

GEORGE DANEEL

Autobiography

Chapter 1

ORIGINS

The first Daneel who landed in South Africa in the 19th century, had no intention of coming here at all. He was *Alexander Daneel* of Flanders. He had intended going to East India, undertaking the long journey by boat in the 19th century, but he did not even reach the Cape. The ship he was sailing on sank in the vicinity of Saldanha Bay. He and a certain van der Merwe managed to swim ashore and were the only survivors.

He was so attracted by life in the Cape that he put East India out of his mind. He returned to his fatherland where he married a Miss Greef, and together they decided to come to the Cape Colony as settlers.

One of their sons, *Richard Huertley Daneel*, became a wealthy businessman who lived in Bird Street in Stellenbosch. Just at that time the Dutch Reformed Church began to think seriously of a Theological Seminary, so that students studying in theology did not have to go overseas for their studies. The problem however, was that the church did not have the necessary funds for such an undertaking. However, Richard Daneel, together with some others, bought the Old Drostdy and donated it to the church. In 1859 the Theological Seminary was opened in the Old Drostdy building, and is still in existence today.

One of Richard Huertley's sons, *Alexander Bertin Daneel*, who decided to become a minister, hoped that the Seminary would be ready in time so that he would not have to go overseas for his studies. But it was not to be, and he was

forced to go to Holland for his theological course. After completing it, he returned to South Africa and accepted a call to Heidelberg, Cape. There he was ordained in 1862 as the first minister of that congregation, and remained there for the rest of his life until he died in 1899.

He married the seventeen-year old *Margaretha Johanna Louw* of the farm Babylons-toring in Groot Drakenstein. They had 11 children, nine boys and two girls. My father, *Marthinus Smuts Daneel*, was the fourth son. When Oupa Daneel died my father was minister at Calvinia. As soon as he got the message of his father's death, he left for Heidelberg, but arrived only when the funeral service had already begun.

After that Ouma Daneel went to live in Stellenbosch with the children who were still at school. She became a well-known personality. Her fifth son, *Eben*, who was deaf and dumb, became a carpenter and was known in Stellenbosch as a proficient and trustworthy artisan, especially in the restoration of furniture. He promised to look after his mother till she died. He kept his promise and shortly after her death, although already advanced in age, he married a *Miss du Toit*. One of Ouma's younger sons, *Henry*, a dentist at Montagu, was a member of the Springbok team of Paul Roos, which toured Britain in 1906.

My mother's grandfather, *Andrew Murray*, came to South Africa from Scotland as a young minister in 1822, long before the Seminary in Stellenbosch had been founded. At that time the Cape was a British colony. English was the official language and children were forbidden to use Dutch at school. It was Lord Charles Somerset's policy to Anglicise the colony. It is recorded that someone told him it would never happen unless he changed the Dutch Reformed Church into an English-speaking Church. And for that it was necessary to have English-speaking ministers. It is said that that was the real reason why Dr Thom asked the London Missionary Society to invite young Scottish ministers and teachers to come to South Africa. Several did come, but what Lord Charles Somerset did not foresee was that most

of them married Afrikaans-speaking girls, and so his plan - if it really was his plan - came to naught.

The first young Scottish minister who accepted Dr Thom's invitation was *Andrew Murray*, the son of a farmer in the district of Aberdeen. He and six young Scottish teachers accompanied Dr Thom to South Africa, after Andrew Murray had spent a year in Holland to learn the language. It took the ship, the *Arethusa*, four months to reach the Cape. In those days the Cape was still under Colonial rule. In 1822 the Governor appointed Andrew Murray as minister of Graaff Reinet where he worked for 45 years. He was followed by his son *Charles* who remained there for 40 years. During his term of service one of the most magnificent churches in South Africa was built in Graaff Reinet.

In 1825 Rev. Andrew Murray married *Maria Susanna Stegman* in Cape Town. They had eleven children, six sons of whom five became ministers, and five daughters. Four of them married ministers. My grandfather, *George Murray*, was the youngest of the sons and served in the church at Willowmore, Swellendam and Oudtshoorn. While at Willowmore he married *Catharina Louw*, a sister of the well-known Tobie Louw of the Paarl who had twelve sons. Their father, Adriaan Louw farmed at Laborie et Picardie, today the headquarters of the KWW. Ouma and Oupa Murray had sixteen children. My mother *Charlotte Louise*, better known as Lottie, was the third child and eldest daughter. She died at the age of 42, the first of the sixteen to pass away.

In 1921 while I was at school in Robertson, the minister, Rev. van der Merwe was delegated to visit all Afrikaners overseas, especially those working in the embassies. In that year Oupa George, already retired, ministered in the Robertson church in a temporary capacity. And that is where he died. I shall never forget the impression it made on me as a child when I joined Ouma and the family in the drawing room of the parsonage round the casket with Oupa lying in it. No one wept. Everyone was filled with praise and gratitude for Oupa's dedicated life, and praised the Lord in singing hymns.

Chapter 2

CHILDHOOD

I was born in Calvinia. It was the first congregation of my father, Rev. M. M. Daneel. He was the minister there during the Anglo-Boer war. The British thought he was responsible for the death of one of their coloured soldiers, so he was kept under house arrest in the parsonage while Mother was sent to Mossel Bay with her first baby. I was barely three years old when my father accepted a call to Fraserburg.

It happened that Calvinia was also my first congregation as assistant minister. There my father was to ordain me on the same day that there was a final trial match in the Cape to choose the 1931 Springbok team to tour Great Britain. As I had already played in all four test matches against the All-Blacks, (the first to come to South Africa) I hoped that I would be chosen again. But at Calvinia my father said he did not think the church would allow me to go, even if I were chosen. Then he told me of his own experience.....

As a student at Stellenbosch he also played for the first team. Shortly after arriving at Calvinia he was elected captain of the first local rugby team. However, the church council were not at all pleased with this, especially when he appeared in the pulpit one Sunday morning with a black eye. To his surprise he found that all over the congregation prayers were being offered for the minister's conversion!

Anyway, my ordination service was to take place on Saturday evening, the same evening that the Springbok team was to be announced. Just before the service, while we were all in the vestry with members of the church council as well as visiting ministers, the last one to come in was a deacon, Johnnie Louw, a great rugby enthusiast. He had heard on the telephone that I had been chosen on the team. He came straight to me, holding out his hand - "Congratulations! You have been chosen for the Springbok team!" I saw my father's eyes growing bigger! At that

moment he must have thought of his own experience at Calvinia. To the surprise of both of us the elders came to me one by one to offer their congratulations, saying how proud they were to have a Springbok as their minister!

Back to my childhood. From Calvinia my father went to Fraserburg where he was minister for seven years. Those were the days before motorcars and cart and horses were the order of the day. Father had two fine horses. Ruby and Sterling. The horse-drawn post cart came to Fraserburg twice a week and it was always a special occasion in the town. The nearest station was Fraserburg Road, seventy miles from Fraserburg itself. The journey took two days and the arrival of the post-cart was always announced by the blowing of a bugle.

While we lived in Fraserburg, we sometimes went to a seaside place, Glentana, near George, for the Christmas holidays. This journey took at least four days. At night we always slept at some farm or other - never in a town. This journey by cart and horse was of course an important part of the holiday, especially when we had to cross the Swartberg Pass, one of the highest and most beautiful passes in the country.

To make it easier for the horses, we children crossed it on foot, picking flowers on the way. It was great fun. Today Glentana is a large seaside resort but in those days there were only three houses. It was the holiday place of my mother's parents, Rev. and Mrs George Murray. He was minister of Oudtshoorn at the time. There was always a crowd of uncles and aunts and cousins. Those holidays were the happiest of my childhood memories. But during one of the holidays a tragedy occurred. My sister Marguerite who came just after me suddenly took ill one morning and died before my father could fetch the doctor on horseback.

The last thing I remember of Fraserburg was that my father was one of the first to invest in a motorcar, namely a Model-T Ford. One day the doctor, who did not have a car, asked my father to take him to a farm where someone was

seriously ill. It was already late in the afternoon, and before they could reach the farm it became dark and the car lamps had to be lit. 'Primitive' is the only word to describe it! They were gas lamps. To produce gas, water had to be poured on to carbide in a container and the gas led to the lamps by means of small tubes. Just as Father was preparing to pour the water on the carbide, the doctor struck a match intending to provide my father with a light. The gas of course exploded and the lamps were useless after that. In the end the doctor had to walk in front of the car to show the way.

Our next congregation was Victoria West, still in the Karoo. This was in 1914, shortly after the outbreak of the First World War. I was ten years old when we arrived there. The town is situated between two hills and was practically divided in two; the upper town and the lower town. The wealthier people lived in the upper town and the poorer folk in the lower. It isn't like that today because the lower town has developed more rapidly. The church has a square tower, and the story goes that during a severe drought, a former minister, Rev. Maeder, shot at the clouds from the top of the tower with a cannon!

The parsonage was a spacious house with a long veranda facing North and it had six bedrooms. Behind the house there was a large yard which I believe used to be a tennis court; but when we came there it was covered with gravel. This was our playground where all the children in the street gathered nearly every afternoon for rugby, hide-and-seek, 'kennetjie' and marbles. To the North there was a large garden, separated from the house by the Pastoriestraat. Father loved gardening and in no time he was producing more fruit, mainly grapes, and vegetables, than we could use. Mother, who was always only too happy to help others, was glad of the opportunity to send fruit and vegetables to the poor. But how to reach them? She solved the problem by sending my brother Alec and myself with a little cart laden with fruit and vegetables, to the lower town on Saturdays. We had so many grapes that we children could help ourselves as much as we liked. But where other fruit was concerned, we had to get father's permission. Of course it

sometimes 'happened' that when I tested a peach for ripeness, it 'accidentally' came off in my hand and I quickly ate it!

Three times a week the parsonage could get water for irrigating from a furrow which ran along the back of the house. The stream then had to be diverted into a dam specially made for that purpose. One of our turns was at midnight and it was Alec's and my job to see that the water was diverted into the dam at the right time. It sometimes happened that the water overflowed during the night which meant that we had to go and irrigate the garden so as not to waste the water.

After a while my father had a windmill erected in the back yard, and a dam which we could also use as a swimming pool. There were two big mulberry trees in the back yard and when the mulberries ripened we had great fun. We would get into our bathing costumes, climb into a tree and tackle each other with mulberries. It only needed a swim in the pool to get clean again.

Victoria West sometimes became very hot in summer, even at night. Mother sometimes allowed us to carry our beds outside and sleep under the stars, even when we had friends staying with us. When the grapes were ripe we would go into the garden early in the morning in our pyjamas, pick a bunch of grapes and get back into bed to eat them.

There was a big almond tree in the garden with benches round it. Many a Sunday afternoon we spent there with my mother. Each child was given a handful of dried fruit and she would read us stories about missionaries. Six of her brothers and sisters were missionaries, mostly in Malawi. (Nyasaland, at that time.) Many of the stories were what had actually happened to them, and we were very much impressed. No wonder that my two brothers and a sister became missionaries.

Friday nights were very important to us. On those evenings we could stay up later and play games. It meant a lot to us

that mother always joined us and also taught us new games. 'Anagrams' and 'Word-making and Word-taking' were our favourites. For 'Anagrams' we decided on a long word, and using only the letters in the word we had to make as many new words as we could in the specified time. Another popular game was 'Ping Pong' especially 'Progressive Ping Pong' when there were several of us and we had to run round the table.

Father always kept a couple of Jersey cows and Alec and I took turns to milk them before school. Every morning they had to be driven to the common pasture to graze, and had to be fetched again in the afternoon. One afternoon my youngest brother Marthinus, who was only three years old, asked if he could go along to fetch the cows. The path to the common was uneven and stony so that I had to hold his hand. I let go for a moment and he stumbled over a stone and cut his knee on an old tin. I took him home at once so that mother could bandage it, but it must have been a rusty tin, because within a few days blood-poisoning set in which spread through his whole body. The doctor did his utmost to cure him but gave up hope that he would survive. But mother did not give up hope as she was convinced that God had a purpose for his life. Day and night she sat by his bed, praying, and kept on giving him water. After three days there was an improvement and he eventually recovered fully. He became a missionary and later played an important role in the Malawi mission. He died at the age of 86.

From Victoria West we again went to Glentana a couple of times, but this time with our little Ford. There were now seven of us and we could not all go by car. The elder four travelled with my father in the car, and my mother went by train with the younger ones. I remember a few things about Glentana, especially the fishing. Every morning we first went for a swim, but mixed bathing was strictly taboo. Men and ladies went into the water some distance from one another. But little boys could join their mothers.

Fishing - the great pastime! We had no proper rods in those days, and mostly fished from the shore, not from the rocks.

A hand-line consisted of a long fishing-line rolled on to a stick. This had to be carefully unwound so that it did not knot. At the end there was a stronger line a few meters long with the sinker and the hook at the end. With a swinging movement round the head like a hammer throw, it was tossed into the sea. This required quite a lot of practice, but a seasoned fisherman could toss it quite far into the water. For bait we used mainly mussel which we dug out at low tide. Raw mussels were rather soft and could easily be eaten off the hook, so we first roasted them which made them tougher. When we had roasted enough, the boys were allowed to join the men for fishing. Fish was still plentiful and I remember well one evening when I caught four lovely big 'galjoen'.

Once on our way back after the holidays we had bad luck. The car stalled between Glentana and George. No matter what father did, he could not get it to go again. The only solution was to find some oxen to pull it to a garage in George. I remembered how embarrassed I was, entering the town behind a team of oxen! Fortunately it did not take long to fix the car and soon we were on our way again. But the Outeniqua Pass lay ahead. It wasn't the Outeniqua Pass of today where one can zoom up in top gear. It was very steep and very narrow. Everything went well till we were halfway up the pass, when the car stalled again. Once again father tried everything but to no avail. He just could not get the car to go. Nor could we stay there and block the road for other traffic. Somehow or other father managed to turn the car around and let it free wheel down the pass. At the bottom he tried once more to get it going and miraculously found out what the trouble was. So we drove home without any further mishap.

Father could not afford to go on holiday with all of us every year, and Alec and I were only too happy to be invited to a farm by friends. The farm we visited most often was Grootfontein, the farm of Mr Karel Claassen. He had four sons, more or less our age. During term time they boarded with an aunt who lived in a house just opposite the parsonage. They were our best friends and regularly came

to play in our back yard. Mr Claassen was a strict man and gave us plenty of work to do. I remember how I sometimes had to tend the sheep, even on Christmas Day. Another farm which we often visited was Trompsgraf belonging to Mr Viljoen, father of one of my classmates.

At Victoria West I also began to play tennis. Father was a very good tennis player and he gave me one of his tennis racquets. Needless to say, it was much too heavy, but better than nothing. Two of my classmates, Kotie Verster and Reggie Eaton also wanted to start playing tennis, so we made our own court in Reggie's back yard. Of course it was not the right size but like the racquet, better than nothing. In those days schools did not have tennis-courts, but we got permission later on to play on the public courts in the mornings before school.

Above the town there was a narrow pass between two hills. A concrete wall had been built in the pass to form a large dam. We had learnt to swim in our own dam and when we felt fit enough, we went to swim in that big dam, as there was no swimming pool at school or in town. We were even brave enough to dive from the tower on the dam wall.

One day Father developed Malta fever. The doctor recommended that he go to Durban to take sunbaths. But while he was away mother also took ill. While sewing, she accidentally stuck the needle under her thumbnail. It developed into blood poisoning which spread rapidly throughout her whole body. She was expecting a baby at the time and the blood poisoning resulted in a premature birth. The baby lived for only a few months, and mother's heart was so weakened that there was no hope of recovery. When father heard of mother's illness, he came home immediately. Mother remained conscious right to the end. I shall never forget the moments before she died as we stood round her bed and she took leave of us. Her last words to us were from Romans 8: 28, "All things work together for the good of those that love God." In later life those words were a tremendous encouragement to me. The funeral service was taken by Rev A F Louw and his text was Psalm 73:28.

Father had not quite recovered from the Malta fever, so Oupa and Ouma Murray decided to come and stay with us. Mother died on September 1, 1916, and they remained with us until schools closed at the end of that year. Then we went to Glentana. Father and Oupa and Ouma decided that it would be best for us children to go and stay with relatives rather than go back to a parsonage without a mother, and a father who was still ill.

So, after the holidays, the seven of us were separated. Charly, the eldest girl went to boarding school at Bloemhof, Stellenbosch. Alec and I went to Ouma Daneel, also in Stellenbosch. Kitty and Marthinus went to live with Oupa Murray in Worcester, and Marie and Frances went to Oom Attie and Tant Lottie in Oudtshoorn. Ouma Daneel was one of a kind. Every day she would sit on her front verandah and start a conversation with anybody who happened to be passing by. She knew practically everything that was going on in the town. One day one of the Murray relatives turned up while Ouma was busy mending our clothes. She calmly remarked...." Ja. Now Lottie (my mother) is happily relaxing in heaven while I have to battle with her children's clothes!"

In May 1918 my father married Mrs Susie Helm, the widow of a missionary doctor at Morgenster (Zimbabwe). So after 18 months we could go home to Victoria West again - but not all of us. Oom Attie and Tant Lottie had no children of their own, and had become so attached to Marie and Frances that they asked father if they could adopt them. But father did not feel that he could let them go. However, in the end he agreed to let them keep the youngest, Frances.

In October of that same year the great flu epidemic broke out, claiming victims in almost all parts of the world. South Africa was no exception and on one farm the whole family was wiped out. Schools were closed. There were no church services; most shops were closed. All of us went down with flu and our stepmother, a nurse, looked after us all until she went down herself, and three days later she died. There

was no thought of a funeral. Father just said a prayer and the undertaker took her body away to be buried.

This time father could not face sending his children away again. The 18 months alone in the big parsonage had been a nightmare, so he got a housekeeper. Eighteen months later he was married for the third time; this time to Miss Van Heerden, matron of the Industrial Girls' School in Potchefstroom. Nine years later she also died in Victoria West.

Father married for the fourth time. She was the matron of the local hospital.

Chapter 3

STELLENBOSCH AND RUGBY

My rugby career actually started at Stellenbosch. This is how it happened. When mother died in 1916, and father decided to send Alec and me to Stellenbosch to live with my grandmother, we attended the Hoer Jongenskool where Paul Roos was the principal at the time. While I was there I played rugby for the under-15 team until we went back to Victoria West after my father's second marriage. At the end of that year I got such a bad school report that father decided that I could not play any rugby the following year.

