not reached me. He told us he had wanted us to stay in the monastery, where he had installed a European-style guest suite, but the xenophobic military regime would not allow this. So he wanted to pay for us to stay at the main hotel. This too was refused. He was told we had to stay in the Government hotel and pay ourselves, to bring in foreign currency. So, he said, he had brought us a gift of Burmese kyats so we could buy presents for our families, and insisted on us taking from him a generous bag of money.

We learned that our message to him had reached him via Madame Aung San, whom I had met when she was Ambassador to Delhi. She was the widow of the murdered General Aung San, hero of Burma's independence from the British, and the mother of today's Burmese freedom fighter, Aung San Suu Kyi. Madame Aung San entertained us generously one evening, taking us out into her garden with a torch afterwards to show with pride the fruits on her trees. She said she was left alone to live her life peacefully, despite the heartbreak of her husband's death and the sadness of her country. She radiated a peaceful happiness and joy that one associates with the Burmese. That house is the one so often seen nowadays on television news, where Suu Kyi has been held under arrest.

Something else that brings that visit vividly back is a print that hangs in our sitting room now, a gift from a Burmese family. The son, Maung Maung Thaug, came to see us on our first morning in

Rangoon. He had lived with Jo Lancaster's family in Melbourne while training in mine engineering, and was in Burma seeing his aged parents. His father had been in U Nu's cabinet, and as Burma's Minister of Culture on an official visit to Hanoi he had been presented with a pair of pictures by Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese dictator. Jo's mother, Lillian, has the other.

Thaung took us to the Swe Dagon Pagoda, jewel of the Burmese Buddhist tradition. As we took off our shoes and walked on marble terraces and floors, accompanied by U Narada's young family, we felt a heavenly beauty in its elegance and glow.

Ma Nu, one of the veterans of the MRA association in Burma, arranged for us to speak to a packed charismatic Christian church on the Sunday morning. Marjory was so happy to find that some in the congregation remembered her uncle, David Watson, from his time in Burma as a doctor with the Indian Army. For me, so much was familiar from my earlier visits. But despite people's charm and the wonderful theatre of Burmese daily life – for example watching elephants shift teak logs on the Irrawaddy – there was a dull lifelessness in comparison to the Rangoon I remembered from U Nu's time. Colourful shopfronts had given way to controlled facades marked out only by little numbers. At U Narada's monastery he told us how he had wanted to saturate the country with MRA and to have a presence there from outside to assist in this, but at the insistence of Ne Win's regime the guest suite remained empty. So he had organized his nieces and friends to distribute an illustrated magazine in Burmese about MRA to far-flung villages. His nieces told us how the monks carried his convictions and messages to some of the smallest villages in Burma.

Rejoining the rest of our group as their plane passed through Rangoon, I tried to give an idea of what might be ahead in Thailand. Over the roar of the engines I described Sang Pathanothai, and said he would either be at the airport to welcome all of us or he would be in jail for being deemed pro-communist because of his links with China. We would doubtless encounter the Lord Abbot of Wat Mahatadhu, Phra Bimaladhamma, and Professor Karuna, an historian who was a longtime associate of Archie Mackenzie. And they did

indeed all form part of a momentous series of reunions in Thailand. Sang greeted us, a broad grin on his face, with not only a complete itinerary for our visit but an air-conditioned minibus.

Our visit coincided with Phra Bimaladhamma's seventieth birthday, a very auspicious event. At a celebratory breakfast I ventured an apology to him for the actions that had led to the way he had been treated on his return home following our world trip earlier. He and Sang had been bracketed together and described as enemies of the state – which indeed they were, because the state was corrupt. He roared with laughter and dismissed my apology out of hand.

We were not able to secure an invitation for *Song of Asia* to come to Thailand at that time, but we talked about its message in every interview and speaking engagement we had. Sang, as a newspaper editor with seven years in jail behind him, was able to catch me up on all the recent twists and turns of Thai affairs. Boonteng Tongwas, a Cabinet Minister, whom I had taken to Mackinac and Washington as a young MP, was one person we met, as well as an MP who had us visit his constituency in Pibulsonggram, a day's drive away from Bangkok. Marjory unfortunately had flu and stayed behind in the hotel with Jane, one of the secretaries in our party, who also wanted time to catch up with my letters and type up a report of our journey. But they received an unexpected visit from my dear friend Phya Mahai, who in the Pibulsonggram days had sent five tonnes of rice three times to Caux – and on this occasion brought Marjory a toy rabbit! And Sang's wife, Vilai, prepared home-made Chinese dumplings for the patient.

Next stop was the small kingdom of Laos, known as the land of a million elephants, wedged between Thailand, China, Cambodia and Vietnam on the long, winding Mekong River. We were honoured to be received by the Prime Minister, Prince Souvanna Phouma, to convey to him Tianethone Chantharasy's message about *Song of Asia*. Tianethone was a favourite of his and it did not take him long to grasp the significance of the letter we brought. And I was able to introduce our group to Oun Sananikone, who had been responsible for MRA coming to Laos and who had brought Tianethone to Mackinac in 1957. He was still active with the *Anciens Combatants* from the war

with the French – a force akin to the British Legion – and we spoke together to the young *fonctionnaires* of the Civil Service.

We travelled by Air Vietnam from Vientiane to Saigon on an aircraft that had undoubtedly been through the war, its joints rattling. Although each passenger was given a little brochure advertising the airline as having ‘that extra touch of luxury’, it seemed a little hard to believe in an open-plan cabin with crowds of women taking baskets of cheap live chickens back home from the markets in Laos. Listening to endless high-pitched chatter and roaring engine noise, we felt we were entering a very different world. When the meal was served by the not-so-gracious, and clearly overworked, stewardesses, one poured coffee straight on to Jo’s knee, missing the cup. He said, rather sardonically but with his usual good nature, ‘I had been wondering when the extra touch of luxury was coming.’

In Vietnam Madame Tao had arranged not only for us to meet many senior figures in the military, but also for General Nguyen van Chuc of the South Vietnamese Army, in charge of the Engineers, to meet, transport and guard us. America had now withdrawn from the country, but sounds of fighting – gunfire, smoke and explosions, and the running of feet in the streets at night during curfew, confirmed we were in a war zone. The South Vietnamese were fighting it out with the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. The General was bemused that the Americans called this the ‘Vietnamization’ of the war.

General Chuc had armed personnel escort us when we visited the Mekong Delta, going by road first from one military base to another, then down river by army motor-launch to Can Tho, passing villagers living their lives at the water’s edge – washing themselves, their hair, their babies, their clothes all in the great brown, flowing Mekong. We were housed in a bungalow recently vacated by United States officers.

The general’s son and his wife travelled with us, the son carrying a machine gun with which to defend us, should such a thing be necessary, although for some reason he left us on the second night. Jane, while kneeling to say her prayers, felt something hard under the bed – it was the machine gun. She coolly picked it up with both hands

and carried it out the door to where I was sitting on the verandah chatting to the captain and his men. Presenting it to me, she said, 'I think you may have more need of this than we will.' That night we could hear the sound of gunfire down the river.

One morning while eating breakfast noodles with General Chuc at a Saigon sidewalk café, we learned of the great debt he felt he owed to following what he himself called his 'inner guidance'. He had read, while on service in the jungle, a *Reader's Digest* article about MRA. The idea of listening and obeying the inner voice came back to him at a moment of crisis when he and his party found themselves surrounded by Viet Cong guerrillas. Having a clear sense that he should go in a particular direction, he was able to lead the men to safety through the one chink the guerrillas had left.

He used the opportunity of our visit to express his own deeply heartfelt conviction that the inner voice could be followed and that he was committed to a Vietnam free from domination. He asked us to express our commitment and beliefs to row upon row of his troops, and arranged for us to meet fellow generals and private citizens, among whom were government officials – including the health minister, whom we heard later had been killed trying to escape when Saigon fell.

Some time after our visit General Chuc became responsible for the defence of Saigon, and when it was eventually overrun managed to escape by amazing means, like other individuals whose stories we heard later. As a refugee in California, we met him running a motel and gas station in Sacramento, and gave him introductions to some of our American friends.

We felt deep sorrow for the people we met and dread for what lay ahead for them. But their optimism and hope was unforgettable. Some, like Nguyen Van Tan, genuinely hoped for a coalition with the North as a solution for lasting peace. A friend from 14 years earlier, he was at the time of our visit working in President Thieu's palace. Delighted and excited to meet us all, and his generosity knowing no bounds, he gave us a thirteen-course Chinese banquet at the Arc en Ciel restaurant in Cholon, one of the city's finest. A year later we had

a postcard from Guam to say he had managed to leave Saigon on the last ship out of the harbour, amidst North Vietnamese shelling. The next note came from Pottstown, Pennsylvania, where his in-laws had been able to sponsor him. He had many qualifications but little English, and found himself working in a factory making window sealants. But he must have been the most cheerful, wholehearted and humble worker in the factory, always grateful to America for welcoming him and proud as anyone could be of his Green Card when he finally got one in the Nineties. He always expressed touching gratitude to me for introducing him to the concept of divine guidance.

Once we were on the plane from Saigon, and before we landed in Manila, I told the party, 'Here, you *can* eat the ice cream.' However, a decade and a half on from my last visit, it was also a very different Philippines that I encountered. It was hard to fathom what was going on under Marcos. Senator Ros Lim was now Chief of the Court of Appeal, but seemed somewhat sheepish at having accepted such a senior post from the Marcos regime. But Gerry Palaypay had left the Philippines, as he could not work under Marcos. The only MRA focus was the work inspired by Up With People, which had grown out of our big youth actions in America. They had attracted a bright young crowd, and it was then that we first met Alice Cardel, who garlanded us on arrival at the airport, in generous Filipino style. Alice was later to work with us in England and then in USA, particularly when MRA gained Non-Governmental Organization status at the United Nations in New York.

There was a vigorous MRA work going on in Papua New Guinea, where colleagues from Britain and Australia who were living there introduced us to Paul Lapun, one of the architects of the country's independence, and friends who were memorable figures in Parliament and public life. They hoped to build a cell of people in that emergent nation who would work together to affect the country positively at a crucial stage in its development. The big resource was copper, and its control was the issue that would decide the nation's future.

It was a poignant experience for me, as an ex-serviceman, to see the start of the Kakoda trail and the vicious mountain ranges where

Australians had fought, and then to see the neatly kept cemetery where hundreds of my fellow-countrymen lay. While they met death here in the Second World War, it is the place engraved in history where the Japanese advance was halted.

Homecoming to Australia, and this time with Marjory, aroused deep emotions in me. My father fêted us, of course, at lunch in Perth's Parliament House. He had retired only two years before. A rare favourite with all political parties, many former colleagues from left and right greeted him, and he introduced me. I suppose this was the beginning of my endeavours to give friendship to and follow the actions of Western Australian politicians for the next 25 years.

It warmed my heart to spend time with five of my six siblings as adults. Although the eldest, I had missed most of their growing up. We met up with the sixth, Penelope, in Durban on the homeward journey. My half-brother Scott, although trained as a geologist, was by then a notable musician. One unusual Sunday afternoon for us was at the pub where he was playing with his group, Mud. The beer mugs literally jumped up and down on the tables as they performed. Now Scott leads his Wise Family Band at folk festivals in different parts of Australia, and the string instruments he makes by hand have earned him great renown as a luthier.

The South West in late spring, the wildflower season, is magical, and we were just in time to see some of this explosion of colour when Dad took us down to the Karri forests. He stopped at the roadside to look over the fence at some prime pasture that he himself had cleared and fenced. 'You see that property?' he said. 'That would have been your inheritance, but I couldn't afford to keep it.' He was always a man of the land.

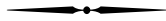
Christmas with the family was delightful, with my father cooking the turkey as was his habit. We swam at Cottesloe Beach on a sizzling Christmas morning – but it was agonizing to be apart from Gordon Scott. All we could hope was that he was happy at Tirley Garth.

Later, in New South Wales, we visited Malcolm and Ruth Mackay. He had been a Liberal Party politician in Canberra and had served as Minister for the Navy. I had known him since wartime. Their concern

for us as a family was expressed in an offer to fly Gordon and Pauline out to join us. But they had not quite grasped that we already had a fixed programme ahead – a month in New Zealand and some weeks in parts of Africa. We consulted with Pauline and Marjory's sister and concluded that it was not a practical proposition for Gordon to come out of school at short notice, make a monumental journey around the world, and travel around on the tour planned for us. But it was touching and incredibly generous that the Mackays wanted to make it possible for the three of us to be together, and later they consummated their gift nonetheless by helping with Gordon's fees at the excellent Hill House prep school in London.

As the years have passed, our minds have often turned back to this long seven-month absence and particularly, when Gordon was leaving us to go and work in America after he graduated from university, both Marjory and I realised that we were to blame at the time for failing to examine the situation carefully enough. We also realised we could go on feeling bad about this for the rest of our lives, or we could ask forgiveness.

We did ask forgiveness of God, and we felt forgiven. We also asked our son to forgive, and believe that he did. Our dutiful natures had blinded us to something that was of equal importance to the mission we were pursuing. Had we pondered long enough when the Mackays made their generous offer, we might have seen that Marjory at any rate could have returned to Britain earlier.



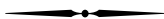
As well as being warmly welcomed into the arms of my family, many of whom had not had the chance to meet her, Marjory met some of my oldest acquaintances. At a supper party in the home of one of my schoolfriends, Marjory, in a conversational gambit, said that she understood 'Gordon was something of a rascal in his young days.' 'That's not the half of it!' one of them responded.

One evening in the home of the Federal Minister for Education, Kim Beazley, with whom we were staying while in Canberra, was especially memorable. I'd kept in touch with Kim ever since our first

encounter in 1946, and he and Betty (who had also attended Modern School) were always gathering people together who could benefit from meeting each other. Despite the official Labor Party policy against Australian participation in the Vietnam War, he had us regale a company of his colleagues of our experiences in Asia. The party included Paul Keating, Prime Minister after Bob Hawke, Bill Hayden, who was later Governor General, and a number of other ministers.

We were glad to note that in due course the policy of the government began to change towards South Vietnam. Kim himself put all the Asian students in Australia at the time on full scholarship, and there was a marked change of policy as humanitarian needs were heeded and refugees welcomed. Other policies introduced by Kim in later years are well documented in Mike Brown's book, *No Longer Down Under*. It was Kim's conviction that full education provision be made available to Australian Aboriginal peoples, and his work for the Aboriginal community was particularly cited when he was granted a doctorate by the Australian National University.

In Melbourne there was a fund-raising dinner for the journey *Song of Asia* would soon make from India. All our travelling party spoke, giving a first hand account of the revue and what they would encounter in the countries they would soon visit. My neighbour at the top table was Sir Richard Williams, my former commander-in-chief and now retired as head of Australia's civil aviation. At one point to keep conversation going, I said, 'My air force number was 427488. What was yours?' '1!' he replied.



We went on to spend a month in New Zealand, criss-crossing the North Island with different friends and colleagues and sharing in their encounters. We happened to be at the Maori Queen's Marai when Queen Elizabeth visited. We learned of the dedication of colleagues such as Mick Lennon to work for unity in the country – both Pakeha (the Maori name for the white people) and Maori. He took me to meet the future Prime Minister, whom he knew well. There were radio interviews, and a visit to the boiling mud at Rotorua, but par-

ticularly firmly and warmly imprinted on our memories is staying at Wairoa with Canon Wi Te Tau Huata and his wife Ybelle.

When we woke on our first morning in the Huata home we found a note from our hosts beside two bowls, one of cooked corn on the cob, and the other of peaches. The note read, 'Help yourselves. We have been called to a funeral' – which was some distance away in a rural parish in the hills. We learned later that the eclectic fare on their table always depended on what was given by parishioners. One day it could be abalone, another day something fresh from the meat works. That day, it was corn and peaches.

Wi had been Chaplain to the Maori battalion in Italy in the Second World War, pinned down at Monte Cassino by the Nazis encamped in the monastery above. One night we were at the reunion of the battalion and Wi told the gathering about his experience of change of heart at Caux just a few months earlier. On the plane journey to the conference, he had looked down on Monte Cassino from the aircraft and vowed he would not speak to Germans if he met any at Caux. It still felt like only yesterday that he had buried countless comrades. However the Spirit, as only the Spirit can, worked in his heart as a German lady spoke from the platform expressing sorrow for the conflict and asking forgiveness. He found his hatred melting away. That evening in Wairoa, nearly 30 years after Monte Cassino, there were tears, and many painful memories expressed at the reunion. We sang action songs, which Wi was a master in leading, and we also began to understand the indomitable nature of the Maori people.

A very significant event was being planned in South Africa and although we longed to go straight home and felt we had travelled enough, we had responded positively to the invitation of our colleagues there, to call in on our homeward journey. They were preparing their first international, multi-racial conference with government permission, a bold event in the still-apartheid era.

Chief Ministers of the Homelands, some of whom had been to Caux through the invitations of our South African friends, gave keynote addresses. Following the conference, we visited the Homelands. Zulu Chief Buthelezi, perhaps the most colourful and

best-known of these leaders, had not himself been to Caux, but received a group of us and his eloquence and vision was impressive. He even joked about my name, saying, 'So, you are a wise man from the west!'

Besides Durban, Cape Town, Johannesburg and Stellenbosch, we had the great pleasure of visiting the mountain country of Swaziland. We stayed with a local family, a bus company operator and his wife, in the capital Mbabane. In Pretoria, our hosts were Judge and Mrs Trengove. He had been the Prosecutor at the trial of Nelson Mandela. He spoke with respect of Mandela, who, according to the laws of the day, had been found guilty of treason.

We were deeply impressed by the representation of black and white South Africa that we met over the course of the journey, and the sincerity and shared commitment that had been built during very difficult years. George Daneel and Bremer Hofmeyr, who had a pivotal part in my life at the time of committing to God, were the architects of this landmark event. After the conference they led the travelling international conference delegation into the Kruger National Park, and we saw for ourselves the wonder of the place. Bishop Kale of Nigeria conducted a communion service for all of us under a spreading tree in the park, at one of our overnight stops. While eating dinner in the park hotel, the New Zealand waitress explained that the faces at the crack in the kitchen door were the black staff watching us eating. They had never before witnessed a multi-racial group together like this.

The next weeks of our homeward journey were spent in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Delegates from there could not attend the conference in South Africa, so it seemed only fair for us to go there and take something of the good news we had witnessed. This complex region had suffered much from colonialism, and was soon to suffer again under Mengistu. Many of the men and women of truth that we encountered while there were later imprisoned or had to escape. As with some of my friends in South-East Asia, there were extraordinary stories to unfold in their lives over the coming years. In Washington DC some time later we met one of these brave patriots working as a

taxi driver. Eventually he was able to return to Addis Ababa, and became Chief of Police.

During this time in Africa, I felt we were representing many others, trying to give our hearts to those toiling in the fields and wanting to bring back news of their heroic work and their needs to our international body. I cannot boast of or remember doing anything particularly noteworthy – but believe that our presence acted as an indication of our love, respect and concern.

When we returned to London, we pondered on all we had been privileged to experience. It had been a journey that had encompassed four continents and 13 countries in seven months. But the home-going to Tirley almost eclipsed it all.

It was a well-intentioned plan, but to leave Gordon Scott at the young age of five and a half, for so long, however well he was planned for and looked after, and loved, has often seemed to us since to have been ill-considered. True, we played a part in a number of important actions, and I picked up connections in places where I felt I had neglected people because of other immediate pressing assignments. But blood is thicker than water, and the potential effect on our own child at that time has often deeply troubled us. His headmaster said on our return, ‘He coped. I watched him carefully. I knew he was missing you. But the fact that he coped means he will cope in the future.’ He had real respect for him.

The little fellow’s first words to me were, ‘You’ve been away a long time.’

I3

A London Life

1974-96



A Home as a Meeting Place – Friendships that Inspired – Moving On

From the mid-Seventies to the late Nineties we lived in London and were privileged to host some of the different homes that were part of our MRA headquarters in Britain. I felt that during those years I was using everything I had that God gave me, and they were among the most exhilarating and fascinating of my whole life.

We spent the first seven of these years living at 44 Charles Street, just round the corner from 45 Berkeley Square, the house that had been given to Frank Buchman which I had come to know so well during the war. It was one of the last of several neighbouring properties that had been sacrificially purchased or donated by their owners during the war years, when owning a house in that part of London was a gamble, given the amount of bombing going on, but when prices were a long way below pre-war market value.

We approached our tenure of 44 Charles Street with several considerations: first, we wanted to receive and entertain people we knew, and their guests, the Scots and Australians, South-East Asians from countries I knew, and to invite our colleagues committed to work with people of the world of Islam to host their guests there.

Secondly, we wanted to offer support and friendship to the men and women who were some of the nation's leaders. This intention inspired a series of 'working dinners' and lunches. Having a team of young people sharing the house with us made this initiative possible. Ever since our marriage we had felt committed to do our best to raise up a younger generation who would come to take responsibility for

Moral Re-Armament, we had an extraordinary succession of new colleagues from many nations into our household, just as we had done with our co-hosts at Tirley Garth. Many of those co-ordinating today's Initiatives of Change, as Moral Re-Armament is now called, are of a group who spent time in such an environment in Britain during those years.