When the first rugby practice of the season was announced my name was naturally on the list. That afternoon I nonchalantly announced that we were having our first rugby practice. Father immediately asked whether I had forgotten what he had said the previous year. I had secretly hoped that he had forgotten about it, or maybe changed his mind. I begged him not to be so hard on me and that I needed the exercise to become strong. "Yes, that's true," he replied. I was just beginning to relax but had yet to learn that father was a man of his word. He sent me to the garden to dig over some beds, saying, "That will give you all the exercise

you need!" Out of sheer frustration I dug so hard that the spade broke. When father came to check on the work and found only a broken spade, he knew where he would find me - on the rugby field. I luckily saw him coming, and did not wait for him but quickly ran home. When he got back he found me already hard at work with another spade. He did not need to say another word, and I had to accept the fact that for the rest of the rugby season I would not be able to touch a rugby ball.

When I reached standard nine, there were only three of us in the class. The other two simply could not get on with the maths teacher and decided to go to another school. When father realised that I would be the only one in the matriculation class, he decided to send me away as well; so in 1921 I went to Robertson. Right from the start I played rugby for the school first team, but not as a forward. I would not hear of it; I decided to play in the back line.

We had a very good coach, Mr Mostert, and he decided that I should play halfback. The captain of the team left in the middle of the year, and to my surprise I was chosen as captain. That year we won the shield.

In the Matric class there was a girl called Johanna, captain of the hockey team, and we had what we used to call 'a case'. However the rules at the girls' hostel were so strict that there was little chance of seeing each other. I had to be satisfied just to catch a glimpse of her in the afternoons when the girls went for a walk in a 'crocodile' with a teacher in charge. Her parents farmed in the district and they had a town house in Robertson where they sometimes spent a weekend to attend church. Johanna then stayed with them and we made good use of the opportunity to see each other. She even invited me to the farm for the October holidays. But that was as far as it went. I never saw her again nor heard of her after leaving Robertson.

My best friend at Robertson was Scholtz Conradie, who strangely enough, did not play rugby. His parents also had a farm in the district and he sometimes invited me out for a

weekend. Those were really happy days and I enjoyed that year in Robertson immensely.

But I am afraid my studies suffered. The previous year several of the matrics had failed with the result that the principal decided that only those who had passed the third term exams could enter for the final exam under the name of the school. I was one of those who had failed. Naturally it gave me many anxious moments as I had to let my father know what the situation was. Fortunately one of the teachers found that I could enter as a private candidate. What a relief.

Father was quite convinced that I would not pass and planned to send me to Carnarvon where there was a good school, for the following year. It was with difficulty that I persuaded him to wait until the results of the examination were published. To his surprise and to my great joy, I passed in the second class.

One incident at our hostel in Robertson I shall never forget. In our competitions in athletics, the weight we used in putting the shot was very heavy. One day as we were practising, one of the boys, Jan Dednam, was struck on the head and he collapsed. We all thought he was dead. Miraculously he recovered. He later became a minister and retired in Pretoria where I often came across him.

I had hoped to go to Stellenbosch after Matriculating. At school I had already decided to enter the ministry and since the only Seminary for the D.R.Church was at Stellenbosch, that was the obvious University for me. But father had other plans for me. He realised that I was not much of a student, and to my dismay, decided to send me to the University of Cape Town because my elder brother Alec was a student there and could keep an eye on me.

While I was at home for the holidays, the secretary of the school board asked if I would be willing to help at a little farm school in the district, for the first term. It meant that I would be two weeks late at the university, but since they had no

one else for the post, with my father's approval, I consented. It was a lonely farm and it was no easy task. There were 15 pupils, from Sub A to Std 6 and it was no joke to keep them all busy, especially two little ones who had gone to school for the first time. There was one compensation however, there were plenty of prickly pears on the farm, one of my favourite kinds of fruit. And the salary, though meagre, was welcome to a poor student in those days.

At university, once again I refused to play forward. I preferred scrumhalf, but as the under-19 A-team already had a very good scrumhalf, I spent the year playing for the under-19 B's. It wasn't a very good team with the result that we were always on the defence. But it was in that team that I really learnt to tackle, and to tackle low.

Academically things did not go so badly that year at Cape Town. Of the four subjects I wrote, I failed one - Latin. In those days Latin was compulsory for admission to the Seminary. In my second year I realised that I would never make it as scrumhalf and decided to play forward. I was immediately chosen for the under-19 A team. That year we had an excellent team. Our coach was Oom Boy de Villiers. We called him Boy Bekkies. He had played centre in the Paul Roos team in 1906 together with Japie Krige.

The second year however was a disaster. Of all the exams I wrote I passed only one. Father was, to say the least, very disappointed. He reckoned that city life offered too many distractions, with the result that I had to go to Stellenbosch the following year. I had become so attached to Cape Town University that it felt like a punishment to go to Stellenbosch. Added to that I was forbidden once more to play rugby for the next season, an even greater punishment. That was in 1924. Fortunately I passed all my subjects in that year except, once again, Latin. But it meant that I could play rugby again.

For most of my time at Stellenbosch, I stayed at Wilgenhof, one of the oldest hostels. In the memorial book of Wilgenhof, the following is written; "Wilgenhof looks with

great pride at its record. The profane world will accuse us of boasting for referring to the list of names in the appendix, but we boast because we are able to boast - with leaders in practically every sphere of society. They were leaders at Wilgenhof and today they are still leaders." The list comprises three members of the Cabinet, the Administrator of the Transvaal, several prominent men in the church, the heads of Iscor, Sasol, Escom, Santam and Sanlam, Nasionale Pers, heads of state departments, leaders in education, professors, senators, members of Parliament, businessmen, authors, farmers, and last but not least, good, solid citizens of our beloved country.

Until June 1920 the resident housemaster at Wilgenhof was Dr W. A. Joubert. The day he resigned however, the students could elect their own house committee to manage the affairs of the hostel. The University authorities reserved the right to intervene if there were complaints or if the behaviour or work of the students justified it. The chairman of the committee was called the Primarius, and for maintaining order, a committee was appointed to mete out punishment when necessary. They were called "Nagligte" (Night Lights) because the punishments usually took place at night. They not only meted out punishments; they were also responsible for the initiation of the freshers and often 'paid them visits' at night. The idea was to make them realise that they were still 'fools'. Sometimes they had to take off their pyjamas and were then smeared with paint. In those days Wilgenhof did not have a hot water system and these poor students had to try and get rid of the paint under a cold shower. This was no joke to say the least, and the chaps had to help each other by using a scrubbing brush. Even after having been a student in Cape Town for two years, I was still considered a 'fool' and was visited by the Night Lights.

Today it is an accepted fact that after hot water was installed, rugby deteriorated!

As in the rest of the University, sport played an important role at Wilgenhof, especially rugby. While I was there, four

of us became Springboks; Danie Craven, Andre MacDonald, Ponie van der Westhuizen and myself. The rugby field was just across the street from Wilgenhof, so we practised often and were very fit. In 1924 after all the league matches were over, we had the cheek to challenge the rest of the University to a match. We decided to have a special flag and our own song for the occasion and both of these are still in use today. The match aroused great interest and Wilgenhof won 12 - 9.

Intervarsity between Stellenbosch and Cape Town University was the most important event on the rugby program, excepting of course rugby tests against New Zealand and Australia, or against the British Lions. Later it became a league match, but at that time it was still a friendly competition, played in turn at Newlands and Stellenbosch. The first four teams played for Intervarsity. It involved everybody. Apart from rugby practices, singing also played a major part. A conductor was appointed to organise the singing which was to encourage the teams on the great day. Seating on the pavilion was limited and only those who had attended the singing rehearsals regularly could get a seat. Most of the songs were composed by the students themselves. The singing competition between the Ikeys (Cape Town) and Maties (Stellenbosch) was almost as important and exciting as the rugby itself. In those days the famous fly half was Bennie Osler, captain of the Ikey team, and during the years I played for Stellenbosch, the Ikeys usually won.

Where tennis was concerned, Wilgenhof was privileged as they had five courts. The best players used court No 1 and the rest played on the other courts according to merit. If a freshman thought he was good enough, he could challenge someone on a particular court. I dared to challenge Johan Buhr on court 1 and was lucky enough to beat him, 6 - 0. Soon after that I was chosen to play for the first University team. A team consisted of two single and two double players. I played in the doubles and my partner was Attie Smuts, also from Wilgenhof.

The University tennis team could only play in the second league in the province, and as the local tennis club needed good doubles players, Attie and I were given permission to play for the local team in the first league. Later on the University team improved to such an extent that we could become members of the first league. When Attie left, Avril Malan, a postgraduate student, became my partner. In my final year at Stellenbosch some of us decided to organise University Championships. I lost in the singles, but my partner, Ralph Cluver and I won the doubles.

My best friend at University was Gawie Hugo. Our birthdays happened to be on the same day, but he was one year older. In 1828, in our third year in the Seminary, we decided to go and board privately so that we could spend more time on our studies. One Christmas holiday I invited him to my home in Victoria West. My younger sister, Kitty, a nurse, was also at home and Gawie fell in love with her, but when he proposed to her some time later, she refused him. He later became a missionary in Malawi and later became head of the Mission. On another occasion I invited another friend, Louis Heyns, for a holiday. He also fell in love with Kitty and he was luckier than Gawie. When he proposed she accepted him and they were married in 1931. He became minister at Grahamstown, and later in several other congregations.

For the short holidays several of us often went to camp at Rooi Els. It is a small bay halfway between Gordons Bay and Kleinmond. Today there is a tarred road all along the coast but in those days there was only a footpath, and we had to carry all our own luggage. The first time we went we were only five, but as time went on the number of campers increased - friends from both Cape Town and Stellenbosch, including some ladies. Later on we used to hire a boat to bring our provisions to Rooi Els. Two of us would join the boat. The rest had to hike.

Once when it was my turn to accompany the boat, the wind began to blow when we had already left the shore. It turned into a gale and we were forced to go back. By that time the hikers were probably almost halfway to Rooi Els. Next day

the wind died down and we set off again. In the meantime twenty weary hikers had to spend the night without food, tents or blankets. There was great rejoicing next day when the boat eventually arrived at the campsite.

Whenever we were a mixed group, Cousin Susie Murray was our chaperone. Her husband, Rev. John Murray had died earlier, and she had to bring up her eight children alone. They went to live in Stellenbosch and she managed to send them to University. She always joined us on the walk to Rooi Els. She was a remarkable woman.

I was often the only fisherman in the group but on one occasion John Murray, son of my uncle Herold Murray, joined me. He was a first year at university and a novice where fishing was concerned. That day we decided to go and fish from the rocks. The sea along that coast could be treacherous at times - calm for a long time and then suddenly sending a huge wave crashing against the rocks. That is exactly what happened that day. We were both standing on the same rock. My line was already in the water but he was still fixing his bait when a huge wave crashed against the rock. I managed to hang on to the rock but when I looked for John, I saw him being swept out to sea. I quickly dived into the water, and luckily the next big wave carried us both back, and we clambered onto the rock. Those were anxious moments. That night, together with the other campers, we thanked God for His protection.

A cousin of mine, Alec Daneel and his son lost their lives in just this way. They also went fishing one morning at Kleinmond. When they did not turn up for lunch, his wife went to look for them. When she reached the rock where they usually fished, there was no sign of them. All she found was their fishing tackle lying on the rocks.

While I was in the Seminary the 'Du Plessis Case' took place. He was one of our four professors. The others were Professors Moorees, Keet and Van Rooyen. Prof. Du Plessis was accused of liberalism and modernism in his theology and was suspended by the Synod. It brought

serious division in the Seminary as well as in the church. Several students in our class supported Prof. du Plessis, and so did I, because he was such a particularly sincere man and meant more to us spiritually than the others. He was the only professor who took the trouble to visit us in our rooms. Because he felt that the church had treated him unfairly, he took the matter to court. The court found him 'not guilty' with the result that he had to be reinstated in his post, with full salary. This was done, but he was not allowed to continue giving lectures. It took years for the rift in the church to be healed, and the irony of the matter is that today Prof. du Plessis' views have been fully accepted.

I feel I cannot close this chapter of my time at Stellenbosch without telling of my relationship with a girl named Lizzie. She lived in Stellenbosch with her parents. They were well-to-do retired farmers. A friend of mine at Wilgenhof invited me one evening to go and play bridge at their home. I met Lizzie for the first time that evening and I was invited to their home several times after that. Soon I was going there every Friday afternoon to play bridge. At first I used to go back to the hostel immediately after our game, but imperceptibly Lizzie's parents began to leave us alone together. Inevitably a more intimate relationship developed, although I must admit there was no physical relationship. The thought of marriage never crossed my mind and I did not realise how selfish I was, enjoying her petting without taking her feelings into consideration. It may be that she had thoughts of marriage, but we never spoke of it. Possibly she did, for the relationship, lasted for quite a long time. When I decided to put an end to it she was very upset. Her parents too, blamed me for misleading her, and in a way they were right. I saw her only once after that - after the spiritual renewal I underwent. I went to ask her forgiveness for my selfishness and the fact that I had possibly misled her. Later she married a man who had also been a resident of Wilgenhof. He later became the head of the KWW at Paarl.

In 1925 I played rugby for the first team at Stellenbosch, and at the same time I was chosen to play for Western Province. Frank Mellish was captain that year. In those days the

Western Province dominated the rugby scene in South Africa; the question was never, who would win, but by how far we would win.

The next year our coach, 'Oubaas' Markotter insisted that I play in the back row and I could not argue about it. He tried me as centre but I was a total disaster. I did not have enough speed for centre. I decided it was no good; I would never get anywhere; it was better to go back to the front row. 1927 was once more Curry Cup year. It was played only every second year in those days. Our first game was against Natal and we gave them a good thrashing.

Before the next match, against Transvaal, the selection committee decided that there were too many loose players in the team; we did not get the ball out of the scrum often enough in the match against Natal. I was one of those who were left out of the team. The selection committee chose the hooker of Cape Town, Shacknovis to play hooker. He was told that his only job was to hook the ball, but he was totally unfit and a hopeless failure. The Western Province very nearly lost the match and won by only one point.

In 1928 the first all-Black team toured South Africa, with Maurice Brownlee as their captain. Their first match was against a rural team of the Western Province which they beat easily. The second game was against a city team of the W.P. and I was chosen to play for them. I remember one incident clearly - there was a tight scrum near our scoring line. The All blacks hooked the ball; the scrumhalf went round the blind side and passed the ball to the wing, Grenside, a hefty New Zealander. I was eighth man and the moment the ball came out I immediately got up and saw Grenside charging for the try-line. I gave chase and tackled him at the corner flag, right off the field. We won that match.

In 1926 we had a series of trial matches to choose a Springbok team. The first was in April, in Port Elizabeth, and the second a fortnight later, before the first test match, in Durban. There was tremendous competition amongst us younger players, as there were very few of the 1924

Springboks left. For some unknown reason the selection committee announced the names of the players only the day before the test.

It was, to say the least, a great day for me when I heard that I had been selected as number eight, my favourite position. There were only five of the former Springboks in the team. They were Bennie Osler, fly half; Jack Slater, wing; Theunis Kruger, hooker; Phil Mostert, one of the props and captain, and Dr Jack van Druten, flank. I don't remember details of the match in Durban except that we were mostly on the attack and that we won 17-0. Bennie Osler contributed 14 points with his boot, and Jack Slater, the wing who stopped at nothing, burst through a barrage of All Blacks to score a try.

The second test was in Johannesburg where we suffered a great setback. A few days before the test we were busy practising. It was a cold winter's day, and while the backs were running backwards and forwards, both Stanley (Bennie) Osler who played centre, and Jack Slater, tore a hamstring. It not only prevented them from playing in the test; they never played for South Africa again. Two substitutes had to be found immediately as there were no such positions as reserves. Strangely enough, those too, also, never played for South Africa again.

Right from the beginning, just as in Durban, we were on the attack. I remember feeling quite sorry for the All Blacks that they were to suffer another defeat! But things did not work out that way. At a crucial moment J.C. van der Westhuizen made a break, but ten metres from the try-line he passed the ball to the substitute wing that dropped the ball and we lost our first try. Shortly afterwards Gerrie Brand who was playing wing, kicked a perfect cross-kick. The flank, Pretorius, unfortunately knocked on, on the try-line, and again we missed a try. The All Blacks won that match, 7-6.

In those days a drop goal counted four points, and a penalty goal, three. We were given a penalty kick from the halfway

line. Phil Mostert decided to take it and to our surprise, the ball sailed between the goal posts.

The third test in Port Elizabeth was more successful. Two new players were chosen for the back line; Willie Roussouw as centre and Manus de Jongh, wing. Manus scored a beautiful try but in the process broke his nose so that he could not play in the next test. Before the match the forwards agreed that if we were given a scrum five metres before the try-line of the All Blacks, we would push them over the line, because when defending they usually used only seven forwards. And that is exactly what happened. We did get a scrum five meters from the try-line. Phil Mostert hooked the ball and yelled, "Push, boys! Push!" We easily pushed the seven All Blacks over the line while I kept the ball in front of my feet. As we crossed the line I picked it up - and the try was ours. We won the match 11-6. Grenside very nearly scored in the last minute, but luckily J.C. van de Westhuizen tackled him near the corner flag and bundled him out.

We lost the fourth test. Yet, when the Western Province team played them the Saturday before the test, we gave them a proper hiding. Afterwards they said that of all the teams they had played against, this was the best.

The fourth test was known as the "umbrella test" as the rain came down in proper Newlands style. The man who won the match for the All Blacks was Mark Nicholls. For some reason or other he did not play in the first three tests, but he was undoubtedly their best fly half. For me personally it was a most unfortunate match. I cost the team six points. In the tight scrums only two forwards in the front line went down into the scrum. The third first waited to see from which side the ball would be thrown and then put his head in on that side. In this way they almost always managed to hook the ball. To prevent this, Phil Mostert, our captain, told Pierre de Villiers our scrum half, the moment the third man put his head in the scrum, to pass the ball to me so that I could put it into the scrum. Twice the referee, Mr Knoppies Nesor, penalised me, saying that I did not put the ball in straight.

And both times Mark Nicholls sent the ball between the goal posts. That cost us the game. Knoppies Naser was the referee in all four tests. He later became a judge.

Chapter 4

THE OXFORD GROUP

A short while before the third test something happened that later brought a great change in my life. I had a friend at Cape Town University, Jack Brock who later became the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. Both of us had played for the under-19 rugby team. He won a Rhodes Scholarship and went to the University of Oxford. There he met Dr Frank Buchman of America who was on a visit to Oxford and his life was radically changed as a result of his contact with this man. During the long summer holiday in 1928 he and a couple of other Rhodes Scholars who had also undergone a deep change, decided to visit South Africa to tell their friends and families what had happened to them. They were simply a group without a particular name, but a name was given to them in Cape Town - some compartments on the train had been reserved for them and when the conductor heard that they had come from Oxford, he simply wrote "Oxford Group" on the carriage. A journalist who came to see them off then used that name in his article, and the name stuck. For many years the people working with Frank Buchman were known as people of the Oxford Group.

Their visit to South Africa had far reaching results. One of the people who accepted their message was Dr. E. Macmillan of Pretoria, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church. Shortly after that he bared his heart to his congregation and asked forgiveness for his pride, as he was more interested in delivering learned sermons than in bringing them the message of salvation. He told them of the change in his life, and that was the beginning of new life in his church.

Jack Brock's parents lived in Port Elizabeth and while he was visiting them the third test against the All Blacks happened to take place. Jack saw my name in the newspaper as one of the team and decided to look me up in the hotel where we were staying. He told me of his experience and gave me a book, 'Life Changers', which was full of stories of people who had changed as a result of Dr Buchman's work.

The change in Jack's life made a great impression on me; so much so that I invited him to Stellenbosch. He and one of the team came to spend a weekend and met several students.

As a result of the positive reaction of the students, Dr Buchman decided to come to South Africa himself the following year, 1929, and bring a team of workers with him. He came ahead together with a man called Maghee Baxter who had been an alcoholic and who had been helped by Dr Buchman. Before leaving America Maghee had promised to abstain from drinking. Things went well until someone on board ship on the way to Cape Town, tempted him. When they arrived in Cape Town, Dr Buchman virtually had to watch him night and day to make sure that he did not get hold of any drink.

One of the students from Oxford who came to South Africa in 1928 was Loudon Hamilton who had already completed his studies. He remained behind when the others returned to Oxford and made all the arrangements for Dr Buchman's visit in 1929. Jack Brock must have given him my name and address because I received an invitation to attend Dr Buchman's opening meeting in Cape Town. It was the beginning of the winter holidays and I decided to accept the invitation. I didn't have money for a train ticket, so I went by bicycle and went to stay with my cousin Alec Daneel.

After the meeting I met Loudon. He invited me to a cup of tea with himself and Dr Buchman for the next morning. While we were waiting for the tea, Dr Buchman sent Loudon on an errand so that we were left alone. He asked me about

my studies and about rugby. When I told him that I was studying theology, he wanted to know whether I had ever won any of my rugby pals for Christ.

I was actually glad that he asked me that question because it was something I had often thought about; so much so that I had gone to a prominent minister at Stellenbosch to ask his advice. I had told the minister that as one who was studying for the ministry, I felt guilty that I had never done anything to win my rugby friends for Christ. I wanted to know from him how I should set about it. I don't remember much about our conversation but I do remember that at the end he gave me some religious tracts, and suggested that I pass them on to my friends and then ask them afterwards whether they had read them. I am afraid nothing came of it. I didn't think my friends would have been at all interested in reading them.

But when Dr Buchman asked me such a direct question, especially after I had read the book "Life Changers", I thought, "Here is a man who can help me." I told him of my interview with the minister and that I really wanted to win my friends for Christ. I expected him to tell me how to set about it and what the secret of his success was, since he himself was a soul-winner. But he did not give me any advice, nor did he say anything about his method; he confronted me with the standards of Christ - purity, honesty, love and unselfishness. It was as if an inner voice said to me, "How can you tell others to be pure if you are not pure yourself?" At that moment I realised that what I needed was not advice, but to be honest about things that were wrong in my life. I told Dr Buchman of the thought that had come to my mind and asked him, "What must I do?" His reply was, "I can't tell you what to do, but if you ask the Lord, He will tell you." "But how will I know what He says?" He explained to me that prayer was communication with God. It wasn't enough to talk to God and tell Him or ask Him whatever was on your mind, but also to be quiet and listen to what He wanted to say to you; because, he added, "What the Lord has to say to you is more important than what you say to Him." After we had prayed together and I had confessed my sins to the Lord, we parted.

Next morning, after reading my Bible and praying, I decided to be quiet for a while. Later that day I met Dr Buchman again and he asked whether I had had a time of quiet. "Yes," I said half unwillingly, "I did and the only thought I had was how I deceived my father and to be honest with him." I pointed out to him that my father was a very strict man and I was afraid to be honest with him. Then I realised that this was not my own thought; it must have come from God. That whole day I wrestled with it without finding an answer.

The next day I decided to 'listen' again, hoping that it would not be necessary to be honest with my father. However the same thought came again, and added to that. "How can you be honest with God if you can't be honest with your father?" This was a new thought. I realised that I had reached a crossroad and that I had to choose - be honest with my father and ask his forgiveness, or stop studying for the ministry. How could I preach to others if I was not willing to obey God myself? So there was nothing I could do but write to my father and be honest with him. For me it meant the beginning of an entirely new life, with total surrender to Christ.

During that time I saw a lot of Dr Buchman and I learnt a great deal from him. One cold afternoon he had to go out for an important appointment. He asked me and a friend to keep an eye on Maghee Baxter who was resting in the bedroom until Dr Buchman returned. My friend and I sat by the fire in the sitting room reading and chatting. After an hour and a half Dr Buchman returned and asked where Maghee was. "He is still in his room," we replied, rather uncertainly. When we opened his door we discovered with a shock that Maghee was not there! We had been too naive to think that he might jump out of the window. Dr Buchman, naturally was very upset and angry, and sent us into the city to look for him, saying "You'd better not come back without him!" I had never been in a bar before, and it was a real nightmare to go from bar to bar looking for Maghee. At one o'clock that night we realised that it was a futile search. We had to go and report that we couldn't find him anywhere. Later that night a taxi brought him back, dead drunk, and

without a penny in his pocket. I began to realise what it cost to care enough for one person, to win him.

A few days later I came across one of my Springbok pals. For a while we chatted about rugby and then I told him about Dr Buchman and his friends. After that it was quite natural to tell him of my own experience and the difference it had made in my life. To my surprise he said, "Do you know, George, for two years I have been longing to talk to someone, but I never had the courage." He opened his heart and told me of the things that were wrong in his life. Before we parted, we knelt down and he gave his life to Jesus Christ. Needless to say, it gave me great joy.

By that time about twelve of Buchman's co-workers had arrived in Cape Town. They were from America, Great Britain and the Netherlands. A number of conferences were planned for Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Bloemfontein, and Dr Buchman asked me to go to Port Elizabeth with them. It happened that I was chosen for the Western Province rugby team that was planning a tour to Transvaal and Natal. Surprisingly, I found that I preferred going with Dr Buchman and his team to going on a rugby tour. My rugby teammates could not understand it, thinking that rugby was the most important thing in my life. I had no doubt at all that from then on Christ was in control of my life.

The conference in Port Elizabeth meant a lot to me. It not only gave me a chance to give my testimony, but it also offered me the opportunity of doing personal work, a new experience for me. Many lives were changed that week. When the conference was over I had to return to Stellenbosch as it was the end of the July holidays. When I went to say goodbye to Dr Buchman, he asked me whether I was sure that I should go back, "What else can I do?" I replied, "my lectures start in a few days' time." "Why don't you ask the Lord what He wants you to do?" he said.

I thought about it earnestly and prayed for guidance. The result was that I decided to join Dr Buchman and his team for one year. The fact that I had learnt more in three weeks

than in the three years at the Theological College had much to do with my decision. I knew I would get a lot of opposition but I was so convinced that it was the right decision that I was prepared for anything.

I have never regretted that decision. Of course my father was very upset; it was to be expected. He wrote to me ordering me to go back to my studies immediately. It was very difficult not to obey him, but I had no choice. Two of my professors, Prof. Moorrees and Prof. du Plessis urged me to go back and witness in the Seminary to the change in my life. But I had to disappoint them as well.

And so I could attend all the conferences in the various cities; and once during an interval between conferences, I could go home and discuss the whole matter with my father. One of the team, John Roots of America, went with me. I was honest with my father and asked his forgiveness, and together we went on our knees and committed the whole matter to the Lord.

That day I lost all my fear of my father and a totally new relationship developed between us. The following Sunday he did something unheard of - he asked John Roots to deliver the sermon in our church, in English of course, and asked me to give my testimony. Both of us spoke from the pulpit.

The last of the conferences, held specially for those who had been changed in the previous ones, was held in Bloemfontein. Maghee Baxter was one of those who had changed and given up drink.

During his stay in South Africa Dr Buchman had talks with several prominent people, like J. B. M. Herzog, the Prime Minister; Gen. J. C. Smuts, leader of the opposition at that time; Mr J. H. Hofmeyr; the Earl of Athlone, Governor General; Dr William Nicol, moderator of the Transvaal Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church; Dr A. J. van der Merwe who later became the Moderator of the General Synod of the D. R. Church - and many others.

After the conferences Dr Buchman had to return to America and Europe. Most of the team remained behind to consolidate the work. He asked some of us, including myself, to accompany him. Of course I was very keen to go, but I was not sure what my father would think of the idea. To my amazement his reply was, "Since you have already gone so far, you might as well carry on to the end!"

It is difficult after so many years to describe my feelings at the thought of going overseas for the first time. It seemed too good to be true - to get such an opportunity, unexpected and undeserved, to visit countries and places that I had only heard or read of. Of course in those days we travelled by boat and the journey from Cape Town to Southampton took two weeks. That in itself was an experience, with all the deck games and competitions. After a few days in London we crossed over to America for conferences in New York, and then I joined one of the team to the South where we worked among the students of a smaller college for a few months.

Dr Buchman's next appointment was on 1st January, 1930 in Edinburgh, Scotland. One of the team who had been with us in America, was Edward Hill. His family had a fleet of merchantmen which plied between New York and Liverpool. For the sake of economy we sailed across the Atlantic Ocean on one of these ships. I shall never forget the sight of the New York sky-scrapers as we sailed along the Hudson River past Manhattan Island. It is a unique sight. The first few days everything went well, but for the rest of the three weeks at sea we had stormy weather. The ship was tossed to and fro in the rough sea, and I seldom managed to get off my bunk! What a relief when we reached Liverpool.

The plan was to have meetings every evening for ten days in the well-known hall, The Oak. After that a conference was to be held in Dunblane, a village not far from Edinburgh. Some of the people who later became full-time workers with Dr Buchman were changed at that time. After all the others had left, only two of us, Loudon Hamilton and I, were left to follow up the work and help those who had begun to live a new life.

When we left after four or five months, I was given a card of appreciation for what I had done, signed by "Your Spiritual Children."

While in Edinburgh, I developed 'flu. Fortunately I was staying with a doctor and his family who looked after me very well. The doctor insisted that I go to the coast for a week to recuperate. He sent me to a holiday resort which was famous for its golf courses. As I had nothing to do, I got hold of a golf club and a couple of balls, and tackled the course with that one club!

One of the tasks assigned to Loudon and myself was to get together as large a delegation as possible for the annual summer conference in Oxford. I don't remember the exact number of persons, but many of the Scots were there. At the conference it was decided to take a team to South Africa once again to support those who had remained behind. More than twenty left for South Africa and I accompanied them. I was just in time to carry on with my studies at the Seminary for the third quarter, just where my studies had been interrupted.

My experience during the year that I worked with Dr Buchman gave me new inspiration for my studies. I remember clearly a talk I had with one of my best friends at the Seminary. I shared with him my secret sins and how the Lord had given me victory over them. He then admitted that he, too, had secret sins that he had never been honest about. We went on our knees together and gave it all to God. It was the beginning of a life of victory for him and for many others. Many decided to get up earlier in the morning for a longer quiet time, not only to talk to God, but also to listen to Him.

The results of my examinations at the end of that year were much better than those of the previous year. One of the professors congratulated me, and added that it was proof of the great change in my life. After my legitimisation, when I was still uncertain of the next step, Rev. Koos van der Merwe who had been appointed to conduct special services

in the various congregations, approached me. He said he was receiving so many requests for special services that he just could not fit them all in. Would I be willing to help him? I wasn't at all sure about the matter but promised to pray about it and find God's will. I also spoke to my professors and it became clear that I should accept his offer.

Shortly after that I received a letter from the Commission of Special Services informing me that I had been appointed assistant to Rev. van der Merwe, but there was one condition - I first had to serve in a congregation for at least six months. (This appointment was later cancelled.) It happened that the church council of Calvinia, on the recommendation of Rev. van der Merwe, asked me to go there for the second half of the year as assistant minister. The date of my ordination was appointed and, as I have already related, it happened to be the same day that the trial matches were to be played to choose a Springbok team to tour Great Britain.

Chapter 5

SPRINGBOK TOUR 1931

Towards the end of 1930 the Student Christian Association asked me to be their travelling secretary until it was time to go to Calvinia. So for four months I worked for the S.C.A. at the Universities of Witwatersrand and Pretoria. While I was there I received a letter from Mr Markotter inviting me to take part in the trial matches for the rugby tour to Great Britain. Almost 100 players took part in these trials, in other words, more than six teams. As I had not played rugby for a long time, I was put in the F team to begin with. It seems that I played well enough to be put in the B team, and in the end, though I could not play for the final trials, I was chosen for the touring team.

Shortly before I went to Calvinia, it happened that the local minister received - and accepted - a call to another church, with the result that when I got there as assistant minister, I

was responsible for all the duties in the congregation. It was good experience, and I was very happy there. The people with whom I stayed, Dr and Mrs Neethling, were very good to me and treated me as one of the family.

I had not been there long, when the minister at Brandvlei asked me to come and assist him with the communion services one weekend. We would take the services in turn. When I arrived at Brandvlei on Friday afternoon he wasn't there. I was told that he was on holiday with his family but that he would arrive any moment. By Saturday he had not arrived and I had to open the bazaar, take the evening preparation service and the prayer meeting on Sunday morning. And still he did not turn up. In the end I had to take all the services, without having prepared for them.

On Monday morning I went back to Calvinia and heard that the family could not be found, even with the help of a helicopter from Cape Town. The minister and his family were eventually discovered in a hut in the veld. The road between Springbok and Brandvlei was still in the making and somewhere he had followed the wrong track and got lost. The one who found him was the garage man at Springbok where the minister had bought new tyres. The garage man recognised the tracks and followed them till he found the poor family sheltering in the hut.

I had been in Calvinia hardly two months when we had to leave on the rugby tour. We left Cape Town on the Arundel Castle. The manager of the team was Theo Pienaar, captain of the 1921 Springbok tour to New Zealand. Those days the coach did not accompany the team; there were only Mr Pienaar and the man who had to attend to our luggage. Before the departure we all gathered to hear what our cabin number was, and who would share cabins. When Phil Mostert heard that he and I had to share a cabin, he asked Mr Pienaar: "Theo, what have you against me?" "Nothing, Why?" Theo replied. Phil laughingly called out "I want to know why you put me in the same cabin as the minister?" We were travelling first class and had to dress for dinner. Some of the team found this a great bother and simply

was responsible for all the duties in the congregation. It was good experience, and I was very happy there. The people with whom I stayed, Dr and Mrs Neethling, were very good to me and treated me as one of the family.

I had not been there long, when the minister at Brandvlei asked me to come and assist him with the communion services one weekend. We would take the services in turn. When I arrived at Brandvlei on Friday afternoon he wasn't there. I was told that he was on holiday with his family but that he would arrive any moment. By Saturday he had not arrived and I had to open the bazaar, take the evening preparation service and the prayer meeting on Sunday morning. And still he did not turn up. In the end I had to take all the services, without having prepared for them.

On Monday morning I went back to Calvinia and heard that the family could not be found, even with the help of a helicopter from Cape Town. The minister and his family were eventually discovered in a hut in the veld. The road between Springbok and Brandvlei was still in the making and somewhere he had followed the wrong track and got lost. The one who found him was the garage man at Springbok where the minister had bought new tyres. The garage man recognised the tracks and followed them till he found the poor family sheltering in the hut.

I had been in Calvinia hardly two months when we had to leave on the rugby tour. We left Cape Town on the Arundel Castle. The manager of the team was Theo Pienaar, captain of the 1921 Springbok tour to New Zealand. Those days the coach did not accompany the team; there were only Mr Pienaar and the man who had to attend to our luggage. Before the departure we all gathered to hear what our cabin number was, and who would share cabins. When Phil Mostert heard that he and I had to share a cabin, he asked Mr Pienaar: "Theo, what have you against me?" "Nothing, Why?" Theo replied. Phil laughingly called out "I want to know why you put me in the same cabin as the minister?" We were travelling first class and had to dress for dinner. Some of the team found this a great bother and simply

Our whole team was invited to attend the service, and I had to give the message. The service was in Welsh, except for my message. At the end of the service the minister announced that he would ask the congregation to sing the Hallelujah Chorus. They did so, in wonderful harmony, and truly, this kind of thing is only possible in Wales!

While we were in London we were invited to Buckingham Palace to meet King George. We waited in the reception room for the King to enter. He first greeted our manager, Theo Pienaar, and the captain Bennie Osler. Then the rest of us were introduced to him. Here and there he chatted to a player, and when he reached the scrum half, Pierre de Villiers, the smallest player in the team, the King seemed surprised. Could such a small man play rugby? "Do you also play rugby?" Pierre, who was taken by surprise, answered "Please Mr King, I play scrum half." Pierre never heard the end of it.

A few months later, back in Calvinia, I received a long letter from the Commission of Special Services saying how sorry they were that they had to cancel my appointment as assistant minister to Rev. Koos van der Merwe as they did not have the necessary funds for my salary. It was at the height of the depression and money was very scarce. The question arose - "What now?" Two things helped me to get clarity about my next step. A certain Rev. Muller had accepted a call to Calvinia so that I was not really needed as assistant minister any more. The second was a letter from Ray Purdy. Ray was a Presbyterian minister in America, but had also worked full-time with Frank Buchman. He was coming to Pretoria to take the place of Dr McMillan who had been invited by Frank to join him and his team in Canada for a year. When he arrived in Pretoria he wrote to ask if I would join him there. As I was not needed at Calvinia any more, and my appointment with Rev. van der Merwe had been cancelled, I decided to join Ray Purdy in Pretoria. There were plenty of activities in the church as well as opportunities outside where I could be of use.

The Oxford Group sometimes held meetings in Pretoria. One such meeting was organised by Mr and Mrs Willie Hofmeyr. He was Head of the Pretoria Boys' High School. Prof. and Mrs Arthur Norval were amongst those invited. He was Professor of Economics at the University of Pretoria. Together with several other professors he did what he possibly could to make the university a purely Afrikaans institution and to get rid of the few English-speaking staff. He even went so far as to tar and feather an English-speaking professor.

Mrs Norval was very interested in the Oxford Group, but her husband refused to accompany her to any of the meetings. He called himself an agnostic. When they received a personal invitation from the Hofmeyrs to a special meeting where Ray Purdie was to be the guest speaker, Mrs Norval was very keen for her husband to accompany her. She persuaded him to do so by promising never to ask him again to join her. So he agreed, and went along.