Our third particular consideration was to continue to try and reach the leadership of labour and management in Britain, continuing unabated that crucial work with industry.

A visit to London by the King and Queen of Romania, then living in exile in Switzerland – King Michael had survived a Nazi regime and a Soviet-inspired coup – was one of our first opportunities to invite a wide variety of London life to hear about the work MRA was doing. Frank Buchman, who had befriended the King and his mother Queen Helen before the war, had given them a permanent invitation to stay at 45 Berkeley Square when in London. At the time we moved to London, Berkeley Square was being readied for sale, its set-up really too labour-intensive for both the modern age and our resources, and its setting somewhat at odds with today's more informal approach to life. It was suggested that 44 Charles Street might become the home to welcome the King and Queen in future.

Their many visits in years to come were both warm, personal encounters and catalysts for a series of memorable meetings and occasions, with Their Majesties in turn learning about the endeavours of people in a wide cross-section of society. For example, knowing that the King was passionate about flying I was able to bring the World War II Air Force hero, Douglas Bader, to visit him. Being cousins on both sides to the British royals also brought them to London for our Royal Family's great occasions, and from Charles and Diana's famous celebrations Queen Anne brought wedding cake and balloons, which festooned the hall. The Cold War years were very difficult ones for Their Majesties, and they worked hard to maintain contact with their own people outside their country. The return of the King to Bucharest after the fall of Ceaucescu, on the invitation of the people, was magnificent and moving.

44 Charles Street had spacious reception rooms and some of the working dinners were quite large, bringing together people who might not normally have the chance to meet but who were eminent in their respective fields. When Archie Mackenzie returned from his senior post as British Representative on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in New York, we had three dinners around the theme 'A new international economic order'. Archie gave a talk, then I would open the floor to comments and then invite one prominent guest to speak. A memorable contribution was made one evening by Lakhdar al-Brahimi when Algerian Ambassador in London. Now, he is Kofi Annan's representative in Afghanistan (see *Faith In Diplomacy* by A.R.K. Mackenzie). Over the course of what Archie said, a point that he would make was about the need for more honesty on the part of Western governments about discriminatory trade and shipping policies in the ongoing debate about a 'new international world economic order'. Al-Brahimi was amazed at such candour, and referred to the need he felt in turn, to address the gaps between the very rich and the very poor people in developing countries, due to tax evasion and corruption.

Some guests at these working dinners might attend several times. Among them was Lord Thomson of Fleet, owner of the *Sunday Times*, *The Times* and other newspapers – a big player in the British establishment, originally the son of a Toronto barber. I came to know him through the auspices of Dr James Dyce, a Harley Street dental surgeon with a long Oxford Group connection. On arriving in London Marjory and I had offered to assist Jim and his wife in their endeavours to befriend and support those at a high level of public life, many of whom were his patients.

One night we invited Lord Thomson to join a distinguished company of trade union leaders and industrialists for a discussion. At one point he said, 'The trouble with this country is that everybody is content to let others rise to the top.' Sir George Smith, former Chairman of the TUC, interrupted and said, 'Is there room for more than one Lord Thomson at the top?' 'Well,' drawled the press magnate, 'I never had much difficulty getting there.'

Thomson's board of directors gave Archie Mackenzie a luncheon, at which I first met William Rees-Mogg – then editor of *The Times*. He became a good friend, and often dined with us during the following years. Conversations developed along numerous tracks regarding current affairs, the economy and faith. On one occasion he came to address a gathering on what his faith meant to him. He had asked me why it was that so many people opposed the work of MRA, for it was not hard in a number of circles in British life to encounter suspicion and a lack of understanding about what we were trying to do. I told him something of the known opposition we had had in the past, and he printed an article by Garth Lean opposite *The Times's* leader page on the centenary of Frank Buchman's birth.

I felt it a privilege to see and feel the melting of prejudice towards the great work started by Frank Buchman. There will always be the battle between good and evil, and MRA's work will probably always encounter persecution and prejudice. It's certainly had dedicated opponents – which has to an extent affected our readiness to take risks. It has certainly affected the publicity that we have received, or lack of it. Prejudice spreads in insidious ways.

While I was the Secretary of the Oxford Group, we were approached by the BBC, who had a budget to make a documentary film about us. The producer/director came to Tirley and interviewed the pioneers, such as Loudon Hamilton. But some senior friends were fearful, quoting me instances when we had been knifed in the back. I felt we should be trusting, and I liked the producer. But in the event, he was promoted and his successor did not want to take the project forward.

MRA's work has so often been misunderstood, its ideas misquoted, and even been violently opposed by those who would like to see it destroyed that it is very gratifying that attempts to demolish negative positions have borne fruit, for the sake of generations to come. The friendships that developed in the Eighties and Nineties with some of the extraordinary personalities that I have been privileged to come into contact with, best serve to describe that the work with which we

have been engaged has found renewed understanding and mutual respect.

Graham Hill, the racing driver who was later killed in an air-crash, was one participant in our working dinners, as well as Graham Leonard, Bishop of London. Archbishop Runcie also came to a lunch, to meet Cardinal König of Vienna, whom he greatly admired. Others included our old friends Seamus and Cathy Graham, who later became the Duke and Duchess of Montrose. Seamus farms on Loch Lomondside in Scotland. Another was the Speaker of the House of Commons, Bernard Wetherill, always a warm-hearted contributor to discussion. He would come in gaiters, silver buckles and lace ruffle, and would have to return to the House for the vote at 9pm. And another, Frank Field, was Pensions Minister in the early Blair government. The idea with these occasions was to have a breadth of experience, and a mix of personalities and viewpoints. Reverend Dr Fraser McCluskie of St Columba's Church of Scotland in London took issue with Dick Cosens, a colleague of ours with shop-floor experience who argued against the Thatcher government's approach to trade union matters. Dick had prefaced his comments by addressing the minister as 'Your Reverence'. McCluskie replied with vigour, 'First of all, the name is Fraser, and I am not very reverent. Secondly, in these matters there is a time for grace and a time for the law. This is the time for the law.'

One colleague, Bill Connor, had befriended the Palestinian Khalid Al-Hassan, leader of the 'pragmatic wing' of the PLO, and an architect of the 'two-state' solution. These were the years when most western governments officially shunned Palestinian politicians. But Bill knew him as a man of great calibre and integrity, and believed that the future of the Middle East would depend on that kind of leadership. He often saw him privately in London, and visited him in Beirut and Tunis. Our neutral premises meant he could be introduced to people like Donald Coggan, formerly Archbishop of Canterbury, and William Rees-Mogg. Bill's mission to support Arab countries, so long fought over by the European powers, in finding their place as partners in the new world order, was a cause we wanted a forum like 44 Charles

Street and its facilities to support. I was honoured when in 1983 Bill asked me to accompany him to Egypt, Kuwait and Lebanon. It is a mission of reconciliation that continues and is still so sorely needed today.

Under the title 'The moral regeneration of Britain', we had four working dinners when Cardinal Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, was our chief guest. I had asked him whether he would care to meet Bill Jordan, then President of the Engineering Workers Union. The Cardinal responded enthusiastically. Peregrine Worsthorne, Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, stressed that the Church needed to give a lead in matters of moral regeneration. The Cardinal replied, 'Your editorials are far more use than anything I can say. You have the best pulpit in the country.' The Cardinal said afterwards to me as he left, 'Pressmen think it is everyone's fault but theirs.'

On another occasion I told the Cardinal that my friends and I were deriving much from reading his book, *Searching for God*. 'I am glad,' he said. 'What did you think of the chapter on theology?' I hesitated, and before I could reply he said, 'I don't think much of it myself. When you become Archbishop three things happen. You have your portrait painted. You are interviewed by the media. And you are supposed to write a book. The first two are straightforward, but the third was harder. But then I had the idea of digging out my filed copies of the talks I gave to the students when I was Abbot of Ampleforth School. These talks are the book.'

Graham Turner, the journalist and writer, was several times co-host at these dinner occasions, and would bring Fleet Street personalities and public figures he met through his investigative writing. At our next occasion with Cardinal Hume, which mostly featured men and women of the press, the Cardinal declined starting off the conversation as he wanted to hear what the other guests were thinking. After he had made his own contribution, the Editor of the *Independent*, Andreas Whittam-Smith, and the head of religious broadcasting at the BBC, Ernest Rea, joined in with vigour. As the Cardinal was leaving he said to Marjory and me, 'Let's have a dinner on neat religion – we have had the press, we have had industrial people, let's gather the

senior clergy of the country.’ I said, ‘You mean whisky without the soda?’ ‘Yes’, he said, ‘invite the Archbishop of Canterbury, the head of the Methodists, the Chief Rabbi, and the others.’

We worked to assemble a very impressive dinner party, including Shaikh Mohammed Aboulkhair Zaki Badawi, a Chief Imam of the London Central Mosque and Principal of the Muslim College in Ealing, London. But in the event Cardinal Hume himself was called to Rome so could not be with us. I asked if we could invite Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, now Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, then Bishop of Arundel and Brighton, in his place, and he agreed. This was the start of another privileged friendship, together with that of the Bishop of London who became Archbishop of York, David Hope. His successor in London, Richard Chartres, was for a time rector of St Stephen’s, Rochester Row. As time went on, he would join us and others of our close colleagues he had got to know well at the dinner table, and has also given us counsel. He opened and blessed MRA’s new London centre at nearby Greencoat Place.

They were times of the heart as well as the head. My own purpose in inviting these people was to give support and appreciation to them in the job they were doing for the country, not to involve them in our programme. A letter I received after one dinner read, ‘I think it is an excellent idea for you to bring together people who do not see each other very often, and in this way encourage creative and moral leadership in those who may be in a position to influence current trends in our society.’

The dinners were often a starting point for rich new fellowship, stimulating new interests for all parties. For instance, it was Cardinal Hume who made the point that we must invite the Chief Rabbi, Immanuel Jacobowitz, to a religious leaders’ dinner. When Lord Jacobowitz retired, I made an endeavour to meet the new Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks. First I met Rabbi Jacobs, one of his ecclesiastical cabinet, who was supportive and very responsive to our ideas, and in 1996 helped arrange for three of us to meet Dr Sacks. We invited him to visit Caux for that summer’s conference session, and he accepted.

He gave a marvellous lecture, and also led what one might call a 'spiritual time' for about 25 of us, in what had been Frank Buchman's drawing room at Caux. An Austrian colleague, Evelyn Puig, spoke of how ashamed she was of her country's Nazi past, which made a big impression on him, and led to some very heartfelt discussion about the Holocaust. There was a chance to talk to him about the opposition there had been to MRA from some of the Jewish authorities; his response was that every great movement draws strong reactions.

He quoted an ancient rabbinic teaching which says that when God mints every human being in his image, they all come out differently. 'We have to recognise that somebody can be in God's image even though he or she is not in our image.' There was no way to change the world without changing human hearts, he said, and went on to note that this 'is what has been happening here at Caux for 50 years. When we listen with the listening that comes from the heart and we speak with the words that come from the heart, then there takes place the great conversation in which, beneath the words, we hear the music of the Divine Presence. Then a miraculous thing happens. We begin to change.'

At a personal level, the encounters that began in our home often led to lasting friendships. In later years, Marjory and I lived across the road from Westminster Catholic Cathedral. Several times a week we would take a turn around the cathedral area, often after a time of prayer within. One day, as we walked along the avenue opposite Archbishop's House, the door opened and Princess Diana emerged, escorted to her car by the Cardinal. Recognising us from across the street, the Cardinal gave a cheery wave. We waved back!

At press conferences and receptions, and in particular at party conferences, I attempted to make myself known to the major political leaders, and over the course of time exchanged a few words with Prime Ministers Edward Heath, Jim Callaghan and Tony Blair. I had gone to school with Harold Wilson's cousin, and through his introduction was able to go and see him at home when he was out of office, although still attending the Lords. Brandishing his pipe and displaying all his trademark mannerisms, he seemed keen to remind me of his

achievements. Seeking to broaden the conversation a bit, I mentioned that I was always very impressed by the pioneering work of Jennie Lee, who had been in his cabinet, in founding the Open University. 'That was actually an idea of mine,' he said quickly.



When Lord Hailsham, the Lord Chancellor, rode his bike to the front door of 44 Charles Street and chained it to our iron railings, it was only one of many unexpected moments I had with him. Hailsham was another of the most impressive personalities I have ever met. He was a man of remarkable qualities, who should have been Prime Minister. My introduction to him was again from Jim Dyce, his dentist, who would sometimes invite his patients to breakfast before their treatment. It was at one of these breakfasts that I met both Selwyn Lloyd, later Speaker, and Quintin Hogg, who served as Lord Chancellor as Lord Hailsham.

He accepted a number of our invitations. He had known Peter Howard well in previous years. A great thinker, Hailsham was also a terrific conversationalist, and a commanding presence. At table one night he told the perhaps apocryphal story of how on his inaugural procession as Lord Chancellor, with all its pomp and ceremony, he spotted his brother Neil among the spectators as he crossed the Lobby that divides the Houses of Parliament. 'Neil!' he exclaimed loudly. At which point, the assembled multitude was reported to have fallen to their knees.

Over 20 years he never refused me an interview and I often took others with me on those occasions. He was always responsive to those he met. When I introduced him to the cast of *Song of Asia* the young budding Japanese politician Yukihiisa Fujita asked him, 'What would you say about the relative merits of Disraeli and Gladstone?' This was a smart political and historical question, the answer to which Fujita, until recently secretary to a member of the Japanese Diet, expected to be very revealing given Hailsham's experience and erudition. But Hailsham actually seemed a little amused by it, responding, 'If I were invited to have dinner with one of them, bearing in mind Gladstone

was an upright politician and Disraeli a clever rascal, I would certainly choose Disraeli.’

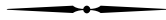
The first time Nada Middleton, who had moved with us from Tirley to London to work with me as my secretary, rang to arrange an appointment for me she asked if she could speak to Lord Hailsham’s secretary. ‘Lord Hailsham HAS no secretary’, came the reply. ‘And who are you?’ Feeling rather shaky as she realised she was talking to the great man himself, she stammered ‘I – I’m Nada Middleton.’ ‘On behalf of whom?’ he continued. She said meekly, ‘Gordon Wise.’ ‘Oh yes.’ And an interview was arranged.

He inscribed for me his book *The Sparrow’s Flight*, ‘With many good wishes prompted by our long friendship’, and his correspondence over many years was similarly hand-written, usually on note cards. The most poignant of these was after his first wife died in a riding accident in Sydney. He wrote, ‘I never knew what my darling meant to me until I lost her.’ He considered Peter Howard a great and long-standing friend, and he would say, ‘I miss him terribly’. When a few years later he agreed to make the oration at Garth Lean’s memorial service at St Bride’s, Fleet Street, we offered to drive him. In the car he suddenly said, ‘I am nervous about doing this.’ But of course he did it splendidly. It was only as I have grown older myself that I’ve realised what a deeply emotional experience it is to make speeches at the funerals of friends who have been deeply linked to one’s life and work. Once I asked what he thought about the next world. He said, ‘The sooner, the better for me – but I get so fed up with these bishops who talk about the Christian faith as if it was their own preserve. I cannot imagine a loving God who created the Buddhists and Muslims leaving them out of His plan.’

While the years of forging these sorts of friendships and extending the kind of hospitality we did over these years was exhilarating, inspiring and rewarding, we of course faced challenges. Marjory would constantly express to me her feeling of inadequacy in hosting such eminent people. I said how well and naturally she did it, but it was a trial for her and each occasion took fresh dedication. She would say, ‘I’m happy to cook the meal whole-heartedly, but to converse with

some of these brilliantly intellectual guests is more than I can do.' I must have given her a hard time. One evening, she simply decided to push her chair back and let the conversation roll between Lord Hailsham on her right and Kim Beazley, still Minister of Education in Australia, on her left. That was her solution, she said. But of course there were many with whom she was completely at ease.

Towards the end of his time as Lord Chancellor, Marjory and I took Clara Severeins, a young Princeton graduate who was staying with us, to visit Hailsham in his chambers. He charmed Clara by asking her to pour the tea.



There were many personal contacts with individuals who were not household names or captains of industry, but who mattered just as much. One day I had a phone call from a colleague in Sheffield asking if I would go to the Westminster Theatre to meet a man whom he and I had known in years gone by. We were both aware that this old friend had met a crisis in his life. I arrived at the theatre at the end of the matinée, a bit late for seeing everyone leave, and I initially feared I had missed seeing our friend. I could see no sign of him in the foyer. I went in to the theatre itself and searched the stalls, and then the circle, and saw him at the back of the circle, sitting alone with his head in his hands. I made my way to him and touched his sleeve, and we went to a small quiet office and he poured out his heart. Something in the play – Peter Howard's last, *Happy Deathday* – had touched him very deeply. He rededicated his life to his Maker and became a new man, following that experience.

As in all our ventures since committing our lives to MRA's work on a full-time basis, we were supported through the generosity of those who wanted to support what we were doing. Especially as a young family, we were particularly grateful to several individuals whose gifts sustained us over the years. One old associate of mine, who helped support us through a trust he administered, was Harold Dodd, a distinguished doctor with a noted private practice. When Harold had not long retired and was doing part-time teaching, I went

to tea with him and Mary in their charming flat. While we shared many of the same beliefs and aims, it had to be said that their background and assumptions were somewhat different from my own.

On this occasion, our conversation ranged over our mutual friends and what they were doing now. As she was pouring tea, Mary said, 'Why on earth are Roly and Mary Wilson going to live in Australia?' Roly and Mary had for many years run their own home in London, with many of MRA's new trainees passing through its doors, and as well as being my predecessor as Secretary of MRA's legal body in Britain, Roly was one of the Oxford Group's earliest participants. I replied, 'Well, their only daughter has married an Australian and they live in Canberra. So Roly and Mary will live there and will see their grandchildren grow up.'

'But what will Mary do?' asked Mary Dodd.

'What do you mean?' I replied, puzzled.

'Well, Mary is such a cultured person.'

I stuttered, 'That hadn't occurred to me, in that way, I mean. We do have a lovely Opera House in Sydney, as well as culture and arts centres in each city. Nellie Melba was an Australian. We do have some things going for us. I think Mary will make out all right.'

Our friendship, and their support, stretched over many years. When Harold got to a ripe age and was in a nursing home, I asked Mary if I might go to see him. 'Of course,' she said, 'he will be glad to see you. But don't be surprised if his memory has faded.' So I went. He was frail and I found I had to be quite inventive to connect with what he was saying as he tried to remember old friends. When the time came to leave it was evening, so I waited for the nurse to tuck him into bed. When I offered to say a prayer it was welcomed. Then as I made my farewells, he said, 'I'm sorry I'm not myself today. You see, Gordon Wise came to see me...' All I could say was, 'I quite understand.'



One of the more time-consuming tasks of our Oxford Group Council of Management is to steward our resources and properties wisely. We

are responsible to the Charity Commissioners for our proper use of donated funds. Decisions had to be reached over the years regarding the sale and purchase of properties, according to our group needs. These were never easy decisions because we held different views representing different functions of our work, and deeply held convictions about how to proceed into the future. We have always been a wide variety of types of personalities, even if we have all sought the mind of God.

But times do change and when it came to decisions regarding our London headquarters at the Westminster Theatre it took a very long time to come to the decision to sell it. There was the school of thought that felt when we no longer had plays to draw the audiences, it was right to sell and buy smaller premises. Then there was the group committed for life to the performing and visual arts that have played such a large and vital role in reaching hearts and encouraging spiritual change. Sometimes, the two seemed irreconcilable.

But what was important to me was to try to maintain the cohesion of the fellowship, respect each other's various commitments, and move on to the next phase with a united heart and mind.

The lease on 44 Charles Street had been sold some years before and we had moved to a smaller (but still sizeable) MRA home just around the corner from the Westminster Theatre in the Victoria area of London. This house was our home for six years. It was a house that had once been visited by President Kennedy when owned by his sister-in-law. Together with several close colleagues we tried to turn it into a home for people to live and work in a family atmosphere. It was here as well as at Charles Street that many of the encounters and gatherings that I have described took place.

After that period we moved to a smaller apartment nearby, in Morpeth Terrace, in the parliamentary area of London where we continued to host events that were in many ways the heirs of developments from the Charles Street days. The flat overlooked the Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral. Only shortly before I turned 70 did Marjory and I move into what we could really call our 'own' first home, in Taplow, a small village outside London in Buckinghamshire

where a whole new world of friendships was to unfold. For some years we divided our time between Taplow and Morpeth Terrace. But the time came when we felt we could not keep up the pace of London life, and we should make the most of the riches of our new environment. On a May morning in 1996, when London had its spring blossoms, but not its warmth, I left Morpeth Terrace for nearly the last time, to walk across my favourite London parks, Green Park and St James's.

Wanting to play a part in our local community, I had for some years chaired the Morpeth Mansions Residents' Association. I was proposed by the outgoing chair, our neighbour Lavender Patten, who remained a supportive associate, and we were charmed to be shown Government House in Hong Kong just before her husband Chris presided over the handover to China. My role proved to be challenging when news came of a plan to develop the undistinguished rear of the cathedral grounds opposite. On one hand, due to our friendship with Cardinal Hume, I felt I couldn't join in a residents' petition. On the other, I had to tell him that there were valid reasons for some of the objections. The scheme was passed, however – they did have need to extend the choir school. And I was the only resident invited to the opening of the new building.

As I set out past the cathedral on my walk, the air was still. I could hear Big Ben chiming as I crossed Victoria Street, still a stirring sound even to someone who has known it for several decades. As I passed the gates to Buckingham Palace, police were halting traffic, and I spotted motorcycle outriders escorting a gleaming black Daimler with President Jacques Chirac of France visible in the back. The French tricolour festooned the Mall.

I was heading to Piccadilly, to buy an airline ticket. The route from Victoria to Mayfair through Green Park is familiar from many years of crossing it daily from Charles Street to the Westminster Theatre in Palace Street.

All sorts of memories came crowding back. Swinging along Piccadilly, with Berkeley Street on the left, leading to Berkeley Square, the Ritz Hotel on the right reminded me of going to the

lobby kiosk with my nine-year old son to try and find Bassett's Liquorice Allsorts, because he wanted the tokens on a packet for a competition. Further on, the Fountain Restaurant at Fortnum & Mason was a favourite spot for treats, and Hatchards for book browsing. In my early years I did my banking at the Bank of New South Wales in Sackville Street, and it was off to the left in Savile Row that my lighter-than-navy blue RAAF officer's suit had been tailored in 1945.

Returning through St James's brought instant recall of touring a Japanese family around London, and the wife, Mrs Kitaguchi, getting caught up in the changing of the guard when she was trying to get herself photographed standing alongside a guardsman. Then on to St James's Park, with all manner of birds on the lake, and memories of Gordon running round it as a child, and strolls with Marjory at the end of the summer days.

A lot had happened to me in London since the day when, as an RAAF pilot on leave, I first approached the House of Commons through that park, and I realised that despite many travels and a homeland in another hemisphere, this city is where I had spent nearly a third of my life, all told. But I knew that although we had just concluded the sale of the last of MRA's larger homes there, there were no regrets at giving up any of these handsome properties. The ink is scarcely dry on one page before you start writing on another.

I4

Our American Challenge

1975-2002



*'Who Will Be Friends to America?' – A New Generation –
The Newtons' House by the Roadside*

As mentioned earlier, while I was in Asia in the early Sixties, a new focus developed for MRA's work in America, harnessing the creative talent of a generation. It was very much inspired by the conviction of Peter Howard and his concern for the youth of the Sixties. He had recently undertaken a tour of some American universities, giving a challenge that engaged the sharp minds in his audiences. This new focus began as a musical show that toured nationwide, and then worldwide, called *Sing Out*. After the death of Peter Howard the musical became *Up With People*, a whole educational programme developed around a show that shared the same name, and was led by Blanton Belk.

There followed a serious split in the world work of Moral Re-Armament. Over the next years there was a radical restructuring of MRA's work in the United States, part of which also saw the Mackinac conference centre converted into a college and eventually sold, together with a number of other properties that had been donated for the work of MRA.

When *Up With People* in its own right became the main preoccupation of our American friends, we in Britain quite erroneously closed our hearts to them. We didn't feel that the show and its programme alone preserved the essence and the breadth of the work Frank Buchman had started and Peter Howard had continued, but in taking what we in Britain felt was the high moral ground we did not

take enough trouble to assess this with those involved. There could be many lessons learned all round. But it is more than I can do to give the whole picture. Suffice it to say that as a result of this split, there was a period of ten years or so when we did not have communion with these erstwhile colleagues, nor appreciate what the United States was going through in those turbulent years.

A turning point for me came while driving with a former American naval captain, one of our hosts during a visit to Washington DC in 1975. He told us he had had charge of a heavy cruiser off the coast of Vietnam, while at the same time his children were involved in the anti-Vietnam War demonstrations on university campuses. After returning home, he retired early. This gave me a personal understanding of America's agony.

I came to realise that we owed friendship of the deepest kind to those we knew there, who had lived through the Vietnam War, the Watergate crisis and Nixon's downfall. Instead we had become frozen in our stance because of what had happened in our work, and hadn't allowed ourselves to feel for them. Coupled with this was a thought of Marjory's, 'Everyone expects so much from America, or blames her. But who will be friends to America?' From this grew our decision to make ourselves available for work there.

Several people truly took it upon themselves to mend the rift that had opened up, in particular Paul Campbell and Bill Jaeger. And one American couple, Jim and Ellie Newton, declared that their home in Florida was 'a house by the roadside where anyone could drop in' – and all sorts of people did just that.

One of those who 'dropped in' regularly in Florida in winter months was Ken Twitchell, one of the earliest collaborators of Frank Buchman's. From a patrician Princeton background, he and his wife carried on Buchman's pioneering work in Oxford during the Thirties, and I had first met him when I went to New York in uniform in 1945. He had teased me ever since about the tuna sandwich and chocolate malted milk incident. Ken and I had long, long beach walks by the Newtons' home, and opened our hearts to each other after years of sad separation.

Together with Garrett Stearley, another pioneer, he felt there were important strands of the work Frank had initiated that had not remained at the core of the work as it developed as Up With People, and that responsibility for these elements needed to be handed on to a group of independent and dynamic men and women, strong in their own faith and vision. Ken and Garrett wanted those ready to make a new start in America to have the opportunity to do so, but it was a complicated diplomatic and legal situation.

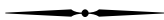
The revival of these friendships led to a meeting with Blanton Belk, the overall director of Up With People. Over a long evening with him and his wife Betty, it became clear that we saw the history from different angles. It was a chilly start, but over the years it was a friendship that warmed, as it did too with him and Bill and Clara Jaeger.

Another couple who had undergone much searching of heart and spirit were John and Denise Wood, early Oxford Group stalwarts alongside Buchman, and faithful to all who came their way. I had been close to them in the Forties, and it was a joy that we found our friendship could blossom again. They are among the most effective, affectionate and faithful friends we have.

It has been an ongoing process. Even in the late Nineties I felt impelled to write a note from my heart to Morris Martin, the private secretary and very long-time companion to Frank Buchman. An Englishman and a scholar from Oxford, he and his first wife, Enid, gave years of selfless service before returning to academia. I wanted to thank him for all he made possible for so many years at Frank Buchman's side. The exchanges of the heart that followed brought fresh perspective all round.

Much more could be chronicled about the rebirth of our relationship with America and American colleagues. As Secretary of the Oxford Group in Britain I felt it not only my desire but also duty to try to heal the divisions, but I know I am only one of many who have reached out and been part of this renewal. Eventually, MRA was incorporated with its own new board, while the work of Up With People continued independently. I was invited to join the new Board in 1976, which necessitated at least two visits to the States a year, over the next 20 years.

One colleague, a Scot, Stuart Smith, served as MRA's secretary for many of these years of transition, and his wife, a Californian, was a member of the newly-formed Board. They were devoted friends, giving of their wisdom and generosity well into their senior years. Stuart used to call me at all hours of the day and night in all sorts of places while I was on the American Board of Management – he always wanted me to be informed. Once, while staying in a remote Scottish village, to reassure him that I reciprocated his desire to keep in touch I walked a mile and a half to the local phone box. Picking up the phone in Washington DC he was very entertained to hear that I had picked my way through a flock of grazing Highland sheep in order to speak to him.



In the late Seventies, we undertook a long visit to the western United States with Bill and Clara Jaeger. We went first to Tucson, Arizona, then to Los Angeles, drove to San Francisco, then flew to Portland and on to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St Paul. There had been a long break in my knowledge of these places. Gradually, we were rebuilding our old friendships and rediscovering our basic common path.

One very colourful memory is of an appointment with Bill Bradley, Mayor of Los Angeles. I was driving but found the highways very different from 30 years before. We approached the City Hall with its tall spires and turned off at what seemed to be the appropriate junction but found ourselves mistakenly heading for that famous HOLLYWOOD sign that you see in the movies. Marjory's map reading could not keep up with the speed of the road. How to get off this one and turn back to City Hall, whose spire was disappearing behind us at a lower level? We managed somehow but with no time to spare, so I deposited Bill and Marjory at the front door and found a parking spot in a multi-storey car park. Clara opted to stay behind in the car as she felt tired. When I was shown into the mayoral office, I discovered the large mayor sitting with Marjory on a large black leather sofa. Bill was on an adjacent one, and in full flight. On hearing me enter he paused, looked up and said, 'Gordon, tell the

mayor about the Zimbabwe situation.’ The object of the meeting was to invite this well-known American to attend Caux the following summer, where a delegation from newly-independent Zimbabwe would be asking the world for its support as a new nation was brought to birth after the bloodshed of civil war. I was breathless but did my best.

When we left his office I followed various landmarks back to the car, but it wasn’t where I thought it would be in the car park. Then I saw that the City Hall had four identical arched entrances, one on each side, and across the square from each was a multi-storey car park. Even the landscaping in between was identical. We ran up and down staircases, looking for familiar reference points – with Marjory and me concerned about Bill overexerting himself considering his less-than-trim frame and the cloth coat and felt hat he was wearing. In the third, almost empty, car park was the car. Just where I’d left it – and with Clara asleep inside! Later, Bill said to Marjory, ‘I’ll go with you anywhere to see any mayor any day.’



As ever in the work I’ve felt called to, there seemed to be much more than coincidence powering some of the connections we made. On one of my early journeys to Washington, I had the pleasure of the company of Leslie Fox, the very experienced Treasurer of the Oxford Group in Britain who had been invited to advise the new American legal body. We had much to mull over together because of the task ahead. We shared thoughts from our notebooks, and we no doubt had a time of quiet and pondered further some deeper matters. We were not paying much attention, other than initial greeting, to the lady sitting beside us. But after some hours she leant over to Leslie and said, ‘Excuse me, I want you to know that I am in the Oxford Group too. I have been since the Thirties. I am Juliet Boobbyer’s aunt.’ Juliet is the daughter of my wartime hosts, Lord and Lady Rennell, and was then as she is now, a close associate. She married Brian Boobbyer. ‘I saw that you were “sharing your guidance” with each other,’ said the lady, ‘and knew I must introduce myself.’

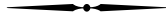
We learned later how she had invited George Freeman, an elderly American whose work had been devoted to the trade union movement for many years, to speak at the retirement community where she lived. He spoke very fully and freely about his life and what his experience of change through discovering the ideas of MRA had been. He always tended to be quite blunt, both about his past and how amazing it was that a spiritual change could have made him take a different direction. At the end of his talk a lady in the audience said to him, 'I have been praying for sinners all my life, but this is the first time I have met one!'

At first our visits to the United States in the mid-Seventies were to gatherings that the new Board of Directors of MRA called to bring together new acquaintances and people of years-long links with our work. These were touching and wonderful times, and we felt part of something new being born. We heard pleas for help and we learned of courageous initiatives in the Port of Baltimore, for instance, and in the old Confederate capital, Richmond, Virginia. But of all the places we visited there over the next 20 years it was New York that was to become almost a second home to us. We loved the bustle, the corner shops, the non-stop life, the friends we made, and lived and worked with, endeavouring to support them in what they had undertaken. It was thrilling that among our new colleagues in the next generation, what had happened over the previous 30 years need not be a burden: it was the future they were looking to. The goals they saw as their mission were new, ranging from the Hope in the Cities programme to fascinating work at the UN.

We felt great sadness when after some time another rift took place. At its climax, a couple very precious to us took a different path, and the division has grieved us deeply. We wish we could have done more. I always sought to encourage, and have seen people, mostly younger than myself, doing great things I had never done, but which were the things that they saw needed doing.

I would like to pay tribute to the solid hard work and commitment of friends across America who brought regeneration to our common work, and who reached out with genuine care to the rest of the world.

They have often provided personnel, funds and offered training in potential leadership to countries crying out for help.



Our renewed involvement with the work of MRA in America owed so much to the continual sponsorship and encouragement of Jim and Ellie Newton and their 'house by the roadside'. Over the course of their long and eventful lives they became almost legendary personalities. Jim's book, *Uncommon Friends*, describes his youthful friendships with Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, Alexis Carrell and Charles Lindbergh, who was his and Ellie's best man. There was ample material for another book about Jim himself, for his 96 years were colourfully spent.

He had encountered some of Buchman's earliest collaborators when he was a salesman in his twenties. As his career progressed he became the right-hand man of Harvey Firestone, who was grooming Jim to be President of the Firestone rubber tyre empire. Firestone admired Jim's innovative approach – for instance, when choosing locations for Firestone retail stores, he would hire a plane and fly over the town or city in question, observing which intersections seemed to have the most traffic, then chose from among them the spot to locate the store. But then Jim asked for a year's leave of absence 'to let my soul catch up with my body'. That single year became 60, and during many of them he played a vital part in a number of MRA's campaigns.

At a critical time for American industry in the build-up of production to provide the sinews of war in the late Thirties and early Forties, Jim and a Pennsylvanian steel industry man, Charles Haines, pioneered programmes for building teamwork in industry. Then Jim served his country in uniform as an officer in charge of armaments. In peacetime, he resumed his MRA work with industry, not least in the American airlines industry. On hearing later of Jim's wider work, Henry Ford said, 'Jimmie, you did the right thing.'

Ellie Newton died only recently, at the age of 104. She was the first woman to work full-time with Buchman's early team, and described some of her experiences in a memoir called *I Always Wanted*

Adventure. Their marriage of 55 years was a saga in itself, with stormy times at the start – for each was of mature years and used to deciding things their own way. But it was a romance to crown all romances. Both of them always represented the truly young at heart, were great lovers of life and of people, convivial to the Nth degree. They made everyone feel special.

I first met them when they came to join those of us working in India in late 1953. We were together in Bangkok at a conference hosted by the Prime Minister, Field Marshal Pibul Songgram. Jim liked to recall in later years how I parted the hedge behind where we were sitting at the reception venue to show him a row of armed and manned tanks, held in reserve in case there was trouble. Songgram had once before been deposed in a coup led by his military associates and was taking no chances. As Marjory came to get to know the Newtons, Jim would recall memories from that Asian era. Once when walking along a Bombay street he remembered having felt a tug on his jacket and a little voice saying, ‘No Momma, no Poppa.’ He said he turned round, expecting to see a street urchin asking for money, to discover me!

During MRA’s European post-war reconciliation work Jim was an enthusiastic participant. But a close Swiss American friend who was alongside him says, ‘I don’t think languages were one of Jim’s strong points, other than his straightforward and sometimes very thoughtful and eloquent English. But he would pick up a phrase, in French or German, and make an English pun or joke of it. Thus ‘*Danke viel mals*’ – German for ‘Thank you very much’ – emerged from Jimmy’s lips as ‘Dunk a fieldmouse!’ If he felt strongly on the matter, this became ‘Dunk a coupla fieldmouses!’

I renewed my friendship with Jim only after many years when he and Ellie came to Caux in the latter part of the Seventies. Jim had returned to his family’s business in South West Florida, and grown it over the years into one of the Fort Meyers area’s biggest real estate developers. A number of their former MRA colleagues had joined them in the area, particularly during the winter, once the main focus of the American campaign had become Up With People, and after

the demise of Mackinac College. At a rollicking evening in London on the way home it was as though the years just melted away, and Jim was delighted to know that we were coming to America off and on.

Oftentimes an encounter, seemingly spontaneous, changes what you do for years ahead, maybe for the rest of your life. One such was a lunch in New York in 1978. We were spending the winter helping re-establish an MRA centre there, and were invited by Jim to join a luncheon as part of the events for the Lindbergh Foundation, a project he had initiated to bring together his late friend's dual interests in conservation and technology. Afterwards, he urged us to come and spend time with them in Florida, as though it was an everyday matter to do so. We thought that it was a very long distance and we would need to have a goodly time available to be worth making the journey. However, Jim was insistent that we should come, even for a few days.

Jim was very mindful of the fractured relationships within what had been the American team, not to mention with those of us from overseas and those seeking to undertake new MRA initiatives in America. He asked us to speak at a lunch, where a whole range of those they had kept touch with were gathered. As well as talking about things that I felt illustrated the work of the Spirit in our lives and the world, I felt I had to say, as someone who lived in Britain, 'We have had our differences and we have looked at things differently. But speaking for myself, I feel we have not been brothers and sisters in Christ to you in America. I am sorry.' When I had finished an old timer came to me and said, 'Well, that sure unplugged a lot of blocked arteries.' Many healing conversations followed, and we were overjoyed that so many were willing to come to the conclusion that it was a question not of who had been right, but what now was right.

This visit to Florida became the first of many almost annual visits, sometimes even twice yearly. The Newtons were always devoted friends to the people around them, and we found we just became friends of their friends. Despite still leading full and proactive lives in their real estate business, they effected countless meetings and conversations, hosting meals and Ellie pouring tea at numerous afternoon parties. Marvellous hosts, we always enjoyed their wonderfully happy,

amusing occasions, mixing people of all sorts and backgrounds and ages, and having us tell them what we had most recently been up to. They and we began to invite those we had met, some of them leading citizens, to Caux. The first year we invited 14, and all came. A number returned several times. When people first started to visit Caux from Eastern Europe, after the demise of the Soviet Union, wanting to discover new ways to live and how to build true democracy, Jim was fascinated to learn from them about their experiences, and was eager to help.

But sometimes Jim and I would just walk along the beach on the shore of the Gulf of Mexico that lapped outside their home and sit on a bench to talk. He would save up a little list of the most intimate matters of his life, in his never-ending quest for a deepening of his faith. Later on, we would come to Florida especially for these talks, and three times in the last year of his life. Touchingly, despite his myriad friendships, he told me I was his best friend and asked me to give a eulogy at his funeral. But I know I was one of many best friends.

We were quartered in a series of Gulfside apartments owned by the Newtons, first in-between lets and then more regularly at one that they wanted us to consider our home there. Jim would call and ask me to come round for a chat at a moment's notice, saying, 'Have you got time in your busy schedule?', knowing full well that our only schedule was to be available for them. As the years went on, we had his old Cadillac to use, and later I became his driver in his newer one, going uptown to Fort Myers to numerous medical or hearing aid appointments, or to visit friends as a foursome. Sometimes he would ask me to meet or farewell Anne Lindbergh, Charles's widow and an author and aviator in her own right, who continued her visits to Fort Myers Beach long after her husband's death.

He loved life, loved communicating, whether in person, by fax or telephone. I often felt that he was born not with a silver spoon in his mouth but with a phone in his tiny fist. His cheery salutations ranged from 'Hi ho' through 'Friends, Romans and Countrymen!' and 'Shall we dance?' to statements like 'I'm 200 per cent and if I felt any better I'd have to take something for it!' He also had a gift when it

came to goodbyes: in his cavalier days he'd say, 'Here's looking up your address', which later became the more universal, 'Let's get together again soon.'

The Newtons were generous to us in so many ways. Sometimes as we farewelled them after a month's stay in a guest apartment Jim would hand me a cheque and say 'Get yourself a suit', or he would give me his credit card and tell me to go to the sales. And Ellie would send Marjory to her favourite dress shop, with instructions to help herself to two dresses on Ellie's account. They even made it possible for us to get to Australia during my father's last year. Jim also saw to it that MRA USA received a generous donation each year, and this continued long after his death.

Jim Newton was baptised a Catholic back in Philadelphia, but he was a free spirit. He respected Buchman enormously but he stood his ground when he thought Buchman was wrong about something. Buchman sometimes dug his heels in, even when Jim's recommendation would have made more sense, rather than accommodate Jim's self-confident 'know-how'. Jim could be awkward, stubborn and quite unreasonable – especially when he was right about something, or indeed when he was wrong. He expected you to see the matter as he did. It took the very brave and very affectionate to point out what in his heart Jim knew perfectly well. He told me of something he'd taken to heart from what a Jesuit priest friend had told him, Jim having asked the question, 'But when does our self-will die?' The priest replied, 'About ten minutes after we do.'

An outstandingly happy time together was when we drove them from Caux through France, crossing the Channel and bringing them to London. We followed this by driving north through favourite places – Oxford, Yorkshire, the Lake District, Loch Lomondside – to spend time with old friends of theirs and ours from over the years. In Keswick we appreciated the chance to sit in the little church where Frank Buchman had experienced the presence of Christ, the springboard for his life's work. In Dunblane, Perthshire, we told the hotel owner that this was a return visit for Ellie, by then a nonagenarian. He asked how long ago she had been there before. 'Seventy years ago,'

she said. The hotel had been the venue for one of the Oxford Group's very early house parties – which Ellie called 'launching pads'.

When he was still three months off his 'graduation', as he put it, Jim wanted to clear up any lingering impaired relationships, and he talked it all over with me. The Newtons did not make enemies, but some friends were more intimate than others.

The day before he died, I phoned his secretary with a fax number for the family of Conrad Hunte, our close West Indian colleague who had died suddenly. Jim dictated a message to the bereaved family while entertaining a young couple with their new baby. When I rang the next morning to see how Jim was, and if the fax had gone, the night nurse told me he was struggling for breath. Later, the struggle intensified so much that the nurse took his hand and said, 'Jim, it's all right to go.' He squeezed her hand, and indeed he went.