Next morning while we were still sitting at breakfast (I was staying with the Purdies) who should turn up but Prof. Norval himself! We could not imagine what his purpose might be. Then he told us. What Ray had said the previous evening had made him furious. So much so that he told his wife he would have nothing to do with the Oxford Group and he forbade her ever to mention it again. Then he went on to tell how he had woken that night with the realisation that he was battling with God; but the more he resisted the more God seemed to be getting the upper hand. He realised that he was beginning to lose the battle and he got out of bed. He got on to his knees and told God he would commit himself to Him, but that he was doing it under protest!

He said that when he got up from his knees he had peace in his heart and he immediately fell asleep. He added, "This morning when I woke, my first thought was about my hatred towards English-speaking people and our conspiracy to get rid of them; but amazingly, my hatred had gone and there was only love in my heart towards them. I simply had to come and tell you about it." We prayed together and

thanked the Lord for the miracle He had brought about. Then we had a time of quiet.

Prof. Norval there and then decided to go and tell the rest of his group what had happened and that he was not going to take action against the English-speaking members of the staff any more. He was going to withdraw from the conspiracy. He also went to Prof. Edgar Brookes, professor in Political Science, asking his forgiveness for his hatred in the past, and so became reconciled with him.

Another outcome of this was a big meeting in the Pretoria City Hall where the two main speakers were Prof. Norval and Prof. Brookes. They spoke of their reconciliation and how it had affected the situation in the university. Prof. Norval began speaking in Afrikaans, but switched to English. He had taken an oath never to speak English again, and now, by speaking English from the platform, he wanted to prove that he had nullified that oath.

After that we decided to have another Oxford Group Conference in Bloemfontein, in the short October holidays, 1932, between the third and fourth school terms. The Eunice school for girls was made available for us. People came from all parts of South Africa, including several students from Stellenbosch. The most important result of the conference was that seven of us decided to give all our time to the work of the Oxford Group without pay. The seven were Mr and Mrs Guy Swart, Mrs Jessie Sheffield, Dr Dio Moorrees, Mr Don Mackay, Miss Sprowson, and myself. Guy Swart gave up an important post in the Shell Company, and Dr Dio Moorrees resigned as Student Minister at the Witwatersrand University. Guy and Dio both had cars and with these we criss-crossed the country, calling on as many people as possible who had been in touch with the Oxford Group, to encourage and inspire them. Wherever we went we held meetings. For the rest of 1932 and also during 1933 into 1934 we were busy with the work. Then Dr Buchman invited us to join him and his team for an outreach in Denmark and Norway.

During the years I spent in Pretoria I met Miss Beryl Reynolds and I was very much attracted to her. She was an optometrist and was very active in the Oxford Group so that we often worked together. My teammates encouraged me in our relationship and before we left to join Dr Buchman, we became engaged. But after I had been overseas for a while and not in contact with Beryl, it became clear that this was not from God, and that I was not genuinely in love with her. It was painfully difficult to write to her, knowing how much it would hurt her. And it did, with the result that she came to Denmark to try and make me change my mind. I felt truly sorry, but I could not deceive her, letting her think that I loved her when I didn't, and knowing that it was my fault that we had become engaged too hastily. We prayed about it a lot, and also discussed it with our teammates, till we finally decided, not without pain and tears, to break the engagement.

In Norway the Oxford Group aroused great interest. When a conference was arranged for about a hundred people, hundreds turned up. One of them was a Norwegian journalist, Frederik Ramm. He had become famous after flying to the North Pole with the explorer Amundsen; but also for his scathing articles against the Danes. They claimed Greenland as their property while the Norwegians regarded it as theirs. At the conference Frederik Ramm's life changed radically. On Dr Buchman's invitation he accompanied us to Copenhagen where thousands of people attended the Oxford Group meeting. No one made a bigger impression than Frederik Ramm. He publicly and humbly apologised for his harsh articles against the Danes and revoked them completely.

In Denmark interest in the Oxford Group was even greater than in Norway. I remember two meetings in particular. One was in the old Castle Helsingborg outside Copenhagen, which was attended by thousands of people. The other was the morning service in the Cathedral of Aalborg, the second largest city in Denmark. We were invited to conduct the service. When the service began there were as many people outside as inside. The result was that those of us

who had to speak first, gave their message inside the Cathedral, and then had to go outside to repeat it. Since our stay in Denmark coincided with the summer holidays, Dr Buchman specially invited students from Oxford and Cambridge to join us in Copenhagen. He took the opportunity to train them, especially with regard to personal work.

From Denmark we went to Geneva at the invitation of Mr Benes, Chairman of the League of Nations, and also Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia. One of those who also played an important role was the widow of Dr Alexander Whyte, a well-known church leader in Scotland. The previous year Dr Buchman had met her in Edinburgh, and she told him that she was preparing herself for her death. "Why not prepare yourself to live?" She took it to heart and went abroad to Geneva to make all the preparations for our visit. One of the meetings was in the hall of the League of Nations, and it was attended by most of the members.

In those days Dr Buchman encouraged us to involve as many young people as possible. This led to a very large gathering in Birmingham. Many even came from Europe. We made good use of community singing, and marched through the streets of Birmingham waving flags of the different countries, and singing as we marched. Quite recently I met a man from Germany who had given his life to God on that occasion.

I spent the greater part of 1936 in the Netherlands. Kit Prescott, who had studied at Oxford, and I, were invited by a Dutch family, Baron and Mrs Wassenaar to stay with them at the Hague and help with the work of the Oxford Group there. While we were there a large gathering was arranged for the Easter weekend at Ollerup, Denmark. Several people in the Netherlands intimated that they would like to attend it. Kit and I got the bright idea of chartering a ship to take us to Ollerup on the west coast of Denmark. After concluding the arrangements we set about finding enough people to join us, so that we would be able to pay all our expenses. When we left Holland, the ship was full. We cast anchor in the harbour

of Ollerup and the ship was used for accommodation during our stay. The whole trip was a very great success and much appreciated by all those who had joined us.

After that it was decided to have an assembly in Holland itself. Some of the team came over from Britain to help with the arrangements. Our guidance was that it should be at Utrecht the most Central city. We planned in terms of thousands who would come together from all parts of the country. The question was where to get a venue large enough. In Utrecht there was a very big market hall, which would be perfect for our meeting, but the city council refused to let us have it. The reason they gave for their refusal was that the hall was open to the whole public and could not be let to a single religious organisation. No matter how we tried to explain that the Oxford Group was not an exclusive organisation, they remained adamant. But one person refused to take "no" for an answer; she was Mrs Lottie van Beuningen, a prominent and influential person in Holland, in whose life a great change had taken place. She personally went to see the mayor and told him of the change in her own; life, and explained what a gathering like that in Utrecht would mean for the whole country. The mayor was very impressed by Mrs van Beuningen's story and said that as far as he was concerned the Oxford Group could use the hall; but he did not know what the rest of the council would say. Mrs van Beuningen then undertook to go and see each member personally, which she did within the next two days. They all agreed to let us have the hall and the result was that thousands of people from all parts of Holland gathered in the hall every day of the following week to listen to speakers from different countries

Shortly before I left for Norway, my father retired at Victoria West where he had been minister for twenty years. He and my stepmother went to live on a plot of 10 morgen near Durbanville where they started farming with grapes and other fruit. He had always been very fond of gardening, and in the three towns where he was minister he always had a large fruit and vegetable garden. At Victoria West he used to grow young peach trees in the garden and supplied

farmers with these trees, just to encourage them to grow fruit. In 1936 he developed arthritis and his health deteriorated. He died in May 1937. I was still in London at the time and could not attend the funeral, but I rang my stepmother and assured her that I was with her and the rest of the family in spirit.

A few months later I returned to South Africa to join the Oxford Group team. But I first took my stepmother and my sister Charly on a trip along the Garden Route by car. In those days we concentrated on the young people and organised camps in various parts of the country. I also acted in two congregations as assistant minister. The first was in Graaff Reinet where Rev. Berning Malan, who had been at the Theological College with me, was minister. He was called to another congregation and asked me to take his place at Graaff Reinet until another minister was called.

The next church was at Boksburg where Rev. James Louw was minister. His mother was a sister of my grandfather, George Murray. He was very ill and he asked me to stay in the parsonage with him and his family. His daughter Mima had a great friend, Johanna Stolp who often visited the parsonage. I got to know her very well and fell in love with her. Mima always called her Joey and I followed suit.

Chapter 6

WORLD WAR 2

While I was in Boksburg, Rev. Louw died and I had to see to the funeral arrangements. Shortly after that the Second World War broke out, and when Rev. Gert Coertze, the only chaplain in the South African army, asked me to join the army as chaplain, I had clear guidance that it was the right thing to do. I remained in Boksburg until it was time for me to go to Voortrekkerhoogte to help Rev. Coertze. At the beginning of 1940 I was transferred to the artillery camp at Potchefstroom. It was a new camp with very few facilities. I

was appointed sports officer and as there were no tennis courts, I took it upon myself to have four courts built. Some of the best tennis players in the country were in that camp with the result that our tennis was of a high standard.

During the winter season I also helped coach our rugby team and sometimes joined in the game myself. When a team had to be chosen for Western Transvaal, it consisted mainly of soldiers from our camp. Nic Bierman, an officer in the camp who had been on the 1931 rugby tour, was captain. Shortly before the match against Transvaal, he took ill and I was asked to take his place. For the rest of the rugby season I played for Western Transvaal.

While I was in the camp, I invested in a second-hand two-seater 'Chevvy' which meant that I could go and visit Joey in Brakpan now and then. The principal regarded Joey as being indispensable on his staff, and when she gave notice at the end of the term, he refused to accept it unless I came to see him personally which perforce I had to do. He told me what a wonderful teacher she was and he would only let her go if he was convinced that I would appreciate her and be good to her! During the short holidays I went to visit her at her home, 'De Rondavels' in Ermelo. When I asked her parents for her hand, they gave me their permission and we became engaged. The wedding was fixed for December 28th, 1940.

Joey's father, Mr Corrie Stolp, was a businessman and was one of the Anglo-Boer War 'bittereinders.' (Die-hards) With his brother he started a general dealer's store called 'Gebroeders Stolp.' It developed into the largest shop in Ermelo, with a branch in Morgenzon. Mr Stolp had a small farm, 'De Rondavels', about a kilometre outside Ermelo. That's where Joey, her three sisters and a brother grew up. They knew no other home. The school was on the other side of the town and they used to go to school with a cart and horses. If they had to go back to school in the afternoons, they had to go on horseback. Joey said she practically grew up on horseback.

Mr Stolp's brother died during the 1918 'flu epidemic, and he had to continue with the business on his own until 1933, the year of the depression. His best customers were the farmers who usually bought on credit, but when they could not pay their debts, due to the depression, he decided to sell "Gebroeders Stolp" and start a cash business. In his 79th year he sold it to his manager whom he had trained in the business.

Joey and I were married on the 28th December, 1940, in the Moederkerk in Ermelo. Dr Dio Moorrees came all the way from Naboomspruit where he was minister, to perform the ceremony. The previous night it had rained so much that the roads were impassable; so much so that friends from Johannesburg had had to turn back. Dio himself was delayed, and when he reached the church in Ermelo and saw people coming out, he thought he was late for the wedding. But they were people who had attended the previous wedding. My best man was Don Mace, and Joey's bridesmaids were her sister Emma, my sister Frances, and her friend, Mima Louw. The reception, given by the 'Vroue Federasie', was in the Town Hall.

We spent our first night in Standerton. After that we went to a guest farm near Harrismith for a week. We were fortunate to get a house in Potchefstroom near the military camp where we stayed until I had to leave for North Africa with the Second Division on July 1941. We left by troop train to a camp in Pietermaritzburg where I had to wait for a boat which was to take us from Durban to Egypt. Joey had an uncle and aunt in Pietermaritzburg and she could stay with them which meant that I could visit her. We even had a last rugby match in Pietermaritzburg between the Infantry and Artillery. I was captain of the Artillery, and as they had no regular prop, I was asked to play in the front row. But I was out of practice and had to leave the field with a badly hurt rib in the second half. It's ironic that my very first injury should have occurred in the very last match of my rugby career. A few days later we left in convoy from Durban, where Joey, her sister and brother-in-law, Annafie and Johannes van

Rooyen, came to see me off. I had quite a lot of pain from that rib on the voyage.

After arriving in Egypt we pitched camp in El Alamein, the first railway station west of Alexandria, and were immediately ordered to dig trenches. The soldiers were very disgruntled about this, saying that they had joined up to fight, not to do hard labour. Little did we know that those very trenches which the Egyptian engineers later enforced with concrete, would eventually save the lives of our allied troops. But more of this later.

The reason why the Second Division could not proceed to the front immediately, was because we had no transport. I managed to get hold of a Harley Davidson motorcycle, so I could visit my men. Transport was provided only months later and we were sent to Tobruk to relieve the Australians. We chaplains had no vehicles but sometimes we found British or German cars abandoned in the desert. One day I came across a 'bakkie' (pick-up) and asked a mechanic to check it. There wasn't much wrong with it and in no time he had it fixed. I looked after it very well since vehicles were so scarce.

Meanwhile our First Division had engaged in battle with the Germans at Sidi Resek and one of their brigades had been captured. The Commander in Chief decided that a brigade from the Second Division should take its place. This so weakened the Second Division that when the Germans later attacked Tobruk, the whole Division was captured after courageous resistance. I escaped the defeat at Tobruk because, as chaplain, I had been transferred to the 1st Division.

In the meantime, the 1st British Armoured Division went into battle with orders to pursue the Germans who were retreating. The 2nd Anti-tank regiment, to which I was connected, was added, and we advanced together against the Germans. The British Intelligence Service were not very well informed because the Germans who in the meantime, had been reinforced, turned back and went into attack.

We were quite unaware of this and were caught napping. We had to retreat helter-skelter in an operation which notoriously came to be known as the 'Gasala Gallop.' The retreat began on a Sunday afternoon and towards evening we could still hear the German cannons. Our flight continued right through the night without lights. It meant that each vehicle had to follow closely on the heels of the one in front so as not to get lost in the desert. Once the vehicle in front of me stopped so suddenly that I ran into it. There was no visible damage and in no time my black batman and I were in line again. But we hadn't got far when the engine stalled and the other vehicles in the convoy raced past one by one. To my dismay I discovered that one of the water pipes had burst and all the water in my truck had leaked out.

What to do now? We were in the middle of the desert, all by ourselves, with a broken truck. There was nothing we could do but wait and pray. When dawn broke, the rest of the convoy was out of sight and we were on our own. While we sat there, wondering what to do, we saw a single vehicle approaching. Friend or foe? To my surprise it was our regimental mechanic who had also been left behind. And wonder of wonders, he had a spare water pipe and I had a can of water which I always took with me in the desert. If this was not an act of Providence! We headed in the direction of the convoy and passed some vehicles that had been left behind. We picked up seven or eight stragglers before catching up with the convoy which by then had reached the tarred road along the coast of North Africa.

But a greater danger awaited us. We were travelling bumper to bumper along the tarred road and nothing could be easier for the German planes than to fly over the convoy with their machine-guns. We had only one option - the moment we heard the drone of the planes, we jumped out of our vehicles and ran as fast as we could and threw ourselves flat on the ground. So there was no loss of life but many vehicles were destroyed. When I got back to my truck after one of the attacks I found that three of my tyres had been hit. Many men just left their damaged vehicles but somehow I could

not face leaving mine behind. It had been a job finding it and I knew that I would not easily find another. My batman and I waited until dark when the attack was over. We managed to find three good wheels on the abandoned vehicles, and in an hour or two joined up with the convoy once again. But now, to my dismay, I found that my brakes weren't working. Every time the truck ahead of me stopped, I had to turn off the road to avoid hitting it. The oil pipe feeding the brakes had also been damaged.

By the following day we were nearing Tobruk and our Brigadier wanted to join the 2nd Division again to help defend the town. The Commander of the 8th Army to which we belonged, however, would not hear of it and ordered us to retreat directly to El Alamein. All the divisions of the 8th Army received the same order since it was decided that El Alamein was the only place where the violent attack of the Germans under Gen. Rommel could be checked.

It's necessary to explain why El Alamein was in such a strategic position and why the 2nd Division had been ordered to dig in there. The battles in North Africa all took place in the desert strip between the North African coast and the Quattara depression. This was a deep and wide gully in the desert which could not be traversed by vehicles or tanks. If the Germans were to conquer Egypt with its capital, Cairo, they would have to pass through El Alamein where the distance between the Quattara depression and the coast was at its narrowest. That is why the trenches and underground fortifications had been made, in case the Germans got the upper hand over the Allied troops in the desert, which they did. Two or three days after the last Allied troops reached El Alamein, the first German troops arrived and immediately attacked. But the Allied troops were so well entrenched that the attack was ineffective and lasted only a few days.

Another reason why the attack was ineffective was the length of the German communication lines. They were far from their base and had to transport their support for hundreds of miles. When they realised that their attack had

been checked they moved their base nearer and prepared for a more effective attack. But this was equally ineffective. They could not capture El Alamein.

It was understandable that after the debacle of the 'Gasala Gallop' and the retreat to El Alamein, the last stronghold of the Allied Troops, the morale of the men of the 8th Army was low. No wonder that one soldier remarked, "If we have to retreat to El Alamein from where we started, we might as well give up the war!" Something drastic had to be done. The Commander of the 8th Army, Gen. Ritchie, was removed and Gen. Montgomery appointed in his place. With his charm and his ability he soon won the confidence of the officers and troops. He personally visited all the units to get to know the troops. We understood he had accepted the appointment as commander on condition the 8th Army would receive priority in the supply of arms, especially tanks. And that is exactly what happened.

Months of preparation, both military and spiritual, led up to the great battle of El Alamein. We were all conscious of the seriousness of the situation. What happened at El Alamein would determine the course of the war. I had a time of quiet with a group of soldiers every morning. We as chaplains realised that the spiritual rearmament of the officers and the troops was absolutely essential for ensuring victory. And that, I believe, is what happened. The day before the battle of El Alamein which began at 8 o'clock in the evening, was my most outstanding experience of the war. As I moved among the troops during the day, I was conscious of the presence of God and I am sure that the troops were too. Everyone was cheerful and full of spirits. Had one not known that that night would be a battle between life and death, one would have thought the men were preparing for a big social event. I felt that with such motivation, victory was sure. Whenever I managed to get little groups together, they were quite prepared to sing and pray and commit themselves to God.

Precisely at 8 o'clock, on the evening of October 23, 1942, the battle began with the ear-splitting roar of the Allied

cannons. At the same time the infantry were preparing for an attack on the German position, the moment the barrage began. They had to clear the way through the minefield between the Germans and us so that the tanks could pass through to engage the enemy tanks.

The barrage was so planned that in the first instance it had to protect the infantry and the engineers, and secondly, make it very difficult and dangerous for the Germans to get at them. Gen. Montgomery was convinced that he would get the better of the German tanks if he could get his own safely through the minefields. This took 10 days to accomplish and many lives were lost, but when our tanks were through, it did not take long to force the German tanks back. When Rommel realised that his tanks had suffered a defeat, he gave orders for his troops to retreat.

The majority of the enemy's infantry consisted of Italians. The Germans were in control of all the vehicles, and when they retreated they left the Italians behind without transport. There was nothing they could do but surrender. This created a colossal problem for the Allies as they now had to accommodate and feed thousands of Italian POW's. Later they were sent to various countries, including South Africa.

There is no doubt the battle of El Alamein was a turning point in the Second World War. Until then the Germans had the upper hand. We chaplains had a very busy time during the battle. The wounded were taken to the nearest medical stations for first aid and a chaplain always had to be present. From there they were taken by ambulance to an underground clinic where doctors and nurses treated them. Those who could stand the journey were taken by ambulance to a hospital in Alexandria. Emergency operations were done at the clinic and the patients were only taken to hospital when they were fit to travel. Chaplains also stayed in the underground clinic to pray for, and encourage the wounded and to take messages the men might want to send to their parents and loved ones. The dead were buried as soon as possible.

Part of the 8th Army pursued the Germans as they retreated and Gen. Rommel knew he would not be able to defend any position anywhere in North Africa again. He ordered his troops to retreat to Sicily and take up position there. In the meantime the whole of the South African First Division, which consisted only of infantry with the necessary artillery, withdrew from the 8th Army with the idea of changing into an armoured division. In the campaign in North Africa, infantry would be superfluous. We were all sent back to South Africa where the 6th Armoured Division would be formed. It was a joy to be back. Joey was in Ermelo with her parents and I joined her there. We took the opportunity to go to Cape Town in the Chevvy so that I could introduce her to various relatives; among them my stepmother who was living in Durbanville, and my grandmother Murray in Somerset West, with Aunt Cecile and Aunt Katie.

After six months the 6th Armoured Division under Gen. Poole was ready to go to Egypt. We had to go to Pietermaritzburg and await our ship leaving from Durban. Joey was once again staying with her aunt and uncle, so we could see each other often. One evening I returned to camp, promising to see her the next day. But this was not to be. Early next morning we were ordered onto the train to Durban and were forbidden to tell anyone, even our own families. There was always the danger that the enemy would hear that a shipload of soldiers was on its way to the front and waylay us with a submarine. So I had to leave without even a "goodbye" to Joey. She told me later what went on in her mind when she realised she would not see me for a long time, maybe never.

This time we sailed to Egypt in the 'New Amsterdam'. We landed safely and went straight to Khatatba, a military camp in the desert. This is where our troops were to get their training in tank warfare, and it was to be our camp for the next nine months.

The whole division was concentrated in one area, so it was possible to hold regular services and catechism classes. It also meant we chaplains could get together now and then to discuss our work. As senior chaplain I was attached to

headquarters and in close contact with the General and other senior officers. For recreation we mostly played hockey, and I learnt to play chess by watching others at play. One of our chaplains was a Jewish Rabbi. While we were at Khatatba he arranged a tour to Israel for the chaplains. It took the form of a study course and we were given very interesting lectures on the history of Palestine and the Jews. We also followed the footsteps of Jesus, especially around Galilee and in Jerusalem, and we went for a swim in the Dead Sea and felt what it was like to lie on our backs in the water without sinking.

Towards the end of our stay at Khatatba Gen. Poole summoned me one day. A message had come via Rev. Coertze that Joey was very ill as a result of her pregnancy and that her doctor had requested I be given leave to go home. The very next day I was off in a Dakota on a four-day flight to Pretoria. Joey's brother Corrie fetched me at the airport and took me to Ermelo. Joey was very weak and the doctors feared she might not have the strength to give birth. But all went well and our first daughter was born on January 9th, 1944. We named her after Ouma Stolp, Johanna Charlotte, and decided to call her by her second name. I still had a month's leave before returning to the front by Dakota, and joining our troops in Italy.

When the Germans had to leave Sicily, they took up a position at Monte Casino. Their headquarters were in a monastery there and fierce battles were fought, lasting weeks and costing many lives, especially between the Germans and the New Zealanders. Our troops joined up with the New Zealanders and helped to drive the Germans out of their stronghold. From Monte Casino the Germans retreated to the Appenine mountains without any attempt to defend Rome. So the road to Rome remained open and it became a competition to see who would reach Rome first.

I think the honour fell to the New Zealanders. But what an experience to be in Rome! To our surprise thousands of people lined the streets to cheer and welcome us as the victors who had come to liberate them. As a result of the

treatment the Italians had received after El Alamein, the Italian people turned against the Germans and welcomed the Allies.

From Rome we went on to Florence to take a stand against the Germans in the Appenines. Castiglione, a village right on top of the mountain, was chosen as headquarters. A few attacks were made on German positions but they were well entrenched in the mountains. The European winter was on hand and it was decided to wait till the beginning of spring of the following year before a large-scale attack could be launched.

In no time the mountains were covered in snow and it was COLD! Of course there was no heat of any kind and as tough soldiers we simply had to endure the cold. Fortunately we had plenty of blankets. On account of the cold the troops could not remain in their fortifications too long and had to leave in rotation every few days. It was a difficult time, trying to keep the men occupied in the icy cold. I did my best, with the help of others at Castiglione, to organise some sort of recreation for the men who were on leave. They could get refreshments there and we tried to provide plenty of games and reading matter.

We were going to celebrate Christmas in the mountains and I had the idea of a musical concert for Christmas Eve. There is no shortage of musicians in Italy, especially where singing is concerned; and during the war most of them were out of work so off I went to Florence and had no trouble in collecting several musicians to come and entertain the troops at Castiglione on Christmas Eve. I had to go to Florence myself to fetch them, as there was no transport for them on account of the war. Florence was about 60 miles from Castiglione.

To get there I had to go down the mountains over a snow-covered pass, something one could not do without snow-chains, especially on the return journey. Well, I brought the musicians and the concert was a roaring success. The music and singing were of the very best; refreshments were

served and we even had some "central heating" by putting drums with live coals in the hall. There was a real Christmas atmosphere and the troops enjoyed it thoroughly.

We paid the musicians with a plentiful supply of tinned food, which meant more to them than money, as food was very scarce in Italy at that time. At midnight we set off for Florence and I only got back at 3 a.m.

Early in April when the snow had melted we launched an attack against the Germans fortifications. It was a mammoth task. The Germans were deeply entrenched in the mountains and it meant stiff climbing to drive them out of their strongholds. By that time the Allied Air force had the upper hand and could bomb the enemy in their trenches high up in the mountains without meeting much resistance on the part of their air force. It would have been impossible to drive them out without our Air Force. At the river Po the Germans made a last desperate attempt to attack the Allies, but to no avail. Towards the end of May 1945, the German Supreme Command decided to surrender, and the war in Italy came to an end. This was about a month before the German forces capitulated in Germany.

It was a tremendous relief when the war ended and there was peace once more. Some of our chaplains took the opportunity of going on a tour through the Dolomite Alps in Tyrol. The scenery was breathtaking. At night we slept on farms, mostly on a heap of straw in a shed. We took a good supply of military rations along and wherever we stopped over for the night we shared our rations with the farmers who were only too happy to prepare and share the meal with us. We also visited Venice.

The war being over we were only too keen to return home. Unfortunately it was not to be as there was no transport. We were dependent on British ships and it meant a delay of at least eight months. The problem now was - how to make the best of the time. As senior chaplain I arranged a meeting of chaplains to discuss the matter. We decided to organise a school for moral and spiritual training and called it "The School of Religion for Spiritual Leadership." The idea was to

offer weekly courses and invite men to attend. I submitted the plan to the general and he approved, so that we became an official unit of the division. The next step was to find accommodation for our school. Fred Rae, one of the chaplains and I set off to find a suitable place. We drove along Lake Como in Northern Italy until we reached a village called Cadenabbia. There we were told of a big house which had belonged to one of Mussolini's ministers, and who had been executed together with him. We went to inspect the house, named Bonaventura, with a lovely spacious garden on the shore of the lake. It was unoccupied and we immediately went to ask the authorities of the 8th Army for leave to occupy it. An American unit had also applied for it but eventually it was allocated to us, as we had been the first to apply for it. The home was beautifully furnished, but we put all the furniture in one room and applied for stacked beds which meant that we could accommodate 80 men at a time.

The next step was to notify the different units about the courses. One thing we insisted on was that attendance should be voluntary. The project was a great success and there was never a shortage of applicants.

The courses ran from Monday to Sunday. Each morning started with a combined time of quiet before breakfast. In the mornings and afternoons there were lectures, and in the evenings a time for open discussion or sharing. One afternoon a week was given to water sport, and one evening to a musical concert, mostly offered by Italian musicians. The lectures were aimed at spiritual uplifting, and to prepare the men for the life ahead of them after five years of war. There were personal talks and many committed their lives to Christ - some even deciding to study for the ministry. For me, personally it was the richest time of my work as chaplain. The courses were not the same every week. Apart from the leadership courses, the opportunity was given to the different denominations for catechism classes to prepare men for membership of their various churches.

For the winter season we moved our school to Rapallo, a holiday resort on the Italian Riviera. All the hotels were

empty and we had the use of one of them. There we remained till the end of 1945 when we could go home. For the last course we invited all the chaplains, including the British chaplains. They were so intrigued with the school that they asked if they could continue with it since the British troops would still remain in Italy for some time. The chaplain in charge was Rev. Arthur Burrell, whose son John later married our daughter Suzan in 1977. Several of the full-time people in MRA who were on active duty visited our school and helped us in our work.

In 1946 I returned to South Africa, again in a Dakota. Joey, Charlotte and I spent a pleasant holiday at Umhlanga Rocks. Charlotte at first could not understand why this strange man stayed with them, but we soon made friends and spent a very happy time together.

Chapter 7

MORAL RE-ARMAMENT

While still in Egypt, I received a call to the D. R. Church in Grahamstown. I wrote to thank them but asked if I could postpone my answer until I returned to South Africa. So after our holiday I wanted to get some of my Oxford Group team mates together to have guidance about the call. But to my dismay I found that many of them had left the Group to join what they called the "New Team." As I had no contact with them, Joey and I realised that it was now a matter between us and God alone. We prayed about it, and it became clear that we should accept the call. So in February 1946 we left for Grahamstown.

When our furniture and other belongings arrived in Grahamstown it was quite a strange experience to unpack our wedding presents for the first time. Some friends from whom we had received presents had already passed away.

What a joy it was to be together again, and in our own home. We had not been together for more than nine months during the first five years of our married life.

We soon felt at home in Grahamstown, and were very happy there, but it was a disappointment to have no contact with the Oxford Group, or rather, with Moral Rearmament, the new name of the Group. However, we were convinced that God had called us to Grahamstown and we gave ourselves fully to the work. And we soon found that our friends in Moral Rearmament had not forgotten us. The change of name from "Oxford Group" to "Moral Rearmament" came on the day in 1938 when Frank Buchman turned 60. The Oxford Group had organised a large gathering in London and asked him to address them. His theme was "Spiritual and Moral Re-armorment." He told them how, a short while before, he had spent a holiday in the Black Forest in Germany. One day, while walking in the forest, he could not get the serious situation in Europe out of his mind. Some of the allied countries, and especially Germany, were already busy re-arming in case war broke out. As he pondered on it, it was as if the Lord said to him, "What Europe needs is not military arms, but a movement of moral and spiritual rearmorment." From that day on the name of the Oxford Group was changed to Moral Rearmament. (In short, MRA.)

Early in 1947 three of the full-time workers of MRA decided to come to South Africa for health reasons. They were Charles Burns of Scotland, who had fallen off a horse and hurt his back rather badly; Andrew Strang, also from Scotland, and who had spent several years in a concentration camp in Germany, and Pat Foss, a pilot who nearly had a nervous breakdown after all the bomb attacks he had made on German positions. But no matter how hard they tried, they could find no way of getting to South Africa. All their attempts were in vain, and in sheer desperation they decided to buy their own aeroplane. It seemed to be the only solution. And that is precisely what they did. They bought a four-seater plane. The fourth seat was used for luggage. It took them more than a month to get from London to Pretoria. There they heard that we were in Grahamstown

and they let us know that they would like to visit us. They arrived soon after and, needless to say, they aroused our interest afresh, especially when they told us that the Palace Hotel in Caux, Switzerland, had been bought by MRA. During the war this hotel had been used for refugees and was so badly damaged that the owner decided to sell it after the war. A company that wanted to demolish it for the sake of the material which was very scarce at that time, had an option on the hotel. But just at that time the Swiss team of MRA were on the lookout for a suitable venue for conferences. Out of gratitude that Switzerland had been spared the devastation which other countries had suffered during the Second World War, the Swiss team wanted to create a Conference Centre where former enemies, through spiritual renewal, could become friends and so contribute to a new united Europe.

These three friends had attended the first conference in Caux the previous year. What they told us of the spirit there, and the miracles of changed lives, so inspired us that we were keen to attend the next conference. We had clear guidance that it was right to go so we asked the church council for their permission to go which they were happy to give.

As we had to make provision for Charlotte, we asked Joey's parents if she could stay with them. I had been given a bonus when I was discharged from the army which would help to pay our airfare, but it was not enough. If it had not been for contributions from friends, we would not have been able to go. So, early in July 1947, we were off to Geneva by plane.

In those days aeroplanes were not able to fly at night and so for two nights we had to stop over on land - one night at Leopoldville (now Kinshasha in Zaire), and the second in Tripoli, capital of Tunisia. We were on a KLM flight which was supposed to fly directly to Amsterdam; but when Mr Driessen, a senior official at KLM heard that we were on the flight and that Joey suffered badly from airsickness, he gave

permission for the plane to land at Geneva. There we were met by friends and taken to Caux by car.

The conference at Caux was totally different from other conferences. Mountain House, the former Palace Hotel, was not equipped like other hotels, with plenty of servants. All the work was done by the people attending the conference, and it was more like one big family. There were teams for cooking, for serving, for washing up, for seeing to accommodation, for secretarial work. There was also teamwork where meetings were concerned. People were not asked to give prepared speeches about given subjects. At every meeting there were several speakers, maybe ten or twelve, who witnessed to the change in their own lives when they had given their lives to God, and the effect it had on their families and friends.

The specific purpose of the conference at Caux was not only to find God's plan for their own lives, but also to be available to be used by God in his plan for the world. To illustrate this more clearly, plays, films and videos were used to demonstrate what happened when people changed. More important even than meetings and shows were the personal talks among the participants. Everyone was encouraged to use the opportunity of getting to know as many people as possible and to learn from each other.

The conference of 1947 which Joey and I attended was historic. A French woman, Irene Laure, leader of the Socialist women of France, decided to attend the conference at Caux. Women had played an important part in the underground movement during the German occupation of France. Madame Laure was also the first woman to become a member of the French Parliament.

She had been at Caux only a few days when 150 delegates arrived from Germany. They were the first Germans who had been allowed outside their country after the Second World War. This was just too much for her. She could not face living under the same roof as Germans. During the occupation the Germans had tortured her son in her

presence to obtain information from her about the French underground movement. This, as well as other incidents, had caused such resentment in her that, in her own words, she wished that Germany would be totally destroyed. She decided there and then to leave Caux and went to pack her cases. On her way she met Dr Buchman, and when he asked her where she was going, she told him that she simply could not stay there any longer. He asked whether she thought it would be possible to build a united Europe without the Germans. As a Socialist this thought challenged her and she promised him she would go and think about it. For three days and nights she struggled with this problem. Then a miracle happened - God healed her completely of her hatred and resentment towards the Germans.

Joey and I were at the meeting the morning that she appeared on the platform. She spoke of the terrible hatred in her heart towards the Germans, as a result of the ill treatment to which she had been subjected and how she had planned to leave the conference when the German contingent arrived. Then she spoke of her struggle those past three days and how God had set her free. There was dead silence in the hall; you could have heard a pin drop when she asked the Germans to forgive her for her hatred. Then one of the German women went up to the platform, holding out her hand. Later Madame Laure said that when she had taken this woman's hand, she knew that God had also forgiven her.

After that Mme Laure went home to fetch her husband to join her at the conference. He was a convinced Marxist and an atheist, but as a result of the change in his wife, he also became a believer. They then went to Germany together. It was her conviction that she should ask the Germans for forgiveness for her hatred and her wish for Germany's total destruction. Together they visited the Legislative bodies of every Province except one, and addressed them asking for forgiveness. Afterwards Chancellor Adenauer said that she had done more than anyone to reconcile Germany and France. For the rest of her life Irene Laure travelled all over

the world bringing the message of reconciliation and forgiveness to individuals as well as to nations.

The conference meant a great deal to Joey and me and we went back to Grahamstown with renewed commitment and enthusiasm. One of the first tasks that awaited us was the building of a church. Grahamstown society was predominantly English-speaking. Most of the 1820 settlers had made their home there, and there were not many Afrikaans-speaking families. As a result the Dutch Reformed Church did not have much in the way of funds. A hall which had been bought from the 'Odd Fellows' served as a church. For many years the members had subscribed to a building fund and after I had been there a couple of years, they decided to start building. A well-known architect drew up the plan free of charge and a building contractor from Boksburg built it at a cost of 30 000 pounds. It was a great day for the small congregation when the church was inaugurated. Meanwhile the number of members had increased and the council decided to call a second minister. This was the Rev. Danie Rabie of Vorentoe, a great friend of mine. After three years he was called to Port Elizabeth and later to Rondebosch. He was a keen angler and one day when he and his son went fishing, an unexpected wave washed him off the rocks and he landed on his head. His neck was so badly injured that he was totally paralysed. His mind remained clear and he could read, but his speech was impaired and it was almost impossible to understand him. He died in 1987, twenty years after his accident.

Grahamstown has always been and still is, an important Educational Centre. At the time we were there, apart from Rhodes University, there was a Training College for women; Catholic, Anglican and Methodist private schools, as well as departmental Boys' High and Girls' High Schools. There were several primary schools, but no Afrikaans-medium school. In the poorer area there was a dual-medium primary school, the only one where Afrikaans was used.

Most of the well-to-do Afrikaners sent their children to the departmental English-medium School, but we decided to

send Charlotte to the dual-medium school as we were convinced that it was important for her to start her education in her mother tongue. She was very happy there and had good teachers. We never regretted sending her to that school.

Our Afrikaans-speaking friends however felt that something had to be done for their children. An important meeting was convened and the Director of Education in the Cape Province was invited to address the meeting and advise us on the matter. It was unanimously decided to request the School Board that an Afrikaans-medium school should be established in Grahamstown. I was chairman of the school board at the time, and the plan was approved of in principle. The request was sent to the Department of Education and it was granted on condition that we would find suitable premises for it. The School Board approached the City Council but they refused the request as the majority were against an Afrikaans-medium school. The issue caused bitter strife in the community which lasted for years. Eventually the City Council gave way, but the premises that they offered were unacceptable. The area was undesirable. At that time there was a plot with a fine view of the town, which had been set-aside for educational purposes. It fell under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education. When they realised that the School Board was getting nowhere with the City Council, they handed it over to the School Board for the building of an Afrikaans-medium school. And so the school was finally built, and proved to be as good as any of the others.