15

Citizens of the World

1977-2000



*Learning about Latin America – Entering the East – A Family Journey –
The Hon. F.J.S. Wise, AO – Finding Flight Sergeant Rutherford*

During the Eighties, in the years when we visited Fort Myers Beach regularly, Miami proved a convenient jumping-off place to visit El Salvador, Jamaica and Brazil. The first two of these visits were connected with the major MRA conference at Georgetown University in 1985. Our remit was to take invitations to members of the El Salvador government, supporting the initiative of a courageous man called Eduardo Molina. One of the founders of the democratic movement there, we had met him at Caux, where we had learned of his outstanding leadership during the struggle for democracy. Eduardo and his wife took us to meet the President and several of his cabinet. All were appreciative and wished they could attend, but with the unsettled state of the country it was not wise for them to leave. There was still bloodshed, and we could hear shelling in the streets. It reminded us of our experience in Vietnam ten years before.

One day we visited a small town outside San Salvador. Its last mayor had been shot, an all too frequent occurrence for those who held office. We were due to give a slide show as part of a presentation, however the technical equipment available, or the lack of skill in using it, meant that the audience had to watch it upside down! But the commentary still worked, and it was appreciated. Eduardo spent a lot of his time in places like this, training the rural civic leadership in the democratic process. It was not an enviable life for any of them, as they

functioned in most dangerous conditions, but they heroically continued with their struggle for a free and fair country.

Our hearts were stirred by the smiles in spite of visible suffering, and the warmth of the hospitality was unforgettable. We were taken to meet the new archbishop, the successor to Archbishop Romero, who had been murdered by a military death squad while at mass. It was supposed that he supported the communists. But his concern was genuinely for the poor of the country, who always suffer in war.

We were encouraged to go to Jamaica to meet the people our colleagues Roddy and Ann Edwards were working with, and to invite them to the Georgetown conference. It was intended to be a gathering of representatives from across the world, but especially all of the Americas. The Edwards, a family of British origin, had made their beautiful property, Walkerswood, into a co-operative giving employment, purpose and a share in it for local people. The co-operative's development of cottage industries in local foodstuffs means it is now a very widely known enterprise exporting to retail outlets the world over, including our own supermarkets. With the Edwards we met Sir Howard Cooke, newly arrived as Governor General. A man of inspired leadership, he joined us in Georgetown. But as well as meeting many who ran Jamaica, we met many who didn't. And between the meetings we enjoyed the glorious coast, including the famous beach at Laughing Waters, once part of the Edwards' land, now part of a government hospitality facility and used for the famous beach scenes in the first James Bond film, *Dr No*.

The following year we were asked to go to Rio de Janeiro, for a conference of the Americas at MRA's centre near Petropolis. Rio was everything we expected – Copacabana Beach, Sugar Loaf Mountain, the enormous statue of Christ with arms outstretched, music, crowds, traffic, wealth and poverty. Over a few days in the city we imbibed this atmosphere and met people who were changing the way of life in their slums, and saw the famous docks where old friends had done so much over the years to bring a new spirit – a story recorded in the MRA film *Men of Brazil*. At Petropolis we met characters whose stories we'd heard about, including a group of Rio taxi drivers previ-

ously notorious for overcharging visitors. On applying moral principles, they formed a group through which to conduct a fair trade, and became known for excellent and honest service. We learned volumes about the challenges of Latin America.



One late afternoon in February 1991, the phone rang in our apartment on Fort Myers Beach. The caller was Paul Gundersen, an old colleague in Helsinki. He said, 'You should make a visit to the Nordic North where you have not been since the Fifties. We would host you.' Paul also said that he and Ken Rundell, who with his late wife Joan had hosted 45 Berkeley Square for a number of years, and whose second wife was Finnish, wanted to introduce us to Russia – the ancient capital of St Petersburg being the nearest large city to the Finnish border.

We accepted with alacrity, and they were generous enough to extend the invitation to Gordon and his cousin, Mary Porter, both in their early twenties. It was Gordon's last Easter holiday before he graduated from university.

Appointments were arranged for us with contacts of Paul's, and we had the joy of renewing many old friendships. An extraordinary moment was speaking on the phone to Kirsti Hakkarinen, with whom I had visited Arthur Horner's family so many times nearly 40 years before. She lived up country. Twice she said, 'I don't believe it!'

Then we boarded a Russian train for Leningrad, as it was still called at that time, a four-hour journey. It was the era of Gorbachev, after a number of reforms had been instituted but before the old system fully collapsed. The forbidding Soviet-era hotel we stayed in still had muscular women posted at the ends of the corridors on every floor, keeping note of the movements of all the guests.

It was a delight to visit the Hermitage museum, stuffed with its art treasures. But it was Rembrandt's 'The Return of the Prodigal Son' that made an indelible impression on my mind. This was a time when there was tension in my heart and difficulty towards my son: this

magnificent depiction of a father's acceptance of his best-loved child was a salutary reminder to me to offer unconditional love without judgment. I found that God gave this gift to me, and that the tension melted away.

We attended the ballet in the historic Kirov Theatre, followed by dinner in the home of a Russian family. It was an education to enter their austere and somewhat dilapidated-looking apartment block off a wide avenue, then find the warmth of a family home where no effort had been spared to entertain us, despite what we saw as a real lack of foodstuffs and creature comforts in the shops. Another touching eye-opener was to enter a church that had just celebrated the Orthodox Easter. We did not know what to believe about the practice of Christian faith in this country. But there was an Easter garden, life size – rocks, tomb and everything else – retelling the Resurrection of Christ. A guide took Marjory by the arm to make sure she had seen that 'He is risen'. It was the revealing of a mysterious world to us, closed to the West since 1945 by the Iron Curtain.

In the spring of the following year, after the 'Velvet Revolution' that saw the writer Vaclav Havel become Czechoslovakia's elected leader, a call came from another old colleague, Jerry von Teuber. Now living in California, he was by descent a baron of the old Czech lands. He invited Patrick Colquhoun and me to accompany him to Prague, and took us to the castle where his grandfather had lived. It was now a hospice for retarded children. Although titles remained abolished, the new regime had granted families such as his the right to reclaim their property. But he preferred to leave it in the hands of the state, for he could see that it was providing a needed home for these children. A poignant moment was listening to the perfection of their orchestra, which moved Jerry, Patrick and me deeply.



Our first visit to Australia as a family was in December 1977. We three landed in Perth and stayed with my sister Una, and her husband Dudley Mackie. Marjory used to spend 9.00 to 11.00 or so each morning doing schoolwork with Gordon Scott. We planned to be

away from home for three months, and his teachers had allowed him to be away during term time provided that he would not have a lot of catching up to do on his return. But unlike at the end of the school day in London, in Perth it was then time to go to the beach!

My father spent a lot of time with Gordon Scott, giving him tips on stamp collecting and showing him around Parliament House. We took a trip with him down to the South West, and Gordon even spent some nights in my old room in the Rosser Street house, watching the Rottneest lighthouse beam flash through the open window and against the bedroom wall just as I had. In the January heat we drove from Melbourne to Canberra and Brisbane, then we headed to North Queensland by road, as far as Cairns and Atherton, in the family footsteps.

At one beach there were warnings about the dangerous stings of jellyfish and the deadly bites of the stonefish. From that latitude north, swimming was not advisable in certain months, including January and February. By the water's edge was a sign, written roughly on a blackboard: 'Antidote serum for stone fish bite available at beach shop.' As we bought a cold drink, we asked how long you could survive if you were bitten by a stonefish. 'Oh, you wouldn't even get as far as the shop,' said the lady encouragingly.

We mostly stayed in on-site caravans. At one campsite, we were sure there was a loud generator running all night. It was only when Marjory went to the washrooms in the morning and encountered an amphibian of a green, waxen variety sitting on the toilet cistern that we realised it was a throaty frog chorus that had kept us awake!

We drove on through the sugar-cane fields, ate the mangoes that carpeted the grass at our lunch-stop at Bowen, and eventually reached Atherton after driving up through the rain-forest, the unbelievable screeching of the fruit bats ringing in our ears, and the sight of the Barron Falls dancing in our eyes. We found the hospital in which I had been born, and the research station where my father had his first job after graduating from Gatton Agricultural College.

There seemed to be wonders and family connections everywhere. From Cairns we took a boat out to Green Island on the Great Barrier

Reef. Gordon marvelled at the coral and tropical fish in their natural habitat, seen through a glass-bottomed boat. My cousin Ken Hunter lived in Townsville, further south. Tragically, he was killed in a car crash a few years later. In Brisbane we met Bernie Hunter, and other first cousins of mine, Graham Stephen and Pam Dodd. Two of my mother's brothers and my father's sister and brother had died by that time, but we were still able to meet Uncle Bob, and Ross and Val Hunter.

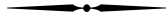
Five years later I decided to spend two months with my father and stepmother in Perth by myself. Dad's health was noticeably frailer by then. He had always been stoical about his diabetes, his damaged shoulder (due to a fall down a lift shaft in a Brisbane hotel many years before, when faulty doors had opened without the lift having arrived), and his Paget's Disease. In the Seventies, following some heart trouble, he had had a pacemaker fitted.

It so happened that the hospital in which he was being treated had just had a new wing built and the Queen, who was on a State Visit to Australia at the time, and visiting Perth, was scheduled to open it. The nurses felt Dad was well enough to attend, and made sure that he was at the front of the roped-in crowd when the Queen did her walk-about. Whether she had been primed or not, I do not know, but she headed straight for him. 'It's a long time since we last met,' she said. 'And it's a long time since we first met,' he responded. The first encounter had been in Canberra in 1954; she had also entertained him on board the Royal Yacht *Britannia*. We have a tremendous picture of her laughing while talking to him while he stands there in his dressing gown, arms folded.

By the age of 85 Dad's various conditions were catching up on him. He allowed me to drive him, still reminding me to park in Cathedral Avenue when we were in downtown Perth, where he had a VIP place. He was rather depressed by the politics of the day, so different from how things had been when he was first a minister, 40 years before. I was really glad that on this visit we were able to talk freely, for the first time, about my mother.

One landmark of this trip for me was qualifying, at the age of 60,

for an RAAF veteran's pension. My pride and joy was to be able to use my first cheque to buy my stepmother a high kitchen table and stool to suit her back and arthritic hip. The kitchen had hardly changed since the day we had moved in, in 1938. I arranged it as a surprise, and on coming home from the shops she could hardly believe her eyes.



My father passed away in June 1986. Given the complications from his various ailments, Dad had been told that he was going to have to consider having his leg amputated. He was not prepared to go through with this, and discharged himself from hospital. Within a few weeks, and in the loving care of the family, he slipped away at home. I had hoped to be with him before he died, but it proved very difficult to get flights. However, the West Australian office in London helped speed my travel plans through.

Marjory and I had been able to see Dad at the start of that year, and we had had daily visits. As we left him for the last time, the four of us said the Lord's Prayer together. And after returning to London I had the thought, 'You will not see your father again.' When my sister's phone call reached us in Scotland, I knew there was little chance of reaching his bedside in time. However, we had so hoped that he would still be there in late August when Marjory, Gordon and I all intended to be in Perth. I had to offer up to God that lingering hope, and we prayed around the breakfast table before driving to London to catch a plane.

When my sister met me at 2am 36 hours later, I learned that Dad had died at exactly the time when we had been praying for him and the family. The spiritual circuit was complete. But it was a strange feeling, after 40 years of visiting my father from abroad to find him always there, to land and know that this would never again be so. Above all, he believed in doing the right and best thing for his countrymen. He was often stern and believed in punishing wrongdoings when we were kids. But when I did something really serious, like banging his car into a lamppost, he was wonderful about it.

Bishop Challen came to see Pat, one of my sisters and me about the service, which was to be held in St George's Cathedral. Kim Beazley Senior, as a fellow senior Labor party politician and office-holder, and friend to and colleague of my father, had already given him much material about Dad's public life. 'But what about the family?' asked the bishop. 'And I gather he was a man of private faith? For he clearly had vision.' We told the bishop enough to illustrate my father's love of family, as well as of duty and country, all of which he was to bring movingly into his address. My stepmother also described how Dad used to sing hymns on the long, lonely car journeys in the North, drawn from a well-stocked memory. And I told of a conversation I had had with him about what might lie ahead in the next world, three years before, when he declared himself to be ready for it. 'Sometimes I think, the sooner the better,' he had said. I had also once asked him about a certain politician who had himself died, but who had treated Dad shamefully. Did he still feel hurt? My father answered, 'No. I had not wanted to meet him in the next world feeling bitter.'

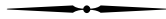
Dad had said to us over recent years, 'At least you won't have to worry about my funeral. The State will take care of that.' We had never quite known what that meant. So to experience the full magnificence and graciousness of Western Australia's last tribute to my father was overwhelming. There were twelve pallbearers, headed by the Premier, Brian Burke, with Kim Beazley, Junior, Federal Minister of Defence, representing Prime Minister Bob Hawke. The entire State Cabinet attended the service in the Cathedral, together with three former State Premiers, the leaders of the opposition, the senior churchmen, the judiciary, the consular corps and the service chiefs. The Archbishop of Perth came back from retreat to give the blessing. Dad's friend Bishop Brian Macdonald had arranged with him that he would conduct the service, but was unavoidably away. However Bishop Challen brought into his talk the idea that Dad believed in a 'hard-headed Christianity', and that he was at one with St James in considering that 'faith without works is dead'. As well as the handsome tribute to my father, the leadership of the State heard from the bishop the Gospel's message: that we must bridge the gap between

how we live and how we would like to live, and how to bridge that gap through God.

Police motorcycle outriders came to Rosser Street to escort the three family limousines, and mounted police flanked us as we proceeded down St George's Terrace, Perth's main thoroughfare. The traffic lights were all set at red, and I wept as I thought of my Dad being accorded this honour as Premier of the State, coming from lowly origins. Throughout the city and the state the flags on government buildings and town halls flew at half-mast, and that night the three television stations all carried news items about the funeral, two with clips of earlier interviews with my father.

The press carried many fine tributes, perhaps best summed up by the *West Australian*, whose conservative tendencies had been such a thorn in my father's side in previous years. The editorial was headed 'Man of Honour', and declared that 'WA has lost an elder statesman; a man of strong character who put the welfare of the State and its people ahead of party politics – and gained the respect of political opponents and colleagues alike. Frank Wise earned an honoured place in the State's history.'

In recognition of his public service, Dad was twice offered a knighthood – in 1948 and 1954. But it was Labor policy not to accept old Empire knighthoods, and twice he sent telegrams back, saying simply 'Beg to decline' – the established code, so word would not leak out – but adding, 'Have not deserved it'. However, he was made an Officer of the dedicated Order of Australia in 1979, in the same Australia Day honours list as former Prime Minister Bob Hawke and Kim Beazley Senior.



When I had made my decision to resign my job my father had been hurt and angry. He did not understand, and nor did my stepmother or my sisters. I had left home with a sense of adventure but also with a heavy heart because of this rift. A change began to come into the relationship when a few years later he came to Europe on a Commonwealth Parliamentary Mission and remarked that a surprising number

of the officialdom whom he met – for example, in the occupied West Germany – knew of MRA, and indeed some knew me.

Five years later when I was based in India I came from Kashmir to Australia with an international group, and after a series of meetings around Australia went to see my father and his new family at Government House in Darwin. At that time Dad and Pat were parents to Jenny, Penelope and Scott, with Rose born after their return to Perth. One day we sat on the verandah of the old colonial residence together while he read the paper. I asked him, as I had sensed something different in our relationship, ‘Dad, are you happy about what I am doing now?’ ‘Yes, son,’ he said, ‘I am happy.’ ‘You weren’t at first, were you?’ I ventured. ‘Well,’ said my dad, turning over a page of the newspaper, ‘A father likes to make plans for his only son.’ This said it all, really. Dad had left school at the age of twelve to help support his family on an uncleared farm property. His education after that was largely of his own making. Yet he had reached the most senior post in the State. His hopes for me, with far better educational and career prospects, were obvious.

Years afterwards I discovered how often he spoke up for me, and on all of my visits he arranged occasions in Parliament House and introduced me around.

To the end, faith for himself and faith for God’s work in the world was hard to come by. But what else would draw a Catholic priest from the North to drive 600 miles each way to attend his funeral; or the Aboriginal woman who had looked after his second family in Darwin to fly to Perth for that day. I always felt he *wanted* to believe. Although for years, despite many physical disabilities, he clung on to life most stubbornly, near the end he seems to have accepted. It was enough. I proudly and gratefully said goodbye to a loving and proud father, a faithful friend, and in God’s meaning of the words, a fellow fighter.

I am privileged to be his son, and have always felt so. One day some time later on a trip to Perth, visiting Parliament House in the company of Kim and Betty Beazley, I asked the gentleman accompanying us up the beautiful spiral staircase, ‘But where are the pictures of the past

premiers?’ He replied, ‘I am afraid they have been removed, as two of them recently have had to go to jail.’ I had always proudly looked there for my Dad’s familiar face.



Although we considered moving to Australia on a permanent basis a number of times, and still feel very much at home there, Marjory and I have always concluded at each time of decision that we would remain living in Britain. On visits back there we have looked at properties to buy, and considered the favourable opportunities the Department of Veteran Affairs, for whose benefits I am eligible, provides. However, our only son and his partner have made their home in London, and our hearts have told us to remain in England.

Gordon, Marjory and I did spend some time living there together as a family. When in July 1986 Gordon finished school, we spent the following year in Australia before he began to study for a degree at Edinburgh University. It was the year the Americas Cup Challenge was sailed off Fremantle, and we saw many races first hand from the press boat – even meeting Dennis Connor, the brilliant American skipper who won the Cup back from Australia for the New York Yacht Club, and the veteran broadcaster Walter Cronkite, who was commentating for American television.

During that year we took a month to drive up the coast, visiting places associated with my father when he represented that area – Shark Bay, Carnarvon, Port Hedland, Broome, Derby, Kununurra – and Darwin, where he had been Administrator of the Northern Territory. The staff of the Frank Wise Tropical Research Station at Kununurra, not long before named in his honour, arranged for us to fly over the magnificent and extraordinary Bungle Bungle mountain range, the vast expanse of Lake Argyll and West Australia’s diamond mines. The Durack homestead can still be seen, although the lands immortalized in Mary Durack’s *Kings in Grass Castles* are now under the lake created by damming the Ord River to create the very irrigation that made possible the agriculture Frank Wise Research Station was there to service. The Duracks were our friends in Broome, and Mary had even

lived in our home. Her Irish settler family had driven cattle from New South Wales right across the 'Top End'.

We stayed in motels at places like Whim Creek and Fitzroy Crossing, the sorts of places that on a large atlas are a dot the size of Birmingham but which when you get to them you discover are little more than the pub itself. We sailed down Katherine and Geiki Gorges, between majestic high red rocks and flanked by basking crocodiles. It was certainly Crocodile Dundee territory. We had the privilege of a private tour of Government House in Darwin, where the family lived from 1951-56. At Kakadu National Park there were crocodiles galore, all manner of wildfowl, and we ate barramundi, the best fish in the world. In Broome we not only swam at Cable Beach but met Dad's old friend, the Roman Catholic Bishop Jobst. And finding a public phone at the end of Broome's mile-long jetty offered another special reason to call Stuart Smith in the US.

At Carnarvon, we were entertained together with Una and Dudley to the most remarkable banana-fed chicken (banana-fed, because this is what the birds found while they scratched around in the yard!) by an old grower friend of Dad's. Another, Frank Baxter, had been one of Dad's strongest supporters and campaigners, and he asked me on our way north whether I would consider standing for Parliament myself, either for the Lower or Upper House. 'With a name like Wise we would have no trouble at all getting you in,' he said. 'Tell me your reply on your way south.'

By the time of our return journey I had given the matter considerable thought. It wasn't a very difficult question to answer, but of course the prospect had its attractions. However, I was well into my sixties, and there still seemed much work to be done in terms of what I felt God had called me to do. Of course I love Australia; and the connection with my father combined with the lure of the north-west was a very strong one. But I told Frank that I was sorry, my answer was 'no'. I knew in my heart that I must continue with the calling God had given me.



During a more recent visit to Australia in March 1999 with Marjory, I got to thinking about Alan Rutherford, my old school friend. Nicknamed 'Pom' because he was born in England, I didn't know that he had died in Britain during our Air Force service until I returned home after the war. The RAAF Association told me that if I wanted to find out more I should contact the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The address they gave me was in Maidenhead, just two miles from where we lived in the UK.

I was informed that Alan had been buried at Duns, on the Scottish Borders, where he had been killed in a training accident. I made up my mind to visit his grave as soon as the opportunity arose, and in June that year we found ourselves in the nearby town of Melrose. At the local police station the sergeant on duty said that one of his colleagues, now at lunch, was an Air Force buff, and knew all about wartime flying operations in the area.

Constable Richardson turned out to be a keen, young officer, who produced a book that recorded every detail of the Air Force in the area. And there was Alan's name. He had died when his Blenheim bomber, in which he was training, hit a tree on takeoff, as did the Observer with him. But there was no record of where he was buried.