While we were in Grahamstown, two more daughters were born; Marie Louise in 1949, and Suzan in 1951.

After our visit to Caux, we kept in touch with our MRA friends. In 1948, Bremer and Agnes Hofmeyr, full-time workers of MRA, returned to South Africa after an absence of 14 years. A year or two later a team from overseas came to South Africa with a play "The Forgotten Factor," which made a great impression wherever it was presented. So far all conferences had been for whites only, but in 1953 it was

decided to have a conference for all races. Because of apartheid it was decided to hold the conference outside South Africa in Lusaka, Zambia. Joey and I also received an invitation to attend it but did not see our way clear to leave the girls behind, the youngest being only two years old. It happened that just at that time Rev. and Mrs Gordon Hannon, an Irish couple, were staying with us. They were convinced that it was right for us to go, and together we prayed about it, asking for guidance. Who would look after the children? Then friends of ours, when they heard of our invitation, offered to do so, and together with the Hannons we set off for Lusaka.

There we met a very prominent black leader, Dr William Nkomo. He was a medical doctor in Atteridgeville, near Pretoria. How he happened to be there was an interesting story. A couple of Pretoria students had been to Kenya the previous year with an MRA team where their whole attitude towards black people had changed. On their return to Pretoria, four of them had clear guidance to visit Dr Nkomo, who was an outstanding black leader, and apologise for their superiority towards black people. They did so. It made a great impression on Dr Nkomo and he said later that he had never expected to hear white Afrikaners apologise to a black man.

This incident aroused his curiosity about MRA and when they invited him to join them in Lusaka, he readily agreed. There were also other black leaders, from Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, (now Zimbabwe).

For us it was a new experience to mix with blacks and share meals with them. Like most whites in South Africa we had grown up in an atmosphere where the white man was the boss, and the black man his servant, but here we met as equals. To begin with, relations were rather strained and it was clear that the black people still harboured hatred and resentment for the way the whites treated them.

It was on the second or third day that the Lord spoke to me very clearly about my attitude towards black people. He

showed me that the hatred in the hearts of the blacks was largely due to the superiority of whites like me. This was a revelation to me and I realised that I had to change drastically. I not only asked God's forgiveness, but I also asked the black people at the conference to forgive me.

In the meantime God was also speaking clearly to Joey. Back in 1947 some of my friends in Caux had asked me whether I did not feel called to work full-time in MRA. When I mentioned it to Joey at that time, she reacted so strongly to the idea that we did not discuss it again. And yet the thought came to me repeatedly; but as Joey's reaction remained the same, I put it out of my mind. But here, at the conference, God began to speak to her. In a time of quiet together with black and white women, the Lord showed her that the negative image she had had of full-time work was of the devil who wanted to prevent her from committing herself to God's plan for a new world. She says that when she shared this with her friends, she found that her fear had gone and that she felt free to do whatever God should ask of her.

When she told me about this, it was like a cork being pulled off a bottle! Her reaction had bound me for years, and now I too, was free. At the next meeting we both spoke of what had happened to us. After that we had a time of quiet with our team mates and it became very clear that we were meant to give our lives to the work of MRA.

In the meantime another miracle had taken place, and that was in the life of Dr William Nkomo. He spoke at a meeting: " I saw white men change; I saw black men change, and I decided to change because it was more revolutionary to change people than to liquidate them." After that he completely renounced violence as a means of fighting for the rights of his people and he became convinced that negotiation was far more effective. We became great friends, spoke together at meetings, visited other countries together and for many years battled together for God's plan for South Africa.

Joey and I returned to Grahamstown, two completely new persons. We both experienced a new freedom of spirit which we had not had before. On our way back I felt so overwhelmed that I had to stop the car and took her in my arms to declare my love for her afresh, and to thank her for her love and for what she meant to me.

The first thing we did when we got back to Grahamstown was to write to Joey's parents, telling them of our decision to work full-time with MRA. Needless to say, it was a great shock to them, especially the fact that we would not earn a salary; and how were we to raise three little girls in such circumstances? They regarded it as completely irresponsible. They wrote to us in no uncertain terms. At first we wondered whether we had not been too hasty in our decision, but after much prayer and reflection, we were convinced that this was God's calling for us and that we should continue on the road He had shown us. We wrote to them in detail saying that we had given our lives unconditionally to God to be used as He wished. We also repeated that we were convinced of our calling to work with MRA. There was no choice but to obey. It was God's choice, not ours. And where the future was concerned, we believed that where God guides, He provides.

After that we received a very understanding letter from them, saying that they had not realised how seriously we regarded the matter, and though they could not understand it, they were prepared to accept our decision. The next step was to inform the church council of our decision and ask permission to be released from our commitment to the church. The council accepted our decision in good spirit and asked the Presbytery to grant me demission and allow me to retain my status as minister. The Presbytery acceded to this request. The minister at Cradock came over for the demission and also for the farewell function, which the council had arranged for us.

And so we came to the end of seven very happy years in Grahamstown. Taking leave wasn't easy, but we left with a great sense of expectation. What did the future hold for us?

It was a great step in faith, especially for Joey, with the three little girls. The question which arose constantly was - how would we be able to provide for them? One day a letter arrived from a woman she hardly knew, with five pounds in it. It was as if the Lord was saying, "This is how I will care for you. And just so, in all the years He has cared for us in various ways, mainly through friends who believed that what we were doing was God's will.

Two things especially strengthened our faith that the Lord had really called us to take responsibility for the work of MRA. One was that the future of South Africa depended largely on reconciliation between the two racial groups. The other was that, except for the Hofmeyrs, all those taking responsibility for MRA in South Africa were foreigners, and it was essential that more of our own people should be involved.

Chapter 8

WORLD TOUR

When friends of ours in Johannesburg, Adriaan and Sophie Smuts, heard of our decision, they wrote to us saying that they were planning to go overseas for six months. They wanted to know whether we would be willing to stay in their home and look after their two girls as it was not possible to take them along. It solved our immediate problem as we had no place to stay at the time. Now we had a home for six months.

After that, another friend, Jimmy van Rensburg, invited us to come and live with him and his mother in Waterkloof, Pretoria. We realised that it would only be temporary, and with the help of friends we began to look for a more permanent residence. We found a house, also in Waterkloof, at a very reasonable rent. In the meantime, Charles Burns of Scotland, who had decided to make South

Africa his home, donated a sum of money to buy a house in Pretoria to be used as a centre for MRA. He had recently married Barbara, daughter of Dr Ebenhezer Macmillan, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church. Dr Macmillan had died during the war and Mrs Delcey Macmillan, with her two children, Robbie and Barbara, had remained in the parsonage of the Presbyterian Church which had been the property of her husband. After both Robbie and Barbara were married, Mrs Macmillan decided to sell the parsonage, No 831 Arcadia Street, and buy a smaller home. As MRA had meant so much to her husband, she offered to sell it to MRA at a very reasonable price. So it became the centre of the work of MRA in South Africa, and our home from 1955 to 1969.

It was a spacious house with a large garden, and a tennis court which was badly neglected. With the help of friends we renovated the fence and gave the tennis court a new ant-heap surface. We consulted a well-known gardener and planned a new garden with several fruit trees and grape vines. In a fine old oak tree in the back yard, the children built a tree house - a source of great joy to them. We had a constant stream of visitors, mostly young people from overseas, working with MRA. We held regular meetings at 831 and sometimes even produced plays. So, with three children at school and visitors from overseas, we had a full life.

In 1955 MRA organised a world tour under the leadership of Peter Howard. About 200 people took part in it: Five were from South Africa -Bremer and Agnes Hofmeyr, Dr William Nkomo, Rev. George Molefe and I. Peter had written a special play for the tour, "The Vanishing Island," which depicted the struggle between communism and justice, and everywhere it had a great impact. We gathered at Mackinac Island in Canada to prepare for the tour. Our first visit was to Honolulu. At first we had to make use of scheduled flights, but later Ray Purdy managed to persuade the American Air force to put two military planes at our disposal, which greatly simplified matters especially where the transport of stage equipment was concerned.

From Honolulu we flew directly to Tokyo where "The Vanishing Island" was performed in the State Theatre. The Japanese Prime Minister was an old man who seldom went out at night. But he was interested in MRA and decided to attend the performance one evening. He did more than that - He asked that some of his senior political leaders should accompany us to our next stop, the Philippines, with the specific aim of asking forgiveness for the conduct of Japanese soldiers during the war, especially for the devastation of their capital, Manila. The first night at Manila the theatre was jam-packed. After the performance, as was our custom, a few of us gave our testimony. Dr Nkomo and I often spoke together, telling of the reconciliation between black and white in South Africa. That evening the senior man from Japan was asked to convey the message of the Prime Minister. The Philipinos were still filled with hatred towards the Japanese, and when they heard him speaking in Japanese, they booed him. Of course they could not understand what he was saying, but when his speech was translated, telling them that the Prime Minister had asked him to apologise to the people of the Philippines, the applause from the audience was deafening.

When the President of the Philippines, Magsaysay, heard what had happened, he invited the Japanese members together with the MRA team to visit the Presidential Residence the next morning. He asked them to express his thanks to their Prime Minister for his fine gesture. The sequel to this was that the next Prime Minister, Mr Kishi, when visiting the countries of East Asia in connection with economic treaties, first apologised in each country for what Japanese soldiers had done during the war. The result was a totally new climate in the relationship between Japan and the countries of East Asia.

When the team left for Taiwan, Peter Howard took some of us to South Korea where we found great interest among the people. A group also visited Vietnam at the invitation of the president. The following visits of the team and "The Vanishing Island" were to Thailand, Burma, also Madras, Calcutta, and New Delhi in India, as well as Karachi in

Pakistan. From there we went to Teheran where we were entertained by the Shah of Iran. The first evening the play took place in a theatre, but it was so unbearably hot that the Shah invited us to give a performance in the palace garden. He even had a special stage built for it. I have never seen so many Persian carpets together - not only was the stage covered with carpets, but also the whole area where the audience were seated.

From Teheran we went to Baghdad in Iraq and Cairo in Egypt where we were received by the President and from there to Kenya. A large gathering was organised and among the speakers was Agnes Hofmeyr who had been born in Kenya. She told how the Mau Mau had murdered her stepmother and later buried her father alive on Mount Kenya. A prophetess had said that the Mau Mau would be victorious if a good white man was buried alive. It is difficult to realise what must have passed through Agnes' mind when she received that message, but by the grace of God she triumphed and her guidance was to fight harder than ever that both black and white should change. She could tell those thousands of Kenyans that she wanted to fight with them to find God's plan for Kenya.

From Kenya we went to Caux where a conference was being held. Dr Buchman was there and he made sure that we gave a full account of what had happened on the tour. From Caux the South African group came home while "The Vanishing Island" toured the rest of Europe.

Personally I learnt an important lesson on the tour. Because Dr Nkomo and Rev. George Molefe were black, I didn't quite trust them and thought I should keep an eye on them in case they did something wrong and got into trouble! Of course they sensed it and sometimes tried to avoid me. This lasted for some time until one day they asked me straight out whether I distrusted them. What could I say? I had to be honest. It made me realise just how much prejudice there was still in my heart towards them and that I discriminated against them because of their colour. I had to pray earnestly, asking God to help me not to look at the colour of someone's

skin but to treat all people as children of God, and as my equal.

Chapter 9

TACKLING RACIAL ISSUES

In 1957 Joey and I joined a large delegation to an MRA conference on Mackinac Island in the U.S.A. We knew we would be away for quite a while and asked friends of ours, Jack and Margaret Ballard if they would come and stay at 831 in support of Emmie Rogan who was already living there. It happened that from time to time young friends came to stay at 831 to help with the housekeeping and the care of the children. For instance there was Jane Hopcraft from Kenya who stayed with us for three years. She was like one of the family and the children loved her. To this day we have kept in touch with her and her husband, David Stanley.

That year, 1957, two outstanding lady singers, Muriel Smith and Ann Buckles, both actresses, attended the conference at Mackinac. A great change took place in their lives and they identified themselves fully with the work of MRA. Together with Peter Howard, Alan Thornhill and others they began to create a musical play based on the life of Mary McLeod Bethune whose parents had been slaves, and Mary was the youngest of 15 children and the only one who attended school. After completing her training, she herself started a school for the children of slaves, who simply spent their time on the streets. At first she had no school building; she simply had to make do with what was available. Later a well-to-do man took pity on her and helped her to build a school. After some years she even managed to found a college, which was called the Bethune College. She became so successful in the educational world that the President appointed her to his advisory board. In the last years of her life she came in contact with MRA and Dr Buchman. It

meant so much to her that she spoke of this experience as "the crowning experience of her life." And that became the title which Muriel Smith, a black woman herself, gave the play; "The Crowning Experience." The climax of the play was the reconciliation between Bethune and a proud woman of the South who all her life had despised Negroes and who apologised to Mrs Bethune for her attitude. Interestingly enough this actually happened at Mackinac. Dr Buchman was so impressed with the performance that he insisted that it should be staged in the southern states of North America. Arrangements were made for it to be performed in Atlanta, Georgia. The leading roles were played by Muriel Smith, Ann Buckles, Louis Byles of Jamaica, and Phyllis Konstam, a well-known actress from England. A few black families joined them and their children took the part of the school children in the play. Several of us, together with the actors, spoke to the audience at the end of each performance, and also met with people afterwards.

In those years segregation was still strictly applied in the South, especially in Atlanta. There was only one hotel where black people were welcomed: the Walhadji, which belonged to a black man. Private families accommodated all the actors, but the rest of us stayed at this hotel. One day when I was buying a pair of trousers from a shop in Atlanta, the assistant asked me where he should deliver it as it first had to be shortened. When I said that I was staying at Walhadji, he was most upset saying, "We don't deliver there." So I simply had to fetch the trousers myself.

The first few performances were in the municipal hall, the only place where Blacks were allowed. Without our knowing it, the owner of the best theatre in the city attended the performance. He was so impressed that he offered the use of his theatre to Dr Buchman, saying that black people would be welcome. This was absolutely unheard of in Atlanta and caused a great sensation. The theatre was full every night and "The Crowning Experience" ran for five months. A very prominent black attorney in Atlanta, Col. A. T. Walden remarked, "Atlanta would never be the same again." Atlanta

became one of the few cities after that where integration in schools took place peacefully.

From Atlanta Joey and I returned to Mackinac where a new play was being prepared, "The Next Phase," written by a man from Ghana. The setting of the play, like that of "Freedom," was in an imaginary African country which had already attained freedom, but where corruption was rife. In winter Lake Michigan where Mackinac is situated, is completely frozen so that no ship can reach the island. At the beginning of the winter of 1957 we joined the cast of 'The Next Phase' on the last ship to leave for the mainland. From there we went to Dellvillewood near New York where we stayed for the next few months. Dellvillewood was a large three-storied house situated in beautiful grounds, which the owner, Mrs Emily Hammond, had offered to Dr Buchman to be used as a Centre.

In Dellvillewood 'The Next Phase' was prepared and finalised. Every day we travelled to New York by bus to present the play in a theatre there. It meant leaving Dellvillewood at 5 p.m. and arriving back after the performance between one and two o'clock in the early morning. Then we had our supper! One of the prominent people attending the play was Paul Robeson, the famous black American singer. His wife was so impressed that she came a few nights running which gave Joey a good chance to get to know her.

While in America we also had the opportunity of going to Louisville, Kentucky, where we stayed with Dr and Mrs Love. In Richmond, Virginia, we also met Dr and Mrs Will Chapin with whom we still have contact. In Nashville, Tennessee we also met the widow of Maghee Baxter who had come to South Africa with Dr Buchman.

Two people who were with us at Mackinac in 1957 were Tutor Ndamase, son of Paramount Chief Victor Poto of the Transkei in South Africa, and his cousin Douglas Ndamase. In the fifties and sixties we often visited the Transkei and held conferences there; and even staged plays. One school

holiday Charlotte joined us and the Tembu chief presented her with a Parker pen as a present.

Rev. George Molefe, the Presbyterian minister in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, and active in the work of MRA, invited Tutor to accompany him to a conference in Cape Town. It was there that Tutor surrendered his life to God. The last time we visited Paramount Chief at the Great Place, was shortly before he retired. Dr William Nkomo was with us and Victor Poto ordered all his headmen to come to his Great Place. After all of us (we were 12 in all) had given our testimony at the request of Poto, he stood up and told his people what MRA had meant to him. Then he thanked us for what we had done for his son Tutor. He was also present. Victor told us how concerned he had been about his son, but now he felt completely free to resign and hand over the chieftainship to Tutor as he was a responsible young man and had the confidence of the leaders of the Pondo. Tutor later became Paramount Chief and when Kaizer Mantanzima resigned as president of the Transkei, Tutor Ndamase was elected in his place.

To return to our visit to America - early in 1958 we were invited to Jamaica by Louis Byles who played an important part in "The Crowning Experience." While we were there we heard that Joey's father was seriously ill and it became clear to us that we should return to South Africa immediately. Finding the money for our airfare was time-consuming, and it was also a problem to get our connection from Jamaica to Haiti, from there to New York, and London and finally to Palmietfontein, the name of Johannesburg Airport at the time. The first news of her father was at Salisbury, now Harare. There we heard that he had already died. Al Cook met us at Johannesburg airport and drove us as fast as he could to Ermelo for the funeral. Fortunately we arrived in time.

After the funeral we returned to Pretoria and to the children whom we had not seen for eleven months. The following year, 1959, when Joey and I again went to Caux, Charlotte who was now in Std 9, went with us. It meant so much to

her that, after passing Matric, instead of going to university, she decided to accept an invitation to do full-time work with MRA in London. We were hesitant about letting her go so far from home, but Peter and Doe Howard offered to take responsibility for her, therefore we agreed to let her go. It was while she was in England that she wrote and told us that she had decided to give her life to God and to serve Him.

After two or three years she joined a group of young people whose work later developed into a musical called "Up with People." In 1965, the year that Peter Howard died, she came home and helped Nico Ferreira to start a similar group in South Africa called "Springbok Stormloop," or "Springbok Stampede."

Some months later Charlotte received a letter from Ton Phillips in Holland, asking her to marry him. He had also been in America working with MRA. I'll never forget her reaction after reading the letter - "But I hardly know the man!" She had met him a few times in America but did not have the slightest idea of his feelings for her. She was altogether confused and did not know what to do. We had a time of quiet together and the thought came to invite Ton to Pretoria so that they could get to know each other better, and within a few days Ton was there. Joey wasn't even at home. She had gone to hospital for one of her hip operations, and was still there when Charlotte and Ton went to tell her that they had become engaged. Joey said that when they came into the ward, before Charlotte could say anything, Ton excitedly announced, "She said Yes!" He could not stay much longer but invited Charlotte to come to Holland and meet his family. I had already met Frits and Sylvia Phillips in 1939 when I visited Holland for six months. So Charlotte went to Holland and stayed with the family for some time.

On April 8, 1967, I performed the marriage ceremony in the Dutch Reformed Church, Pretoria East. Ton's sisters, Digna and Annajet, and his brother Warner arrived from Holland in a private aeroplane belonging to the Phillips Company. The Phillips family were well known across the world and the

media pestered us for all possible information about Ton and Charlotte and the wedding plans. The Phillips Company in South Africa contributed much to the publicity of the event.

We decided to have the reception at our home at 831 Arcadia Street. Idelette who was the sister of Joey's brother-in-law, Dr Tertius Rossouw, undertook the planning of the garden by "planting" flowerpots everywhere. It was a real work of art. We put up a marquee tent on the tennis court, and a festive atmosphere was created by the tables and chairs placed all over the lawn. It was a cloudy day, but luckily there was no rain. However, it rained the next day, and the men who came to fetch the marquee tent left the tennis court covered with footprints. It was a major task to get the court levelled again - but it was worth it.

In the meantime our MRA full-time team grew in strength when Nico Ferreira joined us. He later married Loel Rubidge. There was also Ken Gladwin, married to Janet Kingwill, Bill and Eileen Page, Marie van Selm, Malie Smuts, Vilma Maritz and Sam Pono. Sam has been the only black man in our full-time team. He married Virginia Ncube of Zimbabwe. Later on Pieter Horn, Meryl Christian and Jackie Euvrard joined us. Nico was a clerk in what was then called the Department of Native Affairs. It was the time when the Government decided on the removal of black people from Sophiatown. This caused a great deal of discontent; so much so that the Department was expecting an uprising. One of the senior men in the Department who knew of the change in Nico's life, asked him whether he could do something towards a peaceful removal. He gave Nico a week's leave to see what could be done. Nico had no idea what to do, so he gathered some of the MRA team to pray about it and find God's guidance. Then the thought came to him to go and see a man called P. Q. Vundla, the chief instigator of the uprising in Sophiatown. P. Q. was described by the police as the "most dangerous terrorist on the Witwatersrand!" But Nico went to P. Q.'s home, feeling very nervous, and was met by a large black man with an assegai. While Nico was talking to P. Q., this bodyguard did not leave them. Nico told P. Q. of the change in his life especially with regard to his attitude

towards black people. P. Q. became interested and asked Nico whether there were more people who felt the same. Nico assured him that there were many and P. Q. said that he would like to meet them, which he did, on more than one occasion.

The uprising in Sophiatown did not take place. When a large gathering was later organised by the ANC to protest against the Government policy for Bantu Education, P. Q. was asked to be one of the speakers. He was an outstanding orator and could easily incite people towards violence. He was the last speaker at this meeting and people waited in suspense to hear him attack the government with his bitter tongue. But nothing of the sort happened. Instead he pleaded for negotiation with the government. He spoke of his meeting with Nico and other prominent white people who had changed. He told them how Nico and others had apologised for their superiority towards blacks. He believed that a solution would be found through negotiation rather than by violence. But he did not reckon with the young tsotsis whom he himself had trained in violence. On his way from the meeting they waylaid him, intending to kill him, and left him for dead. But some friends saved his life by taking him to hospital. There he not only recovered, but surrendered his life to God after Nico had visited him several times. After that P. Q. used every opportunity to witness to the Lord with the same fire which he had previously used to incite people.

The ANC however, expelled him as they had done to Dr Nkomo. But that did not deter him, and right up to the end of his life, he worked with MRA; here in South Africa as well as overseas, witnessing to the power of God which can change people's lives. His wife Kathleen supported him a hundred percent, and even after his death she spent the rest of her life winning people for Christ. Her home in Soweto was a veritable oasis where people found a new experience and a new purpose in life. Even visitors from other countries went to her home to meet her.

William Nkomo and P. Q. often attended the MRA Conferences in Caux, Switzerland, which are held every

year, several times. In 1955 Manasseh Moerane, Vice-president of the Black Teachers' Union in South Africa, went to Caux with William. There he found a great number of representatives from other countries in Africa. One morning Frank Buchman announced that he would like to meet everybody from Africa. He told them that he had done a lot of thinking about Africa the previous night. "Africa is not meant to be torn apart between East and West," he said, "but is meant to speak to both East and West with an answer. I think it may come in the form of a play. Do you think you could write such a play?" That same day they met together again. After a time of quiet they shared their thoughts and somehow the gist of a play became clear. Three of them undertook to write it. John Amata, a graduate of the Ibadan University in Nigeria, wrote the first act, Manasseh Moerane the second, and Karbo from Ghana, the third. Next morning the three got together to read what each had written. The rest of the day they spent fitting the acts together and at five o'clock they told Dr Buchman that they had finished writing the play!

It was about an African country on the point of becoming independent. It brought out the insensitive attitude of the Colonial Governor, and the intrigues between the politicians of the different tribes. The country achieved real freedom when there was a change in the heart of the Governor and some of the African leaders. All agreed that the title of the play should be "Freedom." The very next day the play was staged in Caux and a week later in the Westminster Theatre in London. Bremer Hofmeyr and I joined the cast and we travelled to Germany and other European countries with them. Manasseh and William Nkomo were two of the actors. The demand for the play was so great that it was impossible to comply with all the requests; so it was decided to make it into a full-length colour film, the first film ever to be made by people of Africa. It was made in Nigeria and performed in more than twenty different languages in countries all over the world. And so "Freedom" brought the answer to East and West as Buchman had foretold.

One year I was in Caux with John Amata and a Mrs Assale from Cameroon was there at the same time. Her father was one of the political leaders who were causing a lot of division in the country. As a result of her own change she was convinced that MRA could also bring about change in her country, especially if some of the leaders could come to Caux. Dr Buchman asked John and me to accompany a Mr Pinto to Cameroon to invite them to Caux. Mr Pinto, himself a man from Cameroon, later became his country's ambassador to the United Nations. Some of the men Mrs Assale had mentioned did come, and a year or two later her father as well. He told Dr Buchman that all his life he had "eaten the bread of bitterness" and so had caused a lot of dissension in his country. He changed, and so went back to be reconciled with his greatest opponent, Mr Abidjo. Three years later the two men came to an agreement with France which led to the independence of the Cameroon, with Abidjo as President and Assale as Prime Minister.

On a later occasion, four of the chief ministers of the Homelands in South Africa also attended a conference in Caux. They were Mr Mangope of Bophutatswana, Dr Phatudi of Lebowa, Mr Sebe of the Ciskei and Prof. Ntsanwisi of Gazankulu. After that Prof. Ntsanwisi often visited Caux and took part in the work of MRA.

Kwa Thema is a black township near Springs. History was made there. It was the first township where the homes were built by the black people themselves. This happened as a result of the change in the lives of the town engineer of Springs, Archie Archibald, and Jacob Mohlala, a black leader. That was in 1954. Up to that time the building of homes, even for the black people, was in the hands of whites, and most blacks could not afford a house. The thought came to Archie Archibald that he was not only responsible for the building of homes for white people, but also for the homes of blacks. So he and Jacob got together to devise a plan how to train black people to build houses. The result was that these houses were not only built in Kwa Thema, but also in other townships in the Witwatersrand.

Several of Jacob's friends followed in his footsteps and actively supported MRA. One of them had the thought to produce "The Ladder," a play by Peter Howard. With the help of Norah Caulfield, an English actress who was in South Africa at the time, they produced the play not only in Kwa Thema but also in many other places. In 1972 they even went to Caux and staged it there. Someone from Northern Ireland saw it and invited them to Belfast. Some of us who were at Caux at the time, Bremer and Agnes Hofmeyr, Mike and Marguerite Horn, David Kingwill and I together with some others, joined them. What made the greatest impression on the Irish was the sense of unity among black and white from South Africa.

By that time Dr William Nkomo who went with us, was practically blind - but not from old age; a traffic policeman had hit him in the face as he was travelling by car in a street that had been closed. His first reaction was to take revenge on the whites, but when he went home and thought about it, he felt God saying to him that he could not blame a whole nation for the action of one man. The following year William Nkomo died of a heart attack and I was privileged to pay tribute to him at his funeral on behalf of MRA.

It is interesting to note that two years earlier his friends in Atteridgeville and Mamelodi organised a 'William Nkomo Day' to pay tribute to him and thank him for what he meant to his people, medically, spiritually and educationally. They said that they did not want to wait till after his death, but wanted to pay tribute to him while he was still alive. This was a great encouragement to him because for many years after his change he was isolated by the ANC and branded as a sell-out and a traitor because he would not take part in the struggle against whites. His whole aim was to win whites as well as blacks for God.

SPRINGBOK STAMPEDE

In 1965 a great change took place in the work of MRA. Peter Howard, who had taken over the leadership from Frank Buchman, concentrated very much on young people and students. Many of them attended the conference in Mackinac Island that year. The idea of a musical, bringing the message of MRA in song resulted in the "Sing Outs." Later it became "Up with People," the name of the theme song of the shows. From America where the musical was shown all over the country and drew large audiences, other "Sing Outs" grew, even in other countries under the name "Up with People." Here in South Africa Nico and Loel Ferreira, with the help of Charlotte and others, a similar "Sing Out" was started under the name "Springbok Stampede," or "Springbok Stormloop."

At first there were only a few shows, staged from time to time in different places, but it soon became evident that, to be effective, there should be a permanent group, available at any time, and fully equipped with the necessary instruments and with transport facilities. Nico and Loel then made their home at "Wag-'n -Bietjie," (Wait a bit) an estate outside Johannesburg which had been given to MRA. They gathered a number of young people who were willing to join the Stampede on a full-time basis. Many of these were still at school, among them our youngest daughter Suzan, which meant that a school became a necessity. Malie Smuts undertook this. In those years the Stampede became the most important part of our work and all our full-time workers supported Nico and Loel. We paid special attention to the development of the young people, and the main purpose of the Stampede was to win people for Christ. Naturally personal testimonies were part of the shows. But just as with "Up with People," in America, so much attention was given to the performance, that the main purpose became neglected. There I was also to blame. My own personal life

was at a low level and I was more concerned with the success of the show than with the spiritual growth of the young people. Slowly but surely the "Stampede" lost its original purpose. But there were other reasons too.

There was at that time a great deal of politically motivated criticism against MRA, and it became more and more difficult to organise shows. I remember one instance when I had arranged for a show at a school in a certain town. The day before the show the principal informed me that it had been cancelled due to the opposition of the church. Another reason for opposition was that it was illegal to have multi-racial shows in public places; it meant that only whites could join the Stampede. That of course was contrary to the aims of MRA. Some of the team even considered breaking away from MRA, but fortunately that did not happen. But it became clear that there was no future for the Stampede.

In the same year, 1965, we were visiting Roly and Moira Kingwill on their farm, when Joey began to realise that there was something wrong with her hips. Whenever she went for a walk her hips began to ache. Back in Pretoria, she went to see Dr Sakkie de Wet, an orthopaedic specialist who found that the hip cavities were too shallow and had already worn out. It became more and more difficult for her to climb the stairs in our Arcadia home, and eventually we had to sell it and move to a flat in Muckleneuk Lanterns. There were three bedrooms which meant that Suzan and Marie-Louise could each have their own room.

We were very sad to leave 831 Arcadia Street with the spacious garden and the tennis court. It was near the school and also the university, and also the famous rugby field, Loftus Versfeld. The girls used to earn pocket money by parking cars whenever there was a big rugby match. And we certainly missed the fruit trees!

In 1966 Joey had two big operations. One, to remove her gall bladder, which meant that she always had digestion trouble after that, and the other, osteopathy on her left hip.

The pin which was inserted had to be removed after two years.

In 1967 the same operation was performed on the right hip. The operations gave her some relief, but she was never without pain. After five years the pain became unbearable. A Dr Charnly from England had discovered that it was possible to substitute the hip joint with an artificial joint and Dr de Wet advised her to have a Charnly operation. At first she would not hear of it, after so many operations. But the prospect of a wheel chair and the pressure of her friends eventually made her give in, especially when she saw how successful the operation had been in the case of her friend, Mrs Gerda de Haas. After two Charnly operations on her hips in 1975 and 1976, she had no more pain and we could never thank the Lord enough.

Earlier, after Joey's two osteopathy operations, when she thought she might never walk normally again, she decided to take typing lessons so that she would be able to do something while sitting. So she took a course at the Technical College. It cost her a great deal of perseverance to travel to the College by bus for two years, and that at the age of 57, (By far the oldest in the class!) She always had to have someone to help her on and off the bus, and to carry her books up the stairs. But she passed both the junior and the senior examinations. In the end her proficiency in typing stood her in good stead.

In 1970 Charlotte and Ton invited us to visit them in Holland and we spent two months in their summer home in Blaricum. They changed the summer home into a cottage so that Joey did not have to climb stairs, and also installed heating in the swimming pool so that she could do her exercises in it as she had done in hospital. It was a wonderful holiday and a good opportunity to get to know Ton and our two grandchildren, Frits and Hanneke, better. (A third grandchild, Karel, was born in 1976). Charlotte and I and my nephew, Inus Daneel who was studying in Amsterdam at the time, had a chance to attend the Passion play at Uberammergau - an unforgettable experience.

While in Holland I also took the opportunity to visit Caux. I went with a heavy heart, realising that, while the Stampede had demanded all my time, I had become spiritually slack and I had lost contact with the overseas team. I was afraid of what they would say, but to my relief no one mentioned Springbok Stampede. They simply included me in the program of the day. I immediately felt at home and decided to renew my decision to live fully for Christ. It meant so much to me that I visited Caux again before returning to South Africa.

Chapter 11

MRA CONFERENCE IN PRETORIA

When we were living in Muckleneuk Lanterns, we belonged to the Bronberg D. R. Church. As an elder I was sent as a delegate to the Synod of the Northern Transvaal in 1971. The following year I attended the General Synod in Cape Town, representing Northern Transvaal. According to the agenda, race relations in South Africa would be discussed, and I felt I should share my views on this important subject. I was given the opportunity and this is what I said:

Mr Chairman,

The moment has arrived for the church to call us as a people to repentance as far as our inter-racial relationships are concerned. The Commission for Racial and Ecumenical issues quotes in its report:

"In its call for repentance and sanctification, the church attempts to bring about a new worldview, which will create a strong bond between people across cultural boundaries. Such a call must also be heard from the Synod. The future of our country is in the balance. Change is unavoidable. The question is, what kind of change will it be? Voluntary change as a result of confession of guilt and repentance, or violent change that will be forced upon us?"

However, fear of danger, no matter how real, may never be the most important motive for Christians to put right what is wrong. We must do it because God asks us to, and because we are followers of Christ. That is why our relationship as whites towards non-whites must be determined by the command, "You must love your neighbour as yourself." This not only refers to individuals but to society as a whole.

If we are honest, we must confess that such a love towards black people is lacking. The result is estrangement, misunderstanding, prejudice and tension between the different racial groups.

Being born again and to love God is no guarantee that we will love our neighbour, especially if he is black. Think of Peter as an example. He was well advanced in the spiritual life, a man full of the Holy Spirit, when Cornelius, the Roman captain, summoned him at God's command. As a Jew he was full of prejudice and feelings of superiority towards people of other nations. He was still bound by his Jewish traditions. With such an attitude he clearly could never convey the love of Christ to Cornelius. His attitude needed a total transformation. This happened when God spoke to him in a vision on the roof of Simon of Joppa's house. "Do not call anything unclean that God has made pure." Then only could he enter Cornelius' home because God had liberated him from his prejudice, and made him understand that He made no distinction between people.

Prejudice and a feeling of superiority towards non-whites is something with which we grew up. It has become part of our way of life. However that does not make it less sinful in the eyes of God because it stops us from showing genuine love towards black people. It also generates hatred and bitterness in their hearts towards us.

Perhaps there are those who feel that they are free of racial prejudice. But what of those compatriots of whom we have so often read in the Press lately who maltreat their black labourers or act disrespectfully towards them? They are our

own flesh and blood. As Christians we are called to identify with them just as Daniel identified himself with the sins of his nation.

It is also true that it is equally necessary for the non-whites to change. But first of all we must remove the beam from our own eye. Only then will we see how to remove the speck from our brother's eye. If we change, there is the chance that they will also change.

Mr Chairman, the future of our nation depends largely on how far we shall succeed in building friendships, common trust and co-operation with the other ethnic groups in our country. It is vitally important.

We dare not allow our Afrikaner pride to stop us from self-examination and from allowing God to work out the needed transformation regarding the racial question in our land. If we, like Peter, become obedient to the word of God, even when it clashes with our tradition, we will be able to entrust the future of our nation and of all South Africa to Him.

The reaction of the Synod was not very favourable and nothing more was done about the matter. At the same Synod Prof. Ben Marais made a very revolutionary proposal viz "that the D. R. Church should open its doors to all races." He caused quite a stir and when it was put to the vote only 30 of the 500 voted for it. After the meeting some of us asked Ben what his purpose had been, knowing perfectly well what the result would be. His reply was "It will have to happen some time and the sooner we start fighting for it, the better." As Ben had predicted, it happened some 16 years later, with the acceptance of 'Kerk en Samelewing', (Church and Community).

After the National Conference in Lusaka in 1953, black people were included in all the meetings and conferences of MRA. We were convinced that reconciliation between races was absolutely necessary if we were to find a solution for the problems of South Africa. In those days it was practically impossible to find a hall where blacks were allowed, so for our conferences we pitched large tents on a

plot just outside Johannesburg, which had been given us by a friend of MRA. Owing to the clash between the policy of apartheid and our work, we had to put up with a lot of resistance and criticism on the part of the Government, and even of some churches. Security Police often turned up at our meetings, incognito, to spy on us but they could never find anything for which they could charge us. On the contrary, there were some who were so impressed with the testimonies that they actually supported us.

When a group of us from South Africa attended the annual World Conference of MRA at Caux, Switzerland in 1972, the question was put to us whether we did not think the time had come for us to have a conference in South Africa where people from other countries, especially Africa, could be invited. At that time there was a great deal of talk about the possibility of dialogue between South Africa and the other African countries. "But," said a high official of the Abyssinian Government, "I don't think it will be on a political level. What Africa needs is the kind of dialogue that will help build responsible leadership on the continent. Would you, coming from South Africa, as the most developed country in Africa consider having such a conference?"

This was a real challenge! We went home and thought and prayed about it. One morning in my time of quiet it came clearly to me that such a conference was God's will. All my teammates, black and white, agreed that it was right and that it should be international. That meant that we would need the full support of the international team as well as the permission of the S. A. Government so that visas could be obtained and people from all countries, black and white, could stay in the same hotel.