The constable took us to the airfield, much overgrown but with some of the buildings still intact, the runways still being used for occasional training exercises. There were trees at the end of the runways, but he said these were of a more recent planting. Memories came flooding back of Alan and my own wartime training on similar fields.

In a nearby village churchyard members of some of the aircrews were buried, but not Alan. But at the main cemetery on the edge of Duns a cheerful gardener mowing the grass directed us to a group of neatly-kept gravestones, cut in the same style as ones I had seen in war graveyards across northern France. And there, in a slight dip, in that walled hillside cemetery that overlooks the breathtakingly beautiful Border country, green as only the Borders can be, was a brilliant Portland stone marker glistening in the June sunshine that bore Alan's name, rank and number. The trees and the fields and the grazing sheep helped to give the assurance of eternal rest for the fallen. It felt a blessed place.

Alan was 20 when he was killed in August 1942. He was a little older than me, and he had joined the RAAF the year before. From the inscription we also learned that his brother, Rinian, had also been killed on active service, and is buried in Leaconfield in Yorkshire, which was a bomber base.

I have always felt that Alan was, in a sense, God's messenger to me. He and I played extra school sport on Saturdays – grass hockey – and it was in the changing room, out of the blue, that he had said, 'I am seeing Jean on Monday.' It was in pursuit of her that I had ended up at that Oxford Group House Party, hosted by Canon John Bell, and as a result had heard about the idea of 'absolute surrender to God'. While Jean had not been particularly keen to see me, and, to add insult to injury, had gone off after the meeting with two other girls and Jim Coulter, I did hear from Alan about his new-found faith and the impact of his personal change on his divided family. If I hadn't decided to 'give it a go' myself, if Jim and I hadn't teamed up and opted for Coastal Command, I might never have made it through the war and certainly wouldn't have gone on to do the work I did, and I hope things of more usefulness than I might otherwise have done.

I was conscious of a watchful Providence during my years of flying, surviving a mid-air collision as well as another accident during training, and a fire on take-off during operations. Why Alan was killed, and not me, I do not know. But I do know that those six simple words, 'I am seeing Jean on Monday', changed the course of my life forever.

Jean later married an American. When I spoke to her on the phone a few years ago, she said, 'You know Gordon, events change our lives.' I agreed.

16

A New Journey

1994



*Catholic Encounters – Friends with a Cardinal –
The Eternal Revelation of Rome*

When I was a boy in Australia, Catholics were regarded by many as ‘different’, a bit like members of a Masonic Lodge, only more mysterious. This was doubtless an attitude inherited from the first British colonists, the majority of whom would have had a staunchly post-Reformation view of religion. To be a member of the Church of England was simply to be normal.

It was only during my time in the Philippines that I really began to see things differently, for the established church there was Roman Catholic. I would accompany my various hosts to church, although not to the altar for communion – noting that for some there was a close affinity with the Presbyterian attitude, ‘Church doesn’t stop you sinning. It just stops you enjoying it so much.’ But I came to see that there was true comfort in the idea that however badly you had behaved, confession and absolution were always an option – if humbling.

When I went to Rome with Sibnath Bannerjee and the Thai Lord Abbot, I marvelled at the tradition which had continued unbroken from St Peter himself, made all the more fascinating by seeing it through the eyes of a Hindu and a Buddhist. And as my life’s work evolved it became quite natural to befriend both Catholic priests and senior clergy, because I regarded such calls as essential courtesy, informing them about what we were attempting to do and inviting their advice.

When I became Secretary of the Oxford Group in 1971 it felt the natural thing to do to approach Cardinal Heenan, the then Archbishop of Westminster, as one of those whose advice I sought. He invited me to lunch. He later welcomed a group of Protestants and Catholics from Northern Ireland whose lives had been affected by MRA's ideas, which they felt held the keys to the answer to the region's troubles. Later, a wonderful friendship developed with his successor, Cardinal Hume, and especially when we went to live in Morpeth Terrace, alongside the Cathedral. After he had joined us at a dinner in the flat, as he was leaving he said, 'We are neighbours.'

Frank Buchman had often felt MRA had a common cause with the Catholic Church in many areas, and had great respect for it. When there was a period of suspicion on the part of Rome towards MRA, from the early Fifties, he was much grieved. A leading figure in helping the reconciliation forward was a man who became a close personal friend of Marjory's and mine – Cardinal Franz König of Vienna. When I look back now on our years of friendship with him, I realise just how privileged we were to have known him as we did. I first met Cardinal König in his Archbishop's Palace in 1966, when I was travelling with Dick Ruffin. Pierre Spoerri, our colleague from Switzerland, had arranged the meeting. The Cardinal at once struck me as a man who went out of his way to put the other person at ease, completely unstuffy and courteous. Unlike other cardinals I had met, he did not expect us to kneel and kiss his ring. Through the friendship of Pierre and Heini Karrer, also of Switzerland, he became a regular visitor to Caux, and it was there that we next met.

Cardinal Franz König was Archbishop of Vienna for 29 years, from 1956 until 1985. When Pope Paul VI set up the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Believers in 1965, he asked König (who had been made a cardinal in 1962) to lead it. The Secretariat had a special responsibility for people in communist countries, as well as for non-believers in countries that are nominally Christian. As its President for 15 years, König became the Vatican's specialist on dialogue with Eastern Europe.

A man of remarkable intellect and obvious piety, yet with the humility and humanity of his priestly calling, Franz König was born

into a modest farming family in a community 50 miles from Vienna. His father died when he was only six. His mother married a man named Kaiser. ‘So my half brother is an emperor, while I am a king,’ he would joke, playing on the meaning of his family names in German. Although a very senior man of the church, he remained in close contact with this family, inviting all 22 of them to spend time with him every year between Christmas and New Year while he was Archbishop and later in his private apartment.

Even into his eighties he could have filled his diary many times over, travelling widely, but Vienna remained his home, and the concerns of Austria were always in his heart. He accepted his appointment to the Secretariat for Non-Believers with the proviso that he be allowed to stay on in Vienna, rather than move to Rome. He was on friendly terms with all the Austrian political parties and was the first Archbishop of Vienna to be invited to address the Austrian Trades Union Congress, earning the nickname ‘The Red Cardinal’.

He seemed never afraid to do things that might not have been expected of him, but which he felt were appropriate to his calling. When the Vietnamese ‘boat people’ needed shelter, he adopted a whole family, taking them into the archbishop’s palace to live and providing them with work. He loved to walk in the Vienna woods at weekends, despite the fact that one summer a captured terrorist confessed that he and his group had made plans to kidnap the Cardinal for ransom. Once when he was returning from the woods, a taxi driver studied him in the mirror and said, ‘You look like the Archbishop.’ ‘Yes,’ said the Cardinal, ‘lots of people tell me that.’ Certainly, he rarely used the official car available to him, saying when in retirement, ‘I take the tram. I am an ordinary citizen.’

A brilliant scholar – for his final high school exams he chose to write his thesis in Latin, all 50 pages of it – it was while studying in Rome, at the age of 27, that he experienced a call to the priesthood. He was much inspired by the writings of St Augustine and Cardinal Newman and when attending Mass in St Peter’s, he experienced the universality of the Gospel to all nations, expressed in the person of St Peter’s successor, the Pope. His first curacy was in England, at

Haywards Heath in Sussex, and World War II found him chaplain to a high school in Austria. When the Nazi authorities told him he was no longer to perform his duties, he began an underground tutorial group. The Gestapo fined him heavily as a deterrent, and frequently interrogated him for the names of his students. After one occasion, when they took him to their Vienna headquarters and interrogated him in relays for a whole day, he expected to be sent to Dachau but miraculously was not. After the war, he took a further degree, in philosophy, later becoming Professor of Moral Theology in Salzburg. His three-volume *Christ and the Religions of the World* remains a standard work, and his later publications included a *Dictionary of Comparative Religions*.

König felt he had a divine commission for his role liaising with Eastern Europe. Not long after he became Archbishop of Vienna, his neighbour in Yugoslavia, Archbishop Stepinac of Zagreb, died. König felt that he should at least try to go to the funeral, in spite of the difficulties of travelling across borders in those days. To his surprise, he was granted a visa and set off by car with his driver and secretary. It was winter.

After they had crossed the frontier, the roads became icy. At one point the car spun out of control, and crashed into an oncoming truck. König was taken to hospital, badly injured. As he recovered, he saw Tito's picture looking down at him from the wall of the bare room. The Cardinal asked God why he had been spared and believed he heard the answer: 'As well as being a shepherd to your flock in Vienna, I want you to care for those in the countries to the East.'

Pope John XXIII encouraged König to pursue this calling, suggesting that he go to Hungary to talk with the Archbishop of Budapest, Cardinal Mindszenty, who had taken refuge in the American Embassy. 'But how do I go about getting there?' asked König. 'Just go down to the railway station in Vienna and buy a ticket to Budapest,' responded the Pope, who was a plain-spoken man. König said it did not prove quite as simple as that, but he did get there.

Mindszenty was convinced that the US embassy apartment was bugged, so they conversed in Latin and English (neither of which the

Hungarian Cardinal was particularly fluent in), with the radio turned to full volume. ‘What does the Pope want of me?’ Mindszenty asked. ‘Nothing,’ answered König. ‘He wants to send you his greetings.’ It was the first of several visits and many conversations from which König gained great insight and Mindszenty felt great support.

Soon after he became President of the Secretariat, König asked the Soviet authorities to allow him to visit the USSR for a ‘dialogue’. After a long wait the reply came, ‘If you wish to come in order to build up our communist society, then you can. If you want to have an intellectual discussion about different systems and ideas, then perhaps you could use your time better elsewhere.’ It was an unpromising start, but saw the beginning of a series of visits to all the then-communist countries, through which the local bishops and Christian communities had encouragement, and in a number of cases came to enjoy greater religious freedom. He first met Karol Wojtyla on a visit to Poland in 1961, when Wojtyla was Auxiliary Bishop of Krakow.

König was the last of the senior cardinals from the Council who led the Catholic Church through the historic changes set in motion in Rome by Vatican II. In *Man from a Far Country*, Mary Craig’s early book about Pope John Paul II, she attributes Karol Wojtyla’s surprise appointment as resulting from König’s refusal, in a deadlocked conclave, to be an ‘acceptable to all’ candidate. Instead, he espoused the candidacy of the less-known Archbishop of Krakow, whom König had come to know through his work in Eastern Europe. The story is told in more detail in *The Year of the Three Popes* by Peter Hebblethwaite. König would only smile when such things were quoted – as he did when asked on Austrian TV what he had felt when his own name was mentioned as a candidate. He would say that when the Cardinals arrived in Rome to elect John Paul I’s successor, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, then Primate of Poland, had told him, ‘I cannot see any clear candidate this time.’ In response, König said ‘I am wondering whether we might elect a Polish Pope.’ ‘But I am too old,’ replied Wyszyński. ‘I was thinking of the Bishop of Krakow,’ said König. However, the Polish prelate did not believe Wojtyla would get the votes.

In 1985 I invited him to join the weekend conference at Tirley which Stuart Blanch, Archbishop of York, was addressing – we very much wanted the occasion to be ecumenical – but it was Whitsun, when he celebrated confirmations. However, he said, he could come in November that year. So we set to arranging a two-week programme.

When I telephoned him to confirm some details, I said, ‘I expect that you will want to stay in London at Archbishop’s House with Cardinal Basil Hume?’ ‘No,’ he responded, ‘I would rather stay with you.’ Unaware of clerical protocol I asked, ‘Will you be telling Cardinal Hume that you will be coming?’ ‘No,’ he said, ‘you tell him.’ When I met Cardinal Hume during the visit he said smilingly, ‘So you’re the man who stole our Cardinal!’ Staying in a lay Protestant home was indeed unusual.

Before he spoke to a packed auditorium at the Westminster Theatre, we hosted a reception for him. The guest list was headed by the Papal Nuncio and the Austrian Ambassador.

The highlights of that visit included a prayer breakfast in the Speaker’s apartment at the House of Commons; a lunch given in the Cardinal’s honour at the Austrian Embassy, where the other chief guest was the Duke of Norfolk, cousin of the Queen and Britain’s leading Catholic layman; a visit to Tirley Garth when the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, Derek Warlock, came over to meet him at lunch; a reception in the Oxford Union and a college dinner for Oxford theologians; an address to the General Synod of the Church of England, by invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie – the first foreign Cardinal ever to do so; a lunch with Cardinal Hume at Archbishop’s House, with the 43 Bishops of England and Wales who were in conference. I found that I was also expected, and was a Protestant layman among 45 Catholic priests, Bishops and Archbishops, although I had only expected to drive the Cardinal to the event.

The British Catholic weekly, the *Tablet*, wrote that he gave MRA his support because he believed, with Erich Fromm, that ‘for the first time in history the survival of mankind depends on a radical change

of heart' and that he felt Moral Re-Armament took this need seriously.

The day after his return to Vienna, Marjory and I flew to Washington DC on one of our many visits during those years. On the plane I had the idea of asking our American colleagues whether they would consider inviting the Cardinal for a three-week visit to the United States, under MRA auspices – to Washington, New York and Boston. They agreed, and after returning to London Pierre Spoerri and I went to Vienna to issue the invitation. When we finished outlining the programme to the Cardinal he said, 'I will do it'. His trust in MRA and in us was quite amazing.

The visit took place in the spring of 1986. He came to London en route, and then Marjory and I flew with him to the States. We travelled in economy class – his usual practice, it turned out, as well as ours. Our colleagues had arranged a superb programme, but we found that he himself had also added lectures to two Catholic universities in Washington. The first was on the day after his arrival. The Archbishop of Washington, later Cardinal Hickey, introduced him. But in mid-speech the Cardinal halted, unwell. Fearing a heart attack, the university president called for an ambulance, and two fire engines also came. Numb with apprehension, I followed him to the hospital in a car driven by the Archbishop's secretary. By the time we reached the emergency room, he was being given the last rites.

The doctor asked me to fetch the Cardinal's medical records, which he was told always to carry as he had had some heart irregularity. Stuart Smith, with whom we were all staying, and I sweated our way across town, imagining worldwide headlines saying that a confidant of Pope John Paul II had suffered a heart attack as a result of travelling to America at the invitation of Moral Re-Armament!

We returned to the hospital to find the Cardinal was in a recovery room attached to heart monitors, relaxed and smiling. The diagnosis was the ill effects of jet lag and the knock-on exhaustion from a busy programme back in Austria. But that night, I took the Cardinal's hand in mine and asked if I could pray. 'If you want,' he said. Thankfully, when we came to see him the next day he was well rested. Really

moved by the whole experience, I said to the Cardinal, 'You weren't afraid, were you?' 'No', he said, 'but you were!'

Although the university president had had to finish reading out the Cardinal's prepared speech that night, we were able to reschedule the other university event. He also addressed a very senior academic audience at Georgetown University.

On the plane to Boston we read in the *New York Times* that the Pope had made an historic visit to the Rome Synagogue, saying, 'You are our elder brothers.' The Cardinal liked that. But I noticed that he began to get a sniffle – and he had a bronchial history. Oh Lord! So in Boston, at the Cambridge home of Dr Bryan and Anne Hamlin, I dosed the Cardinal with inhalations, Vicks Vapo-rub, aspirin and all manner of homespun remedies. All this in between prestigious engagements with many of Harvard University's elite academics and speeches at the American Academy of Arts and Science and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, with audiences of national, not always uncritical, personalities. The Cardinal submitted equably to my determined ministrations and we – God, he, nature – staved off the dreaded bronchitis to which he was prone in Vienna's winter.

At one point during this programme of appointments König handed me a half-written homily, due to be delivered at the Harvard University Church the next day. 'You finish it,' he asked. I could only agree – and I had begun to know his mind on some subjects. But Marjory began to chuckle. 'What amuses you?' he asked. Marjory said, 'Well, here are you, a Cardinal, and here is Gordon, a Protestant layman, helping you to write your homily.' 'But why not?' he said. 'We are one.' Once at a Mass in the chapel at Caux, on finding that he didn't have his proper glasses and so couldn't see the small print of the Bible for the Gospel reading, he even asked me to come up and read it for him.

For a public meeting the Cardinal spoke on Moral Re-Armament, a speech with which he again asked my help. He always drew substantially on stories and anecdotes to illustrate his convictions. His audiences over these weeks included men at the sharp end of US foreign policy-making. It was 1986, still the time of the Cold War. It

was no secret that the Cardinal had been a trailblazer in going to countries of the then Soviet bloc, to 'encourage the believers' in these lands. He told his audiences about his personal experiences and foresaw that the winning back of freedom to worship God would lead to other freedoms. This was notably true three years later, when the Pope's visit to Poland played such a large part in the story of the dissolution of the Soviet Empire.

His Eminence led a day of retreat to which we invited Jim and Ellie Newton. We knew that they would hit it off and, as I had rather expected, an invitation to visit Florida shortly ensued. 'I'll come for the whole month of February next,' said the Cardinal. This began four visits to the Newtons' guest apartment, each of a month, in February – the time of year when Vienna was so risky for his health. During his first visit Marjory and I were in Australia, so while Jim did the main arrangements, the hands-on hosting – the cooking, the driving, the companionship – was looked after by his earlier Washington hosts. In Perth, 13 hours time difference away, I was kept informed by Jim. To my dismay one day Jim told me that his eminent guest had caught a cold. Mindful of the bronchial history, I gave Jim detailed advice about the medication that had done the trick in Boston. After Jim got through with my list of 'musts' the Cardinal said, 'Gordon treats me as if I were his son!' Another evening the phone rang, and it was Jim, on his car phone, driving along Fort Myers Beach's Estero Boulevard, which runs the length of the island. He handed the phone to His Eminence who was completely astonished to be talking to me in the circumstances and at that distance.

On his next three Florida visits Marjory and I were able to go with him. We lived together for February in 1988, 1990 and 1992. But then he had a thrombosis in Vienna, and his doctor advised against long-haul flights. Jim and I sent him an itinerary that included Concorde to New York, but it was still a long journey and he was never able to come again. His secretary told me that, if it had not been for these Florida winters, he would have been – in her words – 'pushing up the daisies' long before.

Looking back at my notes I realise now more fully the uniqueness

of those months of intimate fellowship with a Prince of the Church. There were several reasons: he was away from all the demands on him; he was away from Austria where he could rarely be incognito; none of his staff were present, for whom he might have to tailor his frankness; we were not Catholics; Fort Myers Beach was the first time in his life that he had been to the beach; it all relaxed him; and, perhaps lastly, we had a good chemistry – almost like a son and daughter. In due course, he offered his cheek for Marjory to kiss. We felt that we came to be a part of his extended family, saying that he prayed for us three. When Gordon was living in New York having started his first publishing job, we happened to be visiting at the same time as the Cardinal was in the city. He invited us and four others to breakfast at the Waldorf Astoria, where he was staying. He sat Gordon on his right and then said to the rest of us, ‘You can find your own places to sit.’

During those memorable months in Florida, he used to talk with utmost frankness and we have always respected his confidences. After one long conversation Marjory said that she felt privileged that he should be talking to us so freely, as usually he seemed to prefer to listen. ‘It’s true that I prefer to listen, but somehow being with you in this relaxed atmosphere, I find myself talking.’ We learned that he had not wanted to be Archbishop, and declined the Papal Nuncio’s call. The Nuncio said he ought to go to Rome and talk with Pope John XXIII, and handed him a plane ticket under the table at a formal dinner. ‘But go incognito, stay at an hotel, dress as an ordinary priest.’ At their meeting, Bishop König and the Pope talked for an hour and a half. And when some time later the Chancellor of Austria announced at a major public function that Austria had a new Archbishop, it was indeed König that he introduced.

He did not tell us the sequence of events in the Conclave which had led to Pope John Paul II’s election, but we knew that it was not the first time he himself had been a candidate: we had read that when after the election of John Paul I he had gone up to congratulate him, the new Pope had said to him quietly, ‘You should be here instead of me.’

While he took us into his confidence in discussing the teachings and practices of the Church, it is not my place to discuss these further.

But he was strongly opposed to abortion, genetic manipulation and the use of foetal tissue for however noble an end, saying: 'That is the road the Nazis took. You cannot expect God to bless methods which are contrary to Church teaching.' 'By itself,' he said, 'science cannot bring progress without making men and women central. So a change in human thought, attitude and behaviour is fundamental for the future.'

He is on record as saying that clerical celibacy is not a dogma of the Church. It is a law of the Church, not of scripture, and the Church can decide otherwise. 'But, as a celibate priest, you can devote yourself to a wider family. In a parish, the parishioners become the priest's family. He is always available.' One time we talked of homosexuality. He said, 'We do not know how these things happen. It is a mystery. We have to trust them to God and always go on loving those concerned. Only mean people judge others.'

He had an ironic disclaimer ready for when he was – he felt – overly praised. The day after one arrival I said, 'In my meditation this morning I gave thanks for seeing your smiling face when you arrived safely yesterday off the airplane.' The Cardinal responded, 'That is hardly a subject for meditation.' When someone commented that his habit of not eating in the evening must make him a 'holy' man, the answer came, 'Well, hardly, but if thinking that enables you to accept that I don't eat dinner, then I don't mind.'

König saw the rekindling of faith and its practice in East Europe as one of the most important contributions the West could make. There also had to be new economic arrangements, and we needed to be generous materially – but we should help those 'emerging' nations to recover their own finest traditions and qualities and not foist on them our militantly consumerist society as if it was the last word and all that we have to offer. Setting people free to choose, he said, should not only mean freedom of the market, but freedom to choose to worship God rather than Mammon. In this, East and West are on the same footing, and share certain problems such as the loss of values among the young and within families. 'Perhaps our common problems will help us seek common solutions,' he said at that time.

A trail-blazer in the furthering of respected relationships between the different faiths, the Cardinal once told us, 'Our job as Christians is to help those of other faiths to live their faith more committedly, not seek to convert them, for that is the Holy Spirit's work.' His tastes, interests and beliefs were always ecumenical. He had visited China, and had very high regard for Chinese medicine. He was also the first senior Catholic statesman to be invited to address the illustrious Al-Azhar University in Cairo. He visited India twice, and had a great respect for Mother Teresa. He told us how during the Vatican II proceedings, she sat in on a conference of 190 bishops. König had asked her, 'What do you make of these bishops?' She replied, 'I don't understand them, but I pray for them.'

Together with serious debate and fellowship, there were many lighthearted moments that we cherished as part of a deepening friendship. On the day of his departure after one of his visits to Caux, we offered to pack his suitcase, as we knew these sorts of practicalities were taken care of in Vienna by the nuns who looked after his household. 'Please do,' he said, 'I hate packing.' After he had left, I had a phone call to ask if I had seen his bishop's ring – a very precious item. I went back to his room and searched it but couldn't find it. Having learned some years before from our Irish cleaning lady in London that St Anthony was the patron of the lost – things as well as people – I sat down and asked St Anthony's help. 'It is in his case,' was my thought, and I told him this. Later that evening I was handed a message: 'That which was lost has been found.' The nun who had unpacked his bag had missed his clerical jacket, and it was in its pocket.

In Florida, as our apartment was on the third floor, he would need to ring up from the entrance lobby to get buzzed in after being out. A voice would come through the speakerphone saying, 'This is a Viennese migrant,' or 'It's the paper boy.' An elderly gentleman on the ground floor saw the Cardinal in his clerical garb after walking back from Mass. The man asked, 'Whom are you visiting?' The Cardinal said, 'Gordon Wise,' upon which the gentleman asked, 'Why, is he sick?' 'On the contrary!' replied König. He loved being unrecognised. One day he came in from the beach chuckling because

someone had come up to him and said, 'I know you, aren't you from Minnesota?'

He told of a visit to a seminary in Spain where he used to confer ordinations. The place had a swimming pool, and as it was a hot day and the ceremony was at 11 AM he asked the Rector if he could have a swim first. The word came back that it would be better to do so afterwards. Later, puzzled, König asked the reason. 'The Rector said that it would be better after because if you drowned we couldn't go ahead with the ordinations.' In a similar spirit, when one day there was a typhoon warning, I said I would defy it and go out for a newspaper. 'That's all right', said His Eminence, 'as long as you come back with the paper.'

Marjory's cooking was appreciated at Fort Myers Beach. But one day at breakfast the Cardinal said that he was putting on weight, so she served fresh grapefruit as a lunch starter, saying that it cuts down the appetite. However, when the Cardinal finished off his third helping of Dutch apple tart, he said, 'The grapefruit is not working.' On another day he was invited out to lunch. Later in the day he became a little peckish, so Marjory offered him some dessert. After his nap he swam in the Gulf of Mexico and came back saying triumphantly, 'I had a long swim and fought against the apple pie successfully!'

We were guests of the Newtons and other MRA friends in the USA, but the Cardinal insisted on paying his own fares. Jim remonstrated, saying, 'It's God's money,' but König answered, 'So is mine!' On his third visit he proudly showed us a new gold Mastercard, his first-ever credit card. He decided to come to the supermarket with me so he could pay for the groceries. There we were, in our shorts and he pushing the shopping trolley, while I took the food he chose from the shelves. Later, at a restaurant lunch, he said that he wanted to entertain us and the Newtons, and would pay with the card. I said, 'You will have to argue that out with Jim.' He said, 'If Jim doesn't let me use my Mastercard, I'll vote Democrat!' Jim was a dedicated Republican. However, when it came to the blessing over lunch Cardinal König asked me to pray, as he said, 'I cannot use my Mastercard for prayers.'

I found I needed to think through my suggestions as to outings, because he always said, 'Why not?' We went flying in a single-engined plane with Jim's niece Robley and her husband Don Greilick. The Cardinal wanted to go to see Key West, but Don was rightly nervous about a storm cloud over the Gulf and to fly over land the whole way was a long flight for the small plane. However, when we went out on the Gulf in a small boat in stormy weather it was not because our friend and skipper, Erik Petersen, wanted to, but because Cardinal König said, 'Doesn't this boat go out on the Gulf?' The Petersens were very experienced boatsmen, and didn't want to risk anything other than sheltered waters. The Cardinal was the only one of the five of us who didn't seem to realise the risk we ran that day.

A particular concern of his was how best to manage the Earth's resources and steward the environment. I suggested a visit to the Everglades where we had a glorious day among all manner of wildlife and birds, escorted by guides explaining the eco-system of the area. The Cardinal loved it, saying that night, 'It has been like Paradise.' We'd even had alligator steak for lunch. We also went to Disney World for two days, and he enjoyed the different attractions with boyish glee.

There were all sorts of little encounters that we remember with great warmth. After going to the movies uptown, the waitress paused while I said grace before our meal in a restaurant. 'I think it's neat when you do that,' she said. The morning after we had watched a video of *My Fair Lady* with Jim and Ellie, König greeted Marjory with 'Good morning, my fair lady!' He even presented her with a rose on Valentine's Day.

The Newtons gave several receptions in his honour, and these were times when their other guests included the family of Charles Lindbergh and the King and Queen of Romania. The King is head of the Orthodox Church of Romania.

At first in Florida he attended daily Mass in the island's large, crowded church, where of course he would officiate as a priest during the service. He knew the way to people's hearts: when he thanked the Americans for their generosity to other nations, the congregation burst into applause. But he felt at the large church more like a visit-

ing chaplain, when the idea was that he should be on holiday. It was at the little chapel in the nearby Monastery of the Poor Clares that he came to be much more at home. He celebrated there with their chaplain, Father Raney, a wonderful retired priest from Illinois, who marvelled at this brilliant scholar of the Church 'patiently listening to my stumbling homilies'. One day there was a visiting Jesuit with them, and before they processed in, Father Raney joked, 'Does a Cardinal take precedence over a Jesuit?' 'Sometimes,' said the Cardinal with a chuckle.

One day he said to us, 'I wonder what age I will be when I start to consider myself an old man?' He was in his eighties at the time. He said, 'I never worry about what comes next, I have no concern about my tomb or what people will say about me after I die, I am at peace about it all.'

His belief was that in a secularized world the enemies of religion make little distinction between the different faiths. 'We should come together and work together,' he wrote. 'Because of our common faith in God, perhaps we can see some just solution come in such regions of tragic confrontation as the Middle East.' He believed that the dialogue that developed in the later twentieth century between Christians and Jews was particularly significant. 'The Church is doing a lot of heart-searching about traditional expressions which offend Jews,' he said. 'We have more of a common heritage than we have understood.'

At the time of Kurt Waldheim's election to the Presidency of Austria Cardinal König was concerned about the resulting tensions within the Jewish community, and called a public meeting in the Vienna Town Hall where he apologized for the historic anti-Semitism of Austria.

One day as we walked he asked me, 'Do you think that guilt is fundamentally an individual matter, or is there such a thing as collective guilt?' I said, 'I should be asking you that! I think that we all inherit the good and the bad deeds of our predecessors and compatriots, so in that sense there can be a collective guilt. But, fundamentally, I am the custodian of my own conscience and for that I am answerable to

God.’ Another time we discussed the difference between conscience and what he called ‘the inner light’. He said that everyone is born with conscience, which indicates right and wrong, while an inner light helps you to heed your conscience.

He often expressed his high regard for MRA. He said, ‘Moral Re-Armament is providential, it is a new inspiration for everyone. You are an apostolate of the laity.’ He saw what we were trying to work towards as fulfilling a role more traditional forces could not.

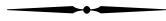
It was not only in Florida that we enjoyed his companionship. He was a generous host to us on three visits to Austria, paying our hotel bills, taking us out to lunches, arranging for us to see the famous Spanish Riding School. On one occasion as we left him, he insisted on reimbursing our fares and when I looked in the envelope, I saw that he had given enough to take me to Australia and back. For his ninety-fifth birthday, a surprise birthday party was arranged by his staff and friends in the rustic setting of the village he loved to visit. When he saw us, in the crowd of guests, he said, ‘How is this possible?’ After farewelling the various notables, he sat down with us and talked. And even after we had moved to Taplow, which is an hour outside London, he came to visit us twice. When after lunch we walked by the Thames and his devoted secretary, Dr Annemarie Fenzl, began to complain about some aspects of Church conduct at that time he said, ‘That’s her problem. I shall take my chair out to the field and have a nap.’ And typical of his trust, he gave me a batch of his personal cards so that I could meet other bishops anywhere I visited.

His life, he would say, was in God’s hands. ‘When I wake up in the morning, I thank Him for giving me one more day.’ I often think of something else he used to say: ‘The first and last question for man, the most human question of them all is: whence do I come, whither do I go, and what is the reason for my being alive?’

When later we attended his Golden Jubilee in Vienna Town Hall we saw for ourselves the undiluted respect and affection in which he was held in his own country. It was a sparkling occasion, attended by the president of Austria, the cabinet and church dignitaries of many denominations – and from neighbouring countries as well. A film

depicting his part in past events was shown, and we knew we were there to honour one of the twentieth century's most loved and significantly effective figures.

It was particularly wonderful for us to attend this happy event, as two years later we would not be able to attend his funeral. Pierre Spoerri, who first introduced me to His Eminence, attended and represented Caux and his many friends in MRA. Five thousand invited guests attended the funeral, and thousands more watched it on video screens outside. The day before, thousands had also visited the cathedral to pay their last respects, including the leaders of the Orthodox Churches in Austria, who assembled at the open coffin to say the Panikhida, the Orthodox prayer for the dead – the first time in Western Europe that it had been said for a Catholic Cardinal. Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, said at the start of the mass how even after the fall of communism in the East 'König also did everything within his power to promote dialogue, so that Europe might once again breathe with both lungs.' He also told of how, on receiving the news of the cardinal's death, Pope John Paul II had withdrawn to pray, and then asked Ratzinger to conduct the mass as his personal representative.



There is no doubt that a major education about the essence of the Catholic Church came to us, unsought, during our months with Cardinal König. He said we were one fellowship. For our part we could ask any and every question and we often accompanied him to Mass. Once, Marjory said we were wondering about taking formal 'instruction', but he said, 'I wouldn't rush into that. It's a big decision.'

Then, in the early Nineties in London, certain events in our personal lives that seemed overwhelming prompted us to pray every day in the neighbouring Cathedral, either together or separately. We did this for about two years. Our faith in God deepened through our sense of inadequacy.

In the February of these years, we tended to go and visit the Newtons even after Cardinal König's visits had stopped, and used to

pray at the grotto in the grounds of the Catholic Church of the Resurrection, on Fort Myers Beach. While there in 1993 we both had the idea of talking to the Poor Clare Sisters, in whose chapel the Cardinal used to say Mass, about getting instruction. They referred us to their elderly chaplain, Father Raney, who embarked upon a series of very enjoyable and informative talks with us. He wasn't in the slightest bit persuasive, he answered our many questions, and suggested on our return home that if we still wanted to pursue formal Catholic instruction, we should seek out our local priest.

We had only just moved to Taplow at that time, where the only centre of spiritual – and, to a great degree, social – community life seemed to be the Church of England. We had just begun to befriend the rector and, through attending communion there regularly, make friends among the congregation. But when we expressed our concern to Father Raney, he wasn't particularly sympathetic. He simply said, 'That's part of the sacrifice.'

It was only our 'inner voice' that impelled us to visit what at first we thought to be the rather charmless Catholic church in the next village, where we asked the priest after Mass if we might come to talk to him. He was rather offhand and said that we should ring up the next day if we wanted to make an appointment. We did, and in the end he took us on for an hour a week for the best part of nine months – and became a very good friend.

I studied the 700-page Catechism and we asked Father Russ all our questions. He especially instructed us in the concept of 'grace', as he had asked another priest about Moral Re-Armament and was told that these people did not know much about grace. But we were prepared to be regarded as novices on the spiritual path, despite having lived the Christian way as best we could over many years.

Father Russ never pressed us and every now and again would say, 'Do you want to continue?' We told Gordon what we had embarked on, and he told us that he was at first angry, as joining the Roman Catholic Church didn't accord with what he felt was a forward-looking spiritual path. However, he said, 'then I realised that this was, for you.' Nonetheless, when the time came for our being received as

Catholics, I was troubled lest this step divide us from our loved son, who had his Christian rearing in the Protestant tradition. I went down to the Anglican village churchyard and stood in front of the cross on the war memorial and prayed for reassurance. The answer I got in my heart was, 'You are on the right track.' Gordon didn't come to the service, but sent us a magnificent bouquet of flowers.

A couple of Christmases later, when Gordon was visiting from New York, we went to midnight mass together at Stonor. At this manor near Henley-on-Thames, mass has been celebrated in the little and beautiful chapel that adjoins the house since 1349, including the turbulent times of the Reformation and Civil War when priests had to be hidden. William Campion, who was later hanged, even had his printing press in the attic. Our Christmas Eve there was a magical moonlit night, and we could see the shadows of an ancient ring of standing stones falling against the lawn, and deer silhouetted in the park.

In due season Cardinal König invited us for a weekend in Vienna. He asked me to read lessons at mass. Afterwards, sitting and sipping a cup of herb tea in his apartment, he said, 'Welcome to the Church of the Apostles. I thought you were walking in this direction, but I never thought I should talk to you about it.' He gave us a rosary which had been given to him by the Pope, and which hangs in our bedroom.

At the Friday evening mass when we were received and confirmed into the Catholic Church, the village of Burnham's usual small congregation was added to by Marjory's sister and her husband, and John and Elizabeth Lester – close colleagues, and also recent Catholics. In his homily, Father Russ said, 'We in the Catholic Church in England have become accustomed to being misunderstood and in earlier times, persecuted. Gordon and Marjory have been a lifetime with Moral Re-Armament, so they, too, have been no strangers to misunderstanding and even persecution. I would like to think that by receiving them into the Church, we are saying "Thank you" to them for their lives of hard work in Christian service.'

However, when some time later he called unexpectedly and invited me to undergo training in the Permanent Diaconate, I was amazed.

I felt I had to say that my work with MRA was a continuing commitment and that I could not promise to be physically available for service in the Church in the same way as the existing deacons. ‘No matter, I think that this further training will help you in the international work you are doing,’ he said. So I agreed, but cautiously.

Father Russ had me for regular tutorials and set me challenging essays, lending me weighty theological tomes for my research. My papers included ‘Grace’, ‘Science and Religion’, ‘Mary’, ‘The Eucharist’, and at the end, ‘The Diaconate’. When it came to saying why I wanted to be ordained a deacon (which is the first level of the priesthood) I had to express my reservations – it had been Father Russ’s initiative, rather than mine.

I had already been to see the Bishop, who had welcomed my candidacy, as did the Monsignor responsible for vocations. My essays had all been accepted, with scarcely any correction. But later I heard through Father Russ – now Canon Russ – that the Ordinands’ Committee felt that my own work was ‘too wide-ranging’ for me to be attached to a church. This of course is what I had said at the outset. To be honest, I was really relieved at avoiding what would have been inevitable, a conflict of loyalties in terms of time and programme, although vocationally I could certainly see them as an honourable pairing.

However, I highly valued the study and instruction I received from Tim Russ over those 18 or so months. I shared the essays with friends, including Father Raney.

Our journey to a richer faith proved to be both spiritual and temporal. We had long dreamed of seeing some of the holy places visited by Jesus and the apostles, as well as the far shores of the Mediterranean and the Bosphorus, where East meets West. After receiving a small inheritance, we made a journey to the Holy Land itself, and later took a cruise from Athens past the Greek Islands and through the Dardanelles to Gallipoli – forever etched in the Australian mind – and on to Istanbul, as well as Ephesus, Rhodes and Cyprus.

In 1996 Marjory and I had six memorable days in Rome, invited by French colleagues Michel and Micheline Sentis. Michel’s friend-

ships in the Vatican go back 40 years. Our purpose was to inform certain senior churchmen about the forthcoming programme to mark the fiftieth anniversary of our conferences at Caux, and to invite them to participate. It was also a chance to see and feel the ancient, and the more recent, architecture and history, and the graciousness of the capital of Italy and Roman Catholicism.

First, we met Cardinal Francis Arinze, a Nigerian, who was then President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue – which means the relationship between the Catholic Church and other faiths. The Vatican is, as you might imagine, a formal place, and we had no introduction, though Michel prefers one. But we had a letter of invitation to Caux from the Swiss Foundation for MRA for the Cardinal, and Michel had prepared a fine one-page document outlining the way in which MRA had reached people of little or no belief. It illustrated how when people heed the voice within and accept absolute moral guidelines, not only is this for the betterment of themselves and society but the Holy Spirit often then leads them to faith and sometimes to the Church. Michel related this to a Vatican II document.

Cardinal Arinze listened carefully and asked questions. ‘Do I understand correctly that many people are wary of the Church if they are approached in a formal way at first, so you approach them from an appreciation of their own beliefs? So, if they are Hindus, they become better Hindus and if they are Muslim, they become better Muslims, and that you find unity in this approach?’ This was indeed at the very heart of Frank Buchman’s mission, himself a committed Christian. I told him how having had a calling to Christian service 50 years ago, just recently I had been led to the Catholic Church. ‘That’s wonderful, you have had a rich experience,’ he said.

When we met with Cardinal Edward Cassidy, the then President of the Pontifical Council for the Advancement of Christian Unity – an Australian, whom Michel and I had met before – he appreciated the sensitivity and restraint with which our parish priest, and over the years, Cardinal König, had approached our enquiries about the Catholic Church. ‘You don’t want to push something on to someone,’

he said. 'At the same time, we are encouraged to share the riches of our faith.'

The Vatican's earlier objection to MRA was based on a misunderstanding and dated from the period before the Second Vatican Council. It was a time when, for the Vatican, any non-Catholic movement was suspect, particularly if it tried to involve Catholics – all kinds of movements were banned for Catholics at that time, not just MRA.

Frank Buchman had once made a speech containing the phrase 'MRA is the good road of an ideology. Catholic, Jew and Protestant, Hindu, Moslem, Buddhist and Confucianist all find they can unite and travel along this good road together.' In orthodox Catholic minds, this could be interpreted as the heresy of indifferentism. As a result, the Holy Office that had issued the warning that posed such a challenge for us in winning support for our campaign in the Philippines at that time. However, ten years later Cardinal Ottoviani, who had headed the Holy Office at that time, said 'There was a misunderstanding, but that is all over.' Cardinal König had said the same to Cardinal John O'Connor of New York, when he met him there with us in 1986.

Cardinal Arinze's office had arranged for us to attend a General Papal Audience. To our astonishment, we found that we were seated in the front row of the auditorium, which holds 3,000. Several choirs sang beautifully, while a group of bishops from all over the world sat to one side of the dais. Called to Rome for their three-yearly visit, each would then have his chance to talk with the Pope, at that time John Paul II. Four of them read in four different languages, then the Holy Father gave a homily. Then followed formal greetings to what seemed like hundreds of groups, most of which stood up. The Poles were excitedly vocal. We all said the Lord's Prayer together, then the Pope gave his blessing in many languages. The atmosphere, despite the enormous crowd, was intimate, like a large, eager family.

At the end, the Pope walked stiffly but unaided across the wide stage and down the wide white marble steps to greet the groups at the front – some in wheelchairs, children, newlyweds, and then right along the first row. He came to Michel who introduced the four of us

as working with Moral Re-Armament for peace and reconciliation in the world. Michel explained that we had seen Cardinal Arinze and that Marjory and I were 'new Catholics'. 'English?' asked the Pope. He nodded when I told him that we had had the privilege of a careful preparation by Cardinal König in the riches of the Catholic Church. He held our hands, saying 'I am glad you have come.' Neither Marjory nor I will ever forget the sense we both had of something truly spiritual and far-seeing in his deep, penetrating clear blue eyes as he took our hands and said those few words.

On the other side of Marjory was a little Italian girl who had climbed over the barrier that separated the front row from those behind – quite out of order, as the security men had already indicated to her to return to her family. But she had squeezed back through. The Pope held her hand while talking to the next group, then bent down and kissed her forehead. Her family was ecstatic. It truly was, 'Suffer the little children come unto me.'

Entrusting a Capital of Ideas 1981 and beyond



Leadership – Finding the Future – Naming a Vision

A year before his untimely death, I recall an occasion when Peter Howard was discussing with a large number of us the leadership and the future of MRA. He said, ‘When Frank Buchman was alive he hoped that there would be a core of leaders, neck and neck, who would follow him. He was the initiator, and the future leadership could not be taken for granted. But when Buchman died there was not a core of leadership ready to step forward, so I did. I hope that when I die there will be at least a dozen of you who are prepared to carry this work into the future.’

Four years before, I had made a decision with Peter and Paul Campbell that I would be one of those who felt a personal responsibility for the world work. So when Peter made this somewhat dramatic statement, while knowing that I had often failed or held back, I could reaffirm my decision in my own heart and be prepared to be one of the twelve – obviously an apostolic number!

When Peter died in Peru in 1965 we got the shocking news at the daily 7.30am meeting for those of us based in central London. We took time to be quiet together. My thought was, ‘Lay down your life for the brotherhood.’

This thought did not fully take traction with me until I became Secretary of the Oxford Group in early 1971. But then I felt it come upon me, like a mantle. Apart from attending to the necessary ‘official’ work of our legal body, I felt that I had several commissions, one of which was to build and develop the cohesion and outreach

of the work we were trying to do both nationally and globally. One initiative with this goal in mind was the establishment of a monthly meeting in London for all of our full-time workers, to which a wider number came as the years went by. Another was the working dinners. And as a tool we started to prepare well-presented Annual Reports (together with our accounts, which although always compiled in accordance with company and charity regulations, had not been distributed previously), to send to the editors of all the main newspapers, to the cabinet ministers and Civil Service heads who could have a natural connection with our work, and to all the church leaders.

On the international front, after Peter's death and in the early Seventies, representatives of our various European programmes began to meet at The Hague to look at our common objectives. A group of us of a similar age bracket kept in close touch. And it was as part of this ethos that I was invited to join the MRA board in America after it was relaunched. Caux was a major focus each year and means of co-ordination. But as not all could be conveniently at Caux at the same time, and those from Australasia, Asia and Africa even less so, we had other meetings in various parts of the world. However, the need for a democratic way to set agreed priorities was evident.

My feelings were perhaps best summed up in a stream of thoughts I still have noted down:

June 26th, 1979

It is generally acknowledged that we are moving into a different age. Oil is running out. Conservation is gaining ground over exploitation of resources. Communications give blanket coverage and are instant. More people are either dropping out or questioning, 'What is it all for?'

Values remain constant in the spiritual realm, despite efforts within and without religious circles to unseat or dilute them. There is a continuing assault on standards and an erosion of what is regarded as normal behaviour from forces in the secular world.

The most spectacular experiment in the non-God idea which has ever been conducted over massive population mobilisations – communism – has been discredited. Science and technology offer limitless

material horizons. Yet it is doubtful that mankind as a total is any happier than, say, 100 years ago.

We are all increasingly familiar with the questions involved with the North-South dialogue. Mass destruction, mutually administered, is available at a button's press. This may happen. Human life, on the one hand, is held in higher regard through surgical and medical advance; and on the other, is cheaper through the automobile's onslaught, the increased use of terror for political purposes and the downgrading of human worth which follows acceptance of non-religious interpretations of history – past and future.

One issue is clear: mankind either adapts to new challenges and makes opportunities out of them or we tear ourselves apart because our behavioural sciences have not kept pace with our techniques and our expanding appetites. My overall feeling is that God raised up Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group and Moral Re-Armament for specific purposes, which, clearly, did not end with the death of Frank Buchman and Peter Howard and the other pioneers. The basic standards are eternal. But it seems to me that we are expressing much of our truth in similar ways to those expressions of earlier years, much of the time. In other words, we are running too much on the momentum of the ideas of earlier decades, while the whole world context is changing around us...

The scientist, Steinmetz, said decades ago that the next great discoveries would be in the realm of the spirit. Has his forecast been fulfilled through Frank Buchman, or has it yet to be seen in totality? Probably the latter is true.

These thoughts seemed to me to be something of a revelation, and prompted me to suggest to colleagues that we plan a global get-together, a world delegate meeting if you will, scheduled well ahead, in a place which offered the maximum convenience to most, bearing in mind the best economy and with a certain isolation from our usual places of work. Each country would decide on its own representation and each representative would go from a united mind. I suggested the first half of 1980, and we all decided this was the way to go.

A perfect setting was found and we met at Nemi, near Rome, for two weeks in April 1980. All the MRA centres worldwide were

invited to send representation. We exchanged information and sought to clarify our agreed priorities, and agree on expressions of what MRA had to offer. We had some very fine input, including a brilliant confidential briefing from Michel Sentis on how the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church in 1951 had 30 years later changed to one of welcome co-operation. And we were all at an audience with the Pope, John Paul II, in St Peter's Square, when Cardinal König introduced some of our number to His Holiness. The Pope said to Michel Sentis, 'I will pray for your work. I am grateful for all that you do. May your work be blessed.'

We had come to Nemi, 46 of us from 19 countries, drawn by our response to two simple, God-given needs sensed by our whole world fellowship: that groups of us take time apart for reflection and decision regularly. Reflection included allowing God to illumine our shortcomings, drawing deeper on his grace and questing deeper for new insights. We looked hard at the world as well as the work and reached new clarity about issues and areas for the time ahead.

In our choice of meeting place we were given a bonus in the way of deeper contact with a similarly-sized international group of Catholic missionary priests and brothers undergoing a five-months 'refresher course'. They welcomed us as brothers and sisters, invited us to speak to them and answered questions. They included us in their chapel services and even gave us a farewell party. But none of us will ever forget the 'sermon of recommissioning' preached to us directly by an Irish priest working in the Philippines, Father Michael. For 15 minutes he spoke to us, with his fellow priests sitting behind him in the church, of all that we had learned from each other. Reminding us of our own decisions in starting out on this path, Father Michael said, 'When I say yes to God, my life is never the same again. We all have known failures. But the one real failure is to give up trying.' He was confident that God would win.

This sense of universality for all those who believe, and this group's inclusion of us, moved me so much that I found myself in my little room weeping, and it was some time before I was able to join the rest of the gathering for our meal.

Nemi was followed in the next years by similar meetings of somewhat shorter duration in France, Germany and Japan. But, by 1987 it was clear that we needed a more identifiable leadership, supported by the fellowship, able to give direction and make decisions for us all. But if the goal was clear enough, how to reach it?

We knew that what we really needed was an international group of six to ten leaders. But since the deaths of Buchman and Howard, and the fractures focused on Up With People, many were wary of a centralized leadership. So we needed to launch a series of more tightly-knit conferences or consultations, smaller in number, overlapping in composition, as representative as possible, out of which might grow the leadership we sought. This we did in 1989 and in the years that followed in many different parts of the world.

But still, some of us wondered if we could set a bolder agenda? In 1998, partly prompted by Sir Howard Cooke, Governor-General of Jamaica, during his visit to Caux the previous summer, an international MRA Consultation took place in Jamaica, at which time there was agreement to establish a 'panel' of leaders, with a document reporting on the discussions and decision to lay before our world teams.

Frank Buchman himself did not make lone decisions. There was always a group around him. That said, the founder of a great movement has a great authority, and he expected us to take his ideas and instructions seriously. However, he also expected each of us to take the same responsibility. But after Peter Howard died unexpectedly in 1965 there was a real crisis of authority, and between the various 'leadership groupings' within MRA, so that it took us almost 35 years to get to the point where we had an agreed world leadership.

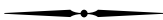
I apologize if I make the above too personal a memory of the history of post-Howard leadership of Moral Re-Armament. I can only give my account. Others would record it from their point of view. I could name many who have faithfully and consistently contributed to its development, a number of whom I have mentioned in the course of this story.

Frank Buchman gave a talk on 5 February 1949, in Garmisch, Germany, in which he said:

Each age holds a capital of ideas in trust for its successors. The fellowship, as joint possessors, can look with zest to the adventure of receiving further disclosures. The gain will be more than an addition, it will be a transformation. For this age the gain is Moral Re-Armament. Saving a crumbling civilisation is passed. It has crumbled... We are in transition. MRA is one concept growing out of another organically.

At the chapel in Keswick in 1908 Buchman experienced the recuperative and restorative processes of God. MRA was such a moment, whether in the life of a Buchman or of anyone. As he himself observed, the future of what we have known as MRA is in moments like these occurring in different lives in different countries, the outcome being illustrated in national circumstances. He called it 'a continuity of such moments in the lives of all sorts of people, the outcome sometimes affecting their governments.'

And to ask his own question, with a world itself still in the making, what exactly did what we called MRA aim at remaking? 'Remaking what is wrong? It is more than this. It is adding to what is already right. It is being originative of relevant alternatives to evil, in economics, government policies and so on – Christ's basic experience for the human race. MRA is for all.'



Over some years there were many discussions and certain discontent among some of those of us who worked together about the name 'Moral Re-Armament'. It was felt by many that this was a dated concept – good when it began, and very relevant to the moral and spiritual rearmament that Frank Buchman felt God called him to offer the world in 1938 in the face of the material rearmament the world witnessed in the build-up to World War II. It was also an idea that remained appropriate for many years. But over time, did it really represent our message and our initiatives, and what was its meaning to those outside our own group? However, a serious study was needed in order to ascertain what would be better to serve our world work now.

We in Britain had a lengthy debate and sent representatives to a meeting in Washington, where input from the whole globe was gath-

ered. It was most interesting to hear that people of some countries felt the existing name was exactly what spelled out the task they had undertaken for the present and future, while others, and I should say the majority, were convinced that MRA or Moral Re-Armament no longer described our present operation.

In 2001 there was agreement that 'Initiatives of Change' would be the new name, and each country where our work is active found its way to announce this, some retaining the old name in addition in order to provide continuity, together with a logo we all share. Thus from the Millennium forward we have had a new name, but still promoting the same aims and vision.

I say we should be prepared to do big things, with God and through God. We should take pride in MRA and IofC. We have had many faults. We've made many mistakes. But we've been handed a jewel, which is meant to sparkle. The future has wonderful mysteries to unravel.

18

Stay

2002



The Story of a Stroke

I look back now to 20 March, 2002, and to collapsing on to the support on our landing at home in Taplow before going to bed. Then it seems like a flickering movie. I had had a major stroke: I have heard what happened next.

But my memory recalls Gordon Scott sobbing on my chest early in the morning, after driving out from London. Then I remember an ambulance team getting me on to the stair lift that the previous owner had left behind, and carrying me into the ambulance. My next flicker is of Marjory and Gordon Scott going off from the Accident and Emergency Unit, where I was being monitored for several hours, quite late in the evening, to find something to eat for themselves at the staff canteen. I had, I am told, ‘nil by mouth’ written at the foot of my bed.

One of the following nights, I heard the word ‘Stay’, seemingly spoken to me from another place, and I knew I must not give up.

There were many difficulties to cope with from then on. Drip-feeding, infection, rashes on my face, pain in my right leg, total inability to use my right hand or arm or leg, or even to sit up, inability to communicate, to mention some. All the time there were therapists coming to encourage recovery, but I was at my lowest ebb. One night, not aware of sleeping at all and with life not worth living, I decided to knock on God’s door to get His attention. ‘Do you want me to live or die?’ I asked. I felt so hopeless. But He said to me, ‘I want you to live.’

Taking thickened fluid, even thickened tea, was appalling, even though the idea was so that I would not choke. I longed to get beyond that. But then I had puréed food, which was awful, absolutely awful. Simply being able to get on to solid food made life so much better. But after a setback I went back to being fed gravy once again. It was a long time before the nurses would help me get dressed – I was in pyjamas for four months. Our priests, and a nun called Sister Norah, would give me communion regularly. But sometimes in the early stages they had to wait for me because I was too ill.

Marjory was my lifeline. I can still see her head appearing round the corner of the ward, with her cheery face. When after about five months Terry, the occupational therapist, found me an electric wheelchair I would go with Marjory to the visitors' café for Coca-Cola in the afternoons, and occasionally a Magnum ice cream. Then followed an almost daily visit to the chapel to pray together. It was a haven of peace.

My right side was affected with varying degrees of paralysis, resulting from a clot that had travelled to the left side of my brain. After the first two days, I had physiotherapy five times a week, except when I was very sick with life-threatening high fevers resulting from an infection. There was also regular occupational and speech therapy. However, nothing happened at the weekends, except for Marjory's daily visits from 3pm, although sometimes a nurse would come and invite me to the Sunday morning service, and I was wheeled along. One night Marjory stayed with me till near midnight, because I couldn't bear to be alone. Nightly she would clean my teeth, help me get washed and ready for the night, and pray with me.

Gordon came as often as he could, leaving work in London early to catch first the Underground, then a train and finally a taxi to get to the hospital before the end of visiting hours. A stroke of fortune was that he was working with an author who lived nearby, and could come to see me before an editorial session or if one finished early. Michael often joined us at weekends.

Many good friends visited. One of the lowest moments was when

Marjory brought roses from our garden. I wept – I so wanted to go home and see the roses actually growing.

The consultant said I could go to the nearby pub for Sunday lunch, so Gordon and Michael wheeled me there. It was marvellous to be out of the ward and eating other than hospital food. But the astonishing intervention after five and a half months was, in September, to be able and allowed leave from hospital to go to Vienna for Cardinal König's Golden Jubilee celebration.

By then I had been given the all clear to start spending some weekends at home, when I was not needed for therapy, but it was amazing to be allowed to take a plane and head off into such unknown territory. But the staff at the stroke unit encouraged me to consider the prospect of the trip as a goal for that stage of my recovery. And so it was. Marjory was ably assisted in this enterprise by my sister Una, who came to stay for the month of August.

The Cardinal himself was barely recovered from an illness, and his doctor ordered that the only function he could undertake was the formal evening event. But His Eminence disagreed, saying: 'If my friend is coming from England in a wheelchair, I want to give him lunch.' It was the last time we were to see him, and it felt like a miraculous encounter. When the Cardinal telephoned us at our hotel to say goodbye the morning after his celebration, he commented that my speech was clearer than the previous day. It was hard to return to hospital life after such a contrasting and adventure-filled few days away.

I was given wonderful care in hospital. The staff nurses – so many of whom were Filipino – and many student nurses and health-care assistants became my hospital family. One, Shazia, whose family was from Pakistan, came to see me some time after my return home, bringing me a little teddy bear and a mug as a present. There was Chris, a tall young man, and Terry, the occupational therapist, who would take me for my bath to the other end of the hospital, and who bought a birthday card for me to give Marjory. And there was Margaret from South Africa, the Ward Sister, who said I was one of her favourites, and Fiona, who came to my eightieth birthday party representing the whole ward. She said, 'I look in that corner and still

expect to see you there.' The consultant, Dr Dove, said when we returned for physiotherapy one day, 'You were one of my minor miracles. You have surpassed my expectations.' I think he meant I was lucky to pull through. Before I left hospital, he had said, 'You've got to go. You are the longest in-patient I have ever had.'

I may say that it had not been my wish to stay the length of time I did. I was longing to be home, but the physiotherapists were determined to help me to walk independently, and they achieved their goal. I now manage with a quad stick and a supporting hand, or a walking frame, and drive an electric scooter around the lanes of the East Sussex village in which we now live.

On the day I left hospital, Marjory made a cake for all the nurses and staff of ward six at Wexham Park Hospital. It was six and a half months after I had been admitted. I shall never forget returning home that day and going up our garden path.

Epilogue



From my early years I wanted to be something – something important – something very important. The concept of MRA, that I could always ask God what to do, reinforced my aspirations. There was a perfect plan for me. In full-time work with MRA, at first I jibbed at the general injunction ‘to make others great’. ‘Why? Why not I be great?’

Over the years I suppose, in life’s university of hard knocks, I came to see that the concept of dying to self created new life in others; that enabling growth in others was my main role, not seeking recognition and place for myself.

And yet, there is a contradiction here. There should be leadership. Peter Howard expected me to give leadership but sought to temper my arrogance. ‘Me? Arrogant?’ I said. I felt a failure from time to time. But arrogance could mean being too proud to ask for the grace of God. One friend said to me, ‘Remember, there is a New Testament too.’ You can’t earn God’s grace: it is a gift.

In the Sixties I had a call to ‘lay down your life for the brotherhood’. And I recall the thought, ‘Build the cohesion of the work’. MRA had an enabling role, enabling great changes to take place without the world always recognising how it was they happened. My life’s theme has been to serve.

I came to realise that at heart I crave to be appreciated and that the leadership needed would not always be appreciated by all. I settled to be among equals, not the first among equals but in a circle of equals. And to help those equipped to lead, to put your neck on the line to do so, ‘for it is in losing your life that you will find it.’ We are meant

to pave the way for the Messiah, as did John the Baptist, not to strive to be the Messiah.

I came to realise that there are some who are more talented than the average, those who are meant to stride forward, albeit with salty fellowship. But then, when you hand over responsibility, do you rejoice when others are applauded for doing a great job, or do you secretly hope that they too will stumble occasionally? You can guess at the answer to this.

It is more than modesty that can cause me to be uncomfortable with praise. I remember a tussle about the Biblical instruction to 'humbly consider the other the better man'. 'Is that honest, if I feel I am the better man?' I found I was asking myself. It was a turning point, to consider the other the better man and honestly feeling it to be true.

Some are born to lead and should be helped to lead. All are meant to be fully responsible. All are meant to help others to be their best, so that enabling, not achieving becomes the heart's longing. At least, this is how I see one of life's lessons. I appreciate that others will have other views because they are other, but it is in this that I feel freedom lies – in the sense of 'in whose service is perfect freedom' – and a satisfied and happy heart. And I know that it has all been put rather better long ago. 'To give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to labour and not to seek for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will.'

All my life I have overreacted to the fallout of my mistakes and to being blamed and I have a strong character trait of seeking to please, of avoiding disapproval. Maybe my stern correcting father made me wish to avoid mistakes or at least to avoid being caught out. I was often wild and wilful but didn't like being caught out. In the course of over five decades of full-time work with MRA, there were several periods when I felt I made such a hash of things that I thought I should perhaps look for something else to do. But when I thought in these terms, I was always reminded that it wasn't Frank Buchman or one of his colleagues who called me to full-time MRA work, but Christ.

But after being bawled out by particular senior colleagues, I had the habit of slinking off to the doghouse and staying there until I could

somehow work my passage back to acceptance, usually by agreeing to all or most that had been said about me, as soon as possible. Scripturally, of course this is incorrect procedure. ‘Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven’ is the true way back. I suppose this also means that I have always found it hard to forgive myself, or to accept, and feel, God’s forgiveness.

I know that reaching out for the new has often enticed me away from staying long enough with the old to bring it to fruition. But this has not always been of my initiating. After 18 months of full-time work with MRA in Australia, 1946–47, Jim Coulter and I were invited to Caux. We went, and I did not return to Australia until 1953 – and then only for a few months. During that long time, which included the five years of work alongside Bill Jaeger based from Britain, I was invited to India by Buchman in 1952, which was followed by the years in other Asian lands, and I did not resume long-stay work in Britain until 1965. And when, after some years in Liverpool and Tirley Garth, Marjory and I were asked to go to London we did have seven satisfying and fruitful years in 44 Charles Street and six more years in Buckingham Place, if punctuated by many journeys, especially to the USA. And there were visits to Australia in the Seventies, Eighties and Nineties, as well as to India, Japan, South America, the Middle East and other European countries.

I am not saying that I should have said ‘no’ to initiatives or invitations, but being asked to new and exacting ventures had a price tag in that sometimes close friends, in industry especially, were left behind, and while not forgotten entirely, were neglected by me. I think, for example, of Sibnath Banerjee in Calcutta. In some cases others continued where I left off. But if it is said that variety is the spice of life, then spice I have had aplenty.

After over 60 years of close association and responsibility with MRA, how do I assess it? Though my failures, and those of others, have taken the bloom off ‘the first fine careless rapture’, nonetheless I have never been disloyal to the idea because I believe it to be of God. Buchman’s life has been brilliantly described by Garth Lean in his biography, but the definitive study of MRA and its place in history,

and its significance for the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, has yet to be written. It will take a skilled pen and a team of researchers, but the archives are accessible.

Why is this important? Some of our published claims have been overstated. Some writings reflect history from a particular person's own point of view. And there are many accounts.

MRA's message and method are deceptively simple. When St Francis was chosen by God to live and proclaim His will, the truths were all there in the Church of his day. When Buchman was transformed at Keswick, he received and transmitted revelations no less startling than those which St Francis did, or St Benedict when he fathered the monastic system, or St Ignatius Loyola who set the Jesuits marching.

So I am jealous for MRA and Initiatives of Change. I do not want its ideas deemed ordinary or its cutting edge blunted or its magic replaced by secular explanations.

Our dear friend Stuart Blanch described God's plan in history in a brilliant survey beginning with the Jewish prophets. However he concluded, 'But there is still the mystery.' When I sent Morris Martin, out of close touch with MRA since the Sixties but formerly a key player, an invitation to come to Caux in 2001, he wrote, 'It's far better organized. But you have lost the magic. And yet I do not see how you could have developed in any other way. The magic happened around Buchman because of who he was. You have made leadership more accessible and far more participatory. We never were able to achieve what you are doing because we had Buchman.' Morris believes that Buchman's succession was not adequately foreseen nor prepared by him, and Peter Howard's leadership was seemingly cut short.

Frankly, I believe the magic can always be present.

So those of us who were called, as Buchman or St Francis were, but who were lesser mortals, have had to do the best we can. After all, it has been hard, indeed impossible, to emulate Buchman. A Buddhist abbot said of him, 'A man like this comes along once in a thousand years,' and Stuart Blanch said after reading the Lean biography, 'I see him not as a saint but a prophet.' Buchman himself claimed to be an

ordinary man whom God used – ‘It is not I but God who does it,’ he said. In one sense he was ordinary, a rural-bred American from a small town, in another sense the well-attested record is extraordinary, which Morris acknowledges.

Today’s Moral Re-Armament and Initiatives of Change ‘programmes’ have developed because of the work people have pursued, and the ways in which the ideas are communicated have evolved according to the nature of that work and those undertaking it. Buchman believed in illustrating his ideas, often through stories of people and situations changing, and often using plays and films – some outstanding but not all of which, in hindsight, were of particularly great stature. Now we tend not to use performance in the same way, and there are new ways of sharing and developing the ideas. The Caux conferences are far better planned than when Buchman lived, when ideas for meetings usually emerged on the morning of the day in question, with 15 or so of us crowded into his bedroom. This method had a spontaneity, which was often magical, but sometimes there were flops. Now we do our best to pre-prepare and shape, invite the speakers well ahead but also allow space for the unexpected. Provided the balance is right, and it must be through teaching as well as example, we have a treasure, and often there is magic too.

So, what of the future of what we now call Initiatives of Change? I see it continuing to be a yeast in global, national and local society, enabling changes to come in culture, and in our ways of living and thinking. These can fulfil Buchman’s vision of ‘empty hands filled with work, empty stomachs with food and empty hearts with an idea that really satisfies’. And to do this, we seek to build grand coalitions of those who think of others as well as themselves, of those who acknowledge God’s supremacy, or, at least, are willing to work shoulder to shoulder with those who do. What will ultimately fail are those endeavours that we nurture while forgetting the author of the endeavours, of polishing and demolishing the fruits while the roots of faith are not watered.

We must never despair if our edifices come tumbling down from time to time, for the God we serve is a jealous God and our failures

may simply serve to remind us that He insists on coming ahead of all our noblest aspirations.

And, after all this scribbling, what are my perspectives of my own last 80-plus years? The first of the graces must be that of gratitude. I am grateful to God and to my parents for life itself. I am grateful that He spared my life in the Second World War, despite three crashes, in nearly 1,000 hours of flying and on millions of miles of flying as a passenger since. I am grateful for a calling to a life of usefulness and satisfaction, when my life might have been prematurely ended or self-seeking. I am supremely grateful in so much of this to have been in active partnership with Marjory, and for my son and his partner and friends aplenty – friends with whom I have risked much, and whose comradeship I have relished and cherish. I am grateful to have seen and experienced so much of the world. And to have been entrusted with serious responsibilities by my peers with at least three fresh starts after serious stumbles.

Not surprisingly, there are also downsides to reflect upon. But my mistakes have been my choices, not of others' affliction. The support of our son was sometimes at sacrifice for him, and it is a regret that sometimes he had no say in deciding the sacrifices in which he shared. Perhaps that is always the case with parents and children. However, as you age, mistakes can haunt your memory and once you are released of them it is of no benefit to indulge this self-centred tendency. Always consider that your cup is 51 per cent full, not 49 per cent empty.

Of a fast-changing world I would not say much, for pundits, more learned and eloquent than I, can be read in the daily press or new books. The increased tempo of world events is, of course, staggering. In my 'heyday' with MRA, I sought to study and grasp and thus be informed about most of the major trends and events. It would be futile for me to try today. But I do try to keep myself informed.

But can I study tea leaves, or read the sky's portents about where we are heading as an incredibly interdependent world community? For me, far more important, more worrying than fascism and communism have been, or terrorism remains, is the secularization of society. In western countries regular polls may state that a majority still

believe in God, but year by year He is allowed less say in the framing and enforcement of legislation. He is mocked and marginalized too often, His gifts of love and procreation are trivialized. In 1966, when I first met him, Cardinal König talked about nihilism, the believing in nothingness, as being what would cause the Soviet empire to crumble, and of the threat of that eroding the West. Of that era's rebellious youth, he said to an ambassador from a communist state, 'They hate us today, they will hate you tomorrow.' Well, communism has come and gone, and we see in many places hate corroding the world.

The world's leading movers and shakers meet regularly. But the disruption to the world congresses at Seattle and Genoa and fears of the same at Gleneagles seemed controlled by Trotsky's acolytes – communism may be dead as a system, with exceptions that include North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba and in some remaining degrees China, but it seems elements of its political tools persist. At least philosophical communism has a logic, however perverted. But activists who disrupt meetings, which despite serious defects have the potential to help the world, are seemingly fuelled by illogic, by two of mankind's fatal and primitive illusions: the power of hate and the seeking of vengeance. I am reminded of the Wild West saloon, where the bartender calls out to quarrelling patrons, 'Don't shoot the pianist. He is doing his best.' Third World debts may often result from greed of lender and corruption of borrower, but there is an extraordinary global alliance of well-motivated people whose work gets hijacked by such nihilism – as well as by those in power who seem not to accept our collective responsibility about shared issues such as the destruction of the environment. I respect more the do-gooders than the do-badders, but the former could become more effective and the latter more useful. Don't shoot the pianist. Teach him how to play better tunes.

My life has been above all a pilgrimage of faith, beginning with the prayers my mother taught me. And it is gratifying in later years to have 'discovered grace'. So much of my life has been characterized by self-effort and striving. Lately I learn that of course I must give of my best, no matter what, but that there is also unremitting grace abundantly available, at every bend of the road. It cannot be earned, and it is often

humblingly unexpected. When St Paul begged Jesus to remove his 'thorn in the flesh', he was told, 'My grace is enough for thee.' When I am inclined to despair about my continuing carnal and approval-seeking temptations at 80, God says, 'Leave it all with Me. Don't dignify the Devil's lures by even considering their awfulness.'

It is a tough doctrine to labour in the vineyard all day and only be paid what the man gets who turns up at sunset. But if I knew why God seems to be unfair at times, I would be God. And then there is always Grace.

There is also mercy. And with mercy, there is hope. There is always the hope of a fresh start, for me, and for the world. God gave us all freedom to choose to reject Him, even though our cleverness imperils humankind's continuation. I will never forget witnessing a conversation between Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Malcolm Muggeridge, who were discussing the folly of man in fashioning with his cleverness the nuclear arsenals that could destroy the world. Muggeridge, in his lately-found faith, said, 'I cannot conceive of a God who gave man, whom He has made, the intelligence to fashion these weapons, to allow men to destroy the world which He has made.' Solzhenitsyn said, 'I agree.'

But as Christians we are taught that while we may have faith and we may have hope, the virtue to be sought and prized must be love. I have always found it hard to love those who have wronged me, really wronged me. I have to keep coming back to the prayer My Saviour taught us, 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.'

But it is also painful to love and be loved. I felt that in its first acute way when my adored and adoring mother died in Australia and I was 12,000 miles away, involved in Britain's war. I have had to choose and re-choose to be vulnerable, prepared to be hurt, weep when others weep, laugh when others laugh, and, most difficult, applaud when others do better than I do. And yet, I would not have done anything else.

A Voice from Buddhism



*From the Introduction to Translating the Visuddhimagga
by Phra Bimaladhamma*

When translating the Brahmavihara chapter on the practice of loving-kindness, I looked for a man on earth with a quality of mind very similar to the God Brahma. Such a man is very difficult to find, but I found one, in M. Henri Dunant of Switzerland. He saw the suffering of the soldiers that were wounded in the battle of Solferino in Italy in 1859. He could not bear to see their pain and he had the idea of creating the International Red Cross Organization to take care of wounded soldiers in the war, regardless of nationality or religion, enemies and friends alike...

Another example is Dr Frank Buchman of America, the founder of the Moral Re-Armament organization, or MRA. This organization aims to propagate morals to the people of the world to secure permanent peace. Any man from any religion, any nation, any race or any colour can be a member of this organization if he is ready to practise absolute purity according to the rules of this organization. Dr Frank Buchman had the aim and object of propagating these principles to people throughout the world regardless of nationality or country. Once he came to Thailand to propagate his ideas and some of the people of Thailand went to attend the Moral Re-Armament Conference. I was one of those delegates.

The Four Principles of MRA are:

1. Absolute Truth
2. Absolute Purity

3. Absolute Unselfishness
4. Absolute Love

Though it may be that not many people achieve them, they do really practise them with full faith. This is better than having greater numbers who do not have true faith.

Dr Frank Buchman had a very great heart: he looked upon all men and women of the world as his friends and brothers. He loved everyone, even those who wanted to harm him. Such a man is really great, and he practises loving kindness just as in the Brahmavihara practice of meditation. It is not easy to find men like him.

These examples show that we do not have the monopoly of goodness. I do not know in what religion M. Henri Dunant believed, but he was surely not a Buddhist. Dr Frank Buchman has found the four principles of MRA, for the people of the world to practise. Therefore, we Buddhists should not misunderstand ourselves and think that we are the best among all religions and look down on others.

Now M. Henri Dunant and Dr Frank Buchman are well-known all over the world for their loving kindness. Though M. Dunant died some time ago his name is remembered by people for ever. Dr Frank Buchman was known to me and I had the great privilege to be a good friend of his. He was a man of morality with a kind heart and unselfishness. He always spoke the best of others. He was loved and respected by many. Though he has died, it is only his body. His four principles will remain for ever for people to follow and have peace in their mind.

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Vulnerability



The following is from a talk I gave in June 1996 at Greencoat Place, the MRA/IofC headquarters in London, to associates and friends who gather together regularly. It has been our practice to listen to one of our number who has some experience or thinking to share with the others to help build our personal faith and collective spirit, before addressing the issues of the day, the nation – or indeed, the world.

I have just been reading a short life of St Patrick, the evangeliser of Ireland, the essential founder of the Christian Church in Ireland and the Patron Saint of all 32 counties.

One aspect of his life which impacted me was his vulnerability. He was vulnerable in a spiritual and psychological sense, to the end of his days. So I got to pondering whether this very vulnerability was the mainspring of his effectiveness.

Patrick was born into a first-century Christian family, and although there are various versions of his origins, they most likely lived in the west of England. At the age of 16 he was carried off by raiders and became a slave in the then pagan Ireland. For nine years he herded swine or sheep. In his book of saints, Frank Longford says, 'He turned to God, or maybe God turned to him.' In Patrick's own *Confession*, he said, 'My faith grew and my spirit was turned up, so that in a single day I said as many as a hundred prayers, and at night, nearly as many.'

God spoke to him in his sleep, as he put it, and led him to escape. Again, there are differing accounts as to where he went, but he was later reunited with his family, and went on to study for the priesthood. In a vision he was called to return to Ireland. But in his *Confession*

Patrick says that the Elders discovered something to his discredit, something he had confessed to 30 years before. He was turned down as a missionary to the Irish. In his *Confession* he wrote, 'So I was first uneducated, an exile, ignorant indeed, one who knows not how to provide for the future, but this I know most certainly that before I was humiliated I was like a stone that lies in the deep mud, and He came, who is mighty, and in his mercy took me up and indeed verily raised me on high and set me on top of the wall.' He was consecrated as a bishop in 432.

Then in his words, he was 'approved in the eyes of God and man.' Pope Celestine had ordained a Bishop to the Irish. His unexpected death led to Patrick taking up his mission to Ireland.

He was insulted because of having been a slave and as a foreigner. But his work flourished. He played a large part in getting slavery abolished in Ireland. He was described in the 'Hymn of Secundinus' as 'upon whom, as upon Peter, a Church was built', and 'that God sent him, like Paul, as an apostle to the Gentiles.'

Clearly, God used Patrick for mighty works in the island, which came to be known as one of saints and scholars. But he made no pretensions to be any kind of academic theologian. He was supremely a man of prayer. He saw visions and heard voices. His prayer was nourished by the Bible. But he was forever bemoaning his lack of education. He was conscious at all times of God's mercy not only to him but to the whole human race.

He retained a kind of human helplessness to the end of his days. One historian suggests that he never fully recovered from what the historian calls 'the severe psychological trauma' of being carried off at 16 into slavery. As a result, even as a venerable bishop, he could never quite lose the image of himself as utterly helpless, utterly defenceless and abandoned. He opens his *Confession* with 'I, Patrick, the sinner and the most illiterate, and the least of all the faithful and contemptible in the eyes of fellow men...'

Longford says that saintly scholars also say such things but Patrick really meant it. In his last chapter, Patrick says, 'whatever trifling matter I did – was the gift of God.'

I take time to dwell on Patrick because in some degree we will all relate to his experience of being often more used by God when we feel desperate and in need of grace than when we are confident.

St Paul wrote of being 'less than the least' and of being 'the chief of sinners'. But he was effective.

When our departed friend Matt Manson found himself seated next to Mother Teresa on a plane journey he naturally got talking with her. You may recall the story. Matt asked her, 'Are you concerned about who is going to carry on your work when you are gone?' 'No,' said Mother Teresa. 'Someone even more helpless than I am will come along.'

Peter Howard told of a talk with Frank Buchman on the eve of a big conference in the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island. Buchman had gone to inspect all the hotel rooms where his guests would be staying. As he climbed wearily into bed, he said to Peter, 'This is going to be a very great advance.' 'How can you be so sure?' asked Peter. 'Because I feel so utterly helpless,' said Frank.

In our weakness is His strength. In our vulnerability we can choose to turn to Him. I say 'can' because our human instinct is to avoid being vulnerable, being wrong, making mistakes, being exposed to ridicule, teasing or criticism. Disappointment has oftentimes turned me to sensual rather than spiritual redress. I like to feel confident, approved of, valued, even praised occasionally. I resist the collapse of my world. But it does collapse from time to time.

Recently, a friend – he is here – wrote me a fairly gentle reprimand about what he called a 'blind spot'. Instead of disregarding my instinct to explain and defend, I, as usual, wrote at length explaining and defending. Maybe he could have made his point differently but I made a big meal out of what was really a snack. Anxiety had outweighed grace which led to the 'blind spot' my friend saw in me.

It is not by chance but by God's design that the supreme example of humiliation is the Cross.

Last week John Vickers took Marjory and me to visit his old friend, the retired Catholic Bishop of Leeds, Gordon Wheeler, who gave the address at MRA's fiftieth anniversary service in St Margaret's,

Westminster. Most of you were there. He gave us a phrase in Latin, *STAT CRUX CUM VOLVITUM ORBIS*, which translated reads, 'The Cross stands with the world revolving around it.' Christ's acceptance of the Cross is supreme vulnerability.

Buchman was remarkably free from being affected by others' opinion of him. When he came to Australia and New Zealand with a chosen group he announced that he was going to stay two years. But he left after a few months. He said he had fresh leading. He had in six weeks in Canberra encouraged Allan Griffith, John Farquharson, Oliver Warin and Peter Barnett, all of whom have made notable contributions, nationally and internationally. And he left behind an experienced group who carried on to develop the many openings and he sent a stream of high profile helpers.

Risk-taking, oftentimes enormous risks, was a hallmark of Buchman and the pioneers, and this inevitably makes for vulnerability. He gave a lapel pin to those in Britain who had been misrepresented in the press at the time of the 'call-up' in the Forties. The inscription read, 'No Cross, no Crown'. These men were vilified, accused of escaping their duty, but did in fact serve in various essential war operations.

I am now drawing some benefit from what one might call 'theological reading'. Although I have worked full-time with MRA for 50 plus years, I had not felt drawn to deeper spiritual searches in theological works partly because of Frank's evident scant regard for theologians. Some, he said, 'go down deeper, stay down longer and come up muddier.' Frank's was an earthy message. But then, he had a theological training as did many of the founders of the Oxford Group. Nowadays, we are all searching more than perhaps we used to, for a deeper understanding of the truths of our faith and our calling.

Julian Thornton-Duesbury, an eminent theologian and Oxford academic, was heart and soul working with MRA and Frank Buchman. In the Seventies I used to invite him to teach us. He felt that Frank Buchman had made a major contribution to Christian experience by his practice of the Quiet Time, of listening. Said Julian, 'Buchman rediscovered the neglected Person of the Trinity, the Holy

Spirit' – the still small voice, the Voice within, the Inner Voice. The US Conference of Catholic Bishops has said, 'The indwelling Holy Spirit gives a person hope and courage, heals his weakness of soul and enables him to master passion and selfishness.'

I know that by nature I am all too easily influenced to agree if a strong view is expressed which is contrary to mine. But once having seen this clearly, I can be forearmed lest I fall.

I am sometimes amazed at how good MRA people indulge in harbouring reservations about other MRA people, indulge in harbouring critical and unresolved attitudes, of blaming even. A few days ago we talked with a loyal MRA lady. She told of a resentment. We suggested that this was wrong. 'I know it's wrong,' she said, 'but *I'm* not the only one who is wrong. Lots of others are wrong.'

I suppose one reflex action against being vulnerable is to cherish the belief that others are really more to blame than I am.

Recently I was pondering on the words of the preamble to the constitution of the incorporated body of MRA in America: 'Riches, reputation nor rest have been for none of us the motives of association.'

Well, most of us don't expect riches or rest. But we are inclined to cherish and defend the reputation of ourselves or even MRA by hating to admit our faults and being reluctant to take truth from others if it is not the way we see it. Anyway, I am like that, and I know of at least one other.

Does reputation really matter? What are our priorities? Cardinal König, at 91, still gets three times as many invitations as he can accept. He has to turn them down. He said to me last year, 'Prestige means nothing to me. I just wake up in the morning and thank God for giving me another day.'

St Paul wrote to the Galatians, 'The Spirit yields a harvest of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, forgiveness, gentleness, faith, courtesy, temperateness and purity.' Wow, one might say. All that?

The Holy Spirit will, as Jesus said, lead us into all truth if we let Him.

When I feel unconfident, this can be the beginning of true wisdom. I am learning that being vulnerable is no bad thing.

Further Reading



- Austin, H.W. 'Bunny' *Frank Buchman as I Knew Him* Grosvenor Books
Austin, H.W. 'Bunny' and Konstam, Phyllis *A Mixed Double* Blandford Press
Barnett, Peter *Foreign Correspondence* Pan Macmillan Australia
Barrett, Michael *Footprints* Grosvenor Books
Buchman, Frank *Remaking the World* Blandford Press
Brown, Mike *No Longer Down Under* Grosvenor Books
Clow, Margaret (Florence Ross Hunter) *The Mecca of Our Desires: Kuranda and the Famous Barron Falls* Ray Langford
Coulter, Jim *Met Along the Way* Grosvenor Books
Craig, Mary *Man from a Far Country* Hodder & Stoughton
Entwistle, Basil *Japan's Decisive Decade* Grosvenor Books
Hebblethwaite, Peter *The Year of Three Popes* Collins
Henderson, Michael *Forgiveness* BookPartners
Henderson, Michael *The Forgiveness Factor* Grosvenor Books
Horn, Sirin *The Dragon's Pearl* Simon & Schuster
Hume, Cardinal Basil *Searching for God* Hodder & Stoughton
Jaeger, Clara *Philadephia Rebel* Grosvenor Books
Jaeger, Clara *Never to Lose My Vision: The Story of Bill Jaeger* Grosvenor Books
König, Cardinal Franz *Open to God, Open to the World* Continuum
Lean, Garth *Frank Buchman: A Life* Constable/Fount
Lee, Arthur Gould *Crown Against Sickle: The Story of King Michael of Rumania* Hutchinson/Royalty Digest
Mackenzie, A.R.K. *Faith in Diplomacy* Grosvenor Books
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Frank Buchman's papers, including my correspondence to him, are held in the US Library of Congress. For details on access for research purposes, please contact the Initiatives of Change office in Washington, DC.

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Moral Re-Armament is referred to throughout as MRA/IofC to reflect the new name (2001), Initiatives of Change.

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THIS IS THE STORY OF A LIFE'S JOURNEY.

Gordon Wise was born the son of an agriculturalist in tropical North Queensland. His father went on to become Premier of Western Australia, but Gordon's own life path proved to have its own adventures, including service in World War II as an RAAF pilot in Coastal Command over European waters.

Through what some might see as an accidental encounter, he had discovered a faith in God at the age of 17. This led to him committing his life to working towards moral and spiritual re-armament for the world: a commitment to trying to find God's plan for all our lives.

A Great Aim in Life is the story of travels in five continents, meeting union leaders, employers, prime ministers, presidents, journalists and religious leaders, and often bringing together people who would otherwise never have met – whether in Liverpool, London, New York, Calcutta or Manila. It tells of staying with a Buddhist Abbot in his Thai monastery and later introducing him to the Pope; of flying in the Berlin Air Lift and over the jungles of Vietnam and Laos; of two personal interviews with Churchill; and of hosting a Chief Rabbi and a Roman Catholic Cardinal. It is a story of enduring friendships and personal challenges, and of learning about leadership, responsibility and humility.

Gordon Wise now lives with his wife in East Sussex. The adventures and personal discoveries he recounts in this book culminate in not only learning how to pass on a life's work to others, but also in rediscovering life itself.