The following year a group of us again went to Caux to consult with the team overseas. All agreed that we should proceed with the conference. They were enthusiastic and promised their full support. The next step was to get permission from the S. A. Government. Dr Connie Mulder was Minister of Internal Affairs at the time, and the man I had to see. I pointed out to him how much it would mean to South Africa if people from other countries who felt positive

towards our country, could come and see for themselves what was happening here instead of basing their opinion on the negative, often false, reports about South Africa in the overseas press. I also pointed out that we specially wanted to invite people from Africa. I asked whether the Government would make it possible to provide them with visas.

Another request was for permission for all of us, black and white, to be accommodated in the same hotel, for two reasons: one, for the sake of overseas visitors. It would create a very negative impression on them if black and white were separated. Secondly, for the sake of the future of our own country, it was essential that we should get to know each other better and learn to trust each other. Dr Mulder's reaction was favourable especially after he had seen the film about Dr Nkomo. But he explained that it was not in his power to give permission. He first had to consult the Cabinet. A few days later he informed us that the Cabinet approved of our plan on condition that the conference was held in a hotel approved by the Government. It was decided to have it at the Burger's Park Hotel in Pretoria.

In preparation for the conference, the following statement was presented to the media to give people an idea of the aim of the conference.

Representatives of Europe, Australia and America, as well as from several African states, will attend the International Conference of Moral Rearmament for all races, during the Easter weekend in Pretoria. The theme of the Conference is 'A society free of hate, free of fear and free of greed.'

The world is experiencing crisis upon crisis. Change is inevitable. But any change that does not affect the root of the crisis is inadequate. The problems with which Southern Africa is wrestling are not in the first instance political or economical, but are part of the moral crisis in the world. We have a responsibility towards other nations; but at the same time we need their help. At this conference we are not meeting to devise plans on paper, but to find God's plan for

ourselves and for our countries.

The purpose of this Conference is therefore, in the first instance, to consider together what it means to choose God's authority in our own lives, and then making it the guiding principle in the affairs of the country.

Another aim is to build a spirit of friendship between the different races. The future of our country depends largely on good racial relationships and co-operation. This does not just happen of itself. It can only be possible as a result of a change of heart in both black and white. Unless we are willing to admit where we have been wrong, and change, we may have to face violent change.

As our invitation states, we are offering an aim where everyone, black, white and coloured, can have a part. If we accept it, and live it, we will have a message for the whole world, and South Africa will have an answer for the nations.

More than 400 people from 26 countries attended the conference from 9 to 15 April, 1974. The opening was held in the spacious hall of the University of South Africa. There were 1 000 people present. The Mayor of Pretoria, Councillor C. A. Young, gave the opening speech, saying, "In this confused world, Moral Re-Armament is like a shining light in the darkness. It is one of the rare safeguards against self-destruction."

Among the crowd there were judges, professors, black leaders from the homelands and townships, and members of the Indian and coloured communities. Members of the black male choir, 'The Serenaders' sang at the beginning and the end of the meetings.

After the mayor had opened the conference, I spoke as Chairman and said, "Have you ever thought what responsibility God has entrusted to us here in South Africa, a country where all the problems of the world are concentrated? The heart of the problem is a moral problem, which has to do with human relationships. There is only one answer to that, and that is a change of heart in both black and white. Nothing else can bring about a society free from

hate, free from fear and free from greed.”

Dr Malcolm Mackay from Australia spoke; “ When I was dismissed as Minister of the Navy last year, I became completely cynical about the future of the human race. But I met someone in MRA who gave me new courage to face life. He made me realise that there was only one place to begin, and that was with myself. I realised that human wisdom was not the answer and that the only hope for humanity and for my children was that God had a plan. I began to do what you have heard from others - I began to ask God to take control of my whole life.”

The next speaker was Madame Irene Laure. She was a member of the French Parliament and leader of the women of the Socialist Party. Chancellor Adenauer of Germany and Robert Schumann, the French statesman spoke of her and her husband as those who had done more than any one else to bring reconciliation between France and Germany. She said, “During the six weeks after the Second World War that we were in Germany, we asked the Germans on 200 occasions to forgive us for the hatred in our hearts towards them. It seems to me to be the only way to bring about a new society. Together we can build a new world - that is what people are longing for. Men are hungry, not only for food, but for hope for the future; they not only long for work for their hands, but for that which will satisfy the deepest longings in their heart. This is what we need to give to people.”

The Honourable Judge C. J. Claassen who had retired from the Supreme Court a short while before, said “ I was privileged to attend the World Conference of MRA in Caux, Switzerland, when 70 people from Japan were there. They had been sent there by their Government. There they began to see things in a totally new way; so much so, that when they visited America and had the opportunity of addressing the House of Representatives, the leader openly apologised for what had happened at Pearl Harbour, and the behaviour of Japanese soldiers during World War 11. From there they returned to Japan. Then the Prime Minister of Japan himself visited the countries of East Asia that had been invaded by

Japan, asking forgiveness for what Japanese soldiers had done. This led to a new relationship and co-operation between Japan and countries in the Far East, and even between Japan and America.

Mr Piet Naude, an Afrikaner farmer from Hoedspruit made a big impression on the conference. He had been known as the "Sjambok Farmer" as a result of the harsh way he treated his black labourers. He said, "A while ago my wife and I had almost decided to give up farming. My farm workers refused to work. We tried everything. But someone suggested that if we asked God, He would tell us what to do. So we prayed and listened, and the answer was clear, 'You are a dictator and you are not interested in your workers'. That was true and then and there I decided to change. Next morning when I met them and said 'Good morning,' they did not know what had hit them! Now I don't regard them as my labourers only, but also labourers in God's Kingdom." He had brought six of his labourers to the conference, and in their own language, Tsonga, they told how God had freed them from dagga, drunkenness, immorality, theft and witchcraft.

Reports of the conference appeared in all the newspapers of the country. In the "Oggendblad" of Pretoria, Prof. J. A. Heyns of the Theological Faculty of the Pretoria University, summed it up as follows: "Judging by what has come out of this conference, it is clear that there is in MRA a real concern about the moral and spiritual need of the world. According to MRA personal change is not enough. It must result in national and international change. The world is full of corruption, hatred, dishonesty and jealousy, also immorality and greed. Fortunately there are people who not only denounce these evils, but who can testify that a different life is possible - a life of victory through Him Whose death we are commemorating this Easter weekend."

In the meantime MRA was also active in Zimbabwe where several of our British team mates were helping to develop the work; people like Kit Prescott, Henry MacNicol and Guinevere Morton. She had recently bought a house in

Salisbury, now Harare, which served as a centre for MRA. At that time a miracle happened in the life of Alec Smith, son of Ian Smith, Prime Minister of Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. He was a student at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. But as a result of the misuse of liquor and drugs, he made no progress with his studies, and after two years he was expelled. This was naturally a great disappointment for his parents. Even more so when he was caught smuggling drugs, found guilty and acquitted with a heavy fine. But his parents did not reject him. In his need he became conscious that there was a God who cared. He saw a film on the life of Christ, and one evening, on his way home, he heard a clear voice saying to him, "Go home and read the New Testament." He did so and it led to his going to church with a friend and giving his life to God.

Alec says that it was only after his change that he became conscious of the conditions in his country and of the discrimination against blacks. In 1974 the war had already been going on for two years, and he had been a Christian for 18 months. He began to realise that as a Christian he could not dissociate himself from what was happening in the country and that surely God had an answer to the situation. It was at this point that he met people from MRA. From them he learnt that personal change was not enough, but that he had a responsibility towards other people and especially towards his country. He decided to give God control of his life and to be used in accordance with God's will.

He began to work with the MRA team, and became active in preparing for an international conference in Salisbury (Harare.) This conference took place in 1975. Many South Africans, black and white, attended it, amongst others Joey and I, and our youngest daughter, Suzan. There was a black minister of the Methodist Church in Rhodesia, Arthur Kanodereka. He was not interested in the conference but his church had sent him as a delegate. He hated white people and supported the rebels in the bush war. Alec's testimony made a deep impression on him, especially the fact that God could change one's heart so completely that one became a totally new person. Something happened in

his heart at that conference. He realised that God did not discriminate between white and black and that you can never change a person by hating him. You only make him worse! Not that his political convictions changed. He was still an outspoken black nationalist, but he realised that violence was not God's way of doing things and that love was stronger than hate.

After that conference Alec and Arthur became great friends. Arthur had a large congregation in a black township in Salisbury. As a result of his conviction that reconciliation between black and white was essential, he decided to invite white people to his church. At the first of these services, he invited Alec to address the congregation. Alec tells how scared he was when he saw row upon row of young black men in front of him, men from the hostels near the church. A short while before there had been a skirmish between police and hostel dwellers. Thirteen had been shot by the police. In fear and trembling Alec stood up to speak. Arthur introduced him as the son of the most hated man in the country. Alec simply told how the Lord had changed him, an arrogant, irresponsible young white man. To his surprise, after the service those young men came to him to shake hands. From then on Arthur and Alec worked together as a team, not only in Zimbabwe, but also in Africa and overseas.

Chapter 12

LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

In 1978 I had the thought to write a letter to the Prime Minister, Dr B.J. Vorster and share with him my convictions about the policy of the Government regarding the black people.

This is what I wrote in May 1978:

Dear Dr Vorster,

The serious circumstances in our country and the uncertainty of the future - unless we can win the trust and

co-operation of the other racial groups - compel me to be accountable before God as to where I stand in regard to our policy, especially towards black people. In all reasonableness and sincerity I want to share my thoughts with you and I shall appreciate it very much to hear from you how you feel about the issues I raise, and, if possible, to discuss them with you.

I write as an Afrikaner who loves my country and who owes a great deal of gratitude towards it. I am grateful for Christian forbears and devout parents; for the privilege of being able to study at Stellenbosch University, for the Church that nurtured and built my faith, and for the privilege of representing my country on the rugby field.

I am also grateful for what the Government has achieved during recent years, and is still planning to achieve, in order to improve the lives of black people and to respect their human dignity. God is no respecter of persons and He does not discriminate between white and black. Therefore should there not be far greater efforts to enable white and black to confer together about the future? Surely it cannot be right that we as whites should decide what is best for black people?

As Christians we believe that God has brought us to South Africa for a specific purpose. If that is so, should we not assume that the same God also has a purpose for the black nations living here? But what do we find? Most black people hate us. They feel suppressed and wronged in the land of their birth. This is a fact we must reckon with and try to determine why it is so. Discriminatory legislation could have contributed, but I believe the real cause lies much deeper. Recently a black minister said at a conference for reconciliation between white and black Christians, "The white people hear our words, but not the pain in our hearts." Although we are generally not aware of it, this pain is caused by prejudice and superiority in our attitude towards black people as a result of our 'baasskap' in the past.

Those of us who say we have nothing to be ashamed of regarding our behaviour towards blacks, are not facing reality. Hundreds of lives have already been lost because of the divisions and clashes between black and white. Their families disintegrate because material gain often weighs heavier with us than the needs and feelings of people. Thousands of people live in circumstances in which no human should live, while we spend millions on things we could easily live without. Then there is also the discrimination in education. How can we ever justify before God that we spend ten times more on the education of a white child than that of a black child?

And what about the things that recently came to light about the maltreatment of prisoners and those held in custody? Of course there is guilt on both sides. Even when efforts are made to build better relations, many black people, especially the young ones, do not want to have anything to do with whites. We blame it on the influence of 'Black Power' and Communism, but forget that we are largely responsible for the circumstances in which Communism flourishes. It serves no purpose for us to warn them against the effect of Communism, because the very fact that a white person is warning them, stimulates their interest in the ideology.

We cannot claim innocence. If we love our country and want, as Christians, to see God in charge, not only in our hearts, but also in our national affairs, we will have to pay the price of following Christ's way, namely, to first remove the beam from our own eye before we can help our black brothers to see where they too, must change.

We all acknowledge that discrimination must go, but change in the legal system is not enough. What is needed is an honest acknowledgement of guilt and a change of attitude that will bring about the reconciliation that will stop violence and will inspire all the national groups to unite and make South Africa the country that God wants it to be.

I believe that God has a plan and an answer to every problem we have to deal with. The problems we are

wrestling with are not limited to our own country. They are simply a foretaste of the issues that face the rich as well as the poor countries. Could it be that we here on the southern tip of Africa, as descendants of the Voortrekkers, are once again called upon in faith to pioneer a way that will be a solution, not only for our own land, but also for many others?

Be assured that while I am very much aware of the difficult and demanding task you have been called to, I regularly pray that God will give you the necessary insight in His will, and the courage and strength to carry it out.

With cordial greetings.

Dr Vorster's answer was typical of the thinking of our political leaders in those days. His answer follows:

Dear Rev. Daneel,

I received your letter on May 12th and was shocked at your unwarranted 'Van der Kemp and Phillips' arguments, as well as that of the Black Sash, and lay them at the door of white people. How many times have I not admonished whites in public about thoughtless and unmannerly behaviour towards people of another colour? Yet there has been no word on the part of any black leader towards their own people who are rude and arrogant towards whites. This is not a one-sided affair. You would like to lay all the blame on whites and create in them a sense of guilt. I take exception to that; your letter bristles with misconceptions such as funds available for education etc. As soon as I can find time I will write to you more fully, or arrange a meeting with you.

Yours etc.

Dr Vorster was as good as his word and arranged for a meeting with me. He gave me a detailed explanation of the policy of the Government and did not give me much time to explain my standpoint. I felt that nothing had been achieved and that he was simply convinced that he was right and I was wrong.

But fortunately that was not the end of the matter. After he had retired from politics, and shortly before his death, he visited a great friend of his. During their conversation he mentioned my letter, and added, "Daneel was right after all!"

In that same year the British diplomat, Archie McKenzie who had represented England at the United Nations, visited South Africa with his wife Ruth in connection with the work of MRA. In Cape Town they met Mr Japie Basson, a Member of Parliament and he encouraged them to visit South West Africa. (Now Namibia.) Japie could not go himself but made all the necessary arrangements for Archie and Ruth, together with a few other MRA workers to go to Windhoek. After that Bremer and Agnes, and Joey and I visited Windhoek every year. We stayed some months and made many friends.

During one visit I became very ill and the person who cared for me was the wife of the Administrator, Mr A. H. du Plessis. We were staying in a small flat at the time, but when I was on the mend, Mrs du Plessis who lived with her husband in the official Administrator's residence, offered us their private home just outside Windhoek. It was a large, comfortable house where we lived in comfort for a month.

In 1982 it was Joey's and my guidance that it was not good enough to visit South West Africa periodically; we should make it a more permanent home. So Bremer and I flew to Windhoek to hunt for a flat. To our surprise we learnt from the agents that there were no flats available; several houses, but no flats. When we explained our problem to one of the agents, telling him what our purpose was in coming to live in Windhoek, he told us of one man who owned flats but did not let them through agents. He offered to make an appointment for us with this man. He told him that a certain Rev. Daneel who had been a minister in Grahamstown would like to see him. This man asked us to come at once and when we arrived there he explained that he had not met me personally, but his wife had been in my catechism class, and still spoke of how much it had meant to her. He was really keen to help us but all his flats were occupied. But he

promised to reserve the first flat that became vacant for us. We had to be satisfied with that, and Bremer and I returned home. That was on a Saturday. The very next Monday morning at 10 o'clock there was a phone call for me from the owner of the flats to say that the occupant of one of them had to return to South Africa urgently and that the flat would be available for us. I had no doubt that God's hand was in this, and it also gave us the assurance that it was right to go. So Joey and I left for Windhoek in November 1982, thinking it might be for only six months. In the end we were there for seven years.

The flat that we were given was very convenient, with two bedrooms and a pleasant balcony facing north. As we had our old-age pension, we could afford the rent, but after two years we were informed that we were no longer entitled to the pension as we still possessed a flat in Pretoria. This meant that our assets increased our capital beyond the maximum allowed for pensioners. We did not want to let our flat, knowing that we would be needing it occasionally, and also because we wanted it to be available for MRA people. But just as the Lord had always cared for us, He did so again. We found that there were flats in Windhoek available for pensioners where the rent was minimal. We immediately applied and got one for 30 Rands month. Although it had only one bedroom it was quite adequate for our needs, with a little veranda facing north where we could enjoy the winter sun.

By that time we had met several people in Windhoek as a result of our previous visits. Making friends was no problem because the people of South West were known for their hospitality. One man, especially, introduced us to several of his friends. This was Andries Kloppers, a coloured man, and one of the best-known personalities in Windhoek. He was the leader of the strongest political party among the coloured people. A great change had come into his life and he was never ashamed of admitting it. He often invited people to his home to introduce them to us and to show some of our films. He joined us twice on visits to MRA conferences in Caux and also encouraged others to go, among them his two sons and

their wives. Another politician who also went to Caux and changed, was an Ovambo, Paul Helmuth. He was a prominent leader in SWAPO, (South West African People's Organisation) He had had five years' training in Russia. He left SWAPO when he realised how corrupt some of the leaders were. He witnessed to the way the Lord had liberated him from all his hate and bitterness towards the white man.

Someone else whose friendship meant a lot to us was Dr Piet Basson, with his wife Heidi. He was the State Veterinary Surgeon at Grootfontein, where we often visited them whenever we went to Ovamboland. We had got to know Piet when he became changed as a student at Onderstepoort near Pretoria. He in turn introduced us to Hans and Ulli Ernst, farmers just outside Grootfontein, and they too became great friends. A cousin of mine Johan Retief, and his wife Anita also lived in Windhoek and we often visited them. He was an engineer in the Department of Water Affairs. One day he and some other engineers were on an inspection tour in the north of South West, and the helicopter in which they were travelling, crashed. We were thankful that we could be there to support Anita in her sorrow. Another couple with whom we became intimate friends, were Coen and Ingrid van Graan. He is an architect and designed the largest building in Windhoek, the Sanlam Building. Even before we went to live in Windhoek we used to stay with them and they were also always prepared to give accommodation to our friends from overseas.

We were privileged to experience the whole process of the independence of South West Africa, now Namibia. SWAPO, under the leadership of Mr Sam Nujoma, had for years fought the South African Government from across the Angolan border to free South West. They made their attacks from Angola, but the South African Armed Forces which had a great number of troops on the border, managed to counter all the efforts of SWAPO to invade South West. It cost South Africa an enormous amount of money to keep its troops there. This, together with other factors, resulted in the eventual decision to grant South West its independence.

The United Nations was asked to act as supervisor during the transition. Thousands of troops and personnel were sent to the new Namibia to make sure that elections were free and fair. Most people expected violence, but just the opposite happened. The elections were calm and peaceful, and personally I am sure it was an answer to prayer.

Before the elections groups of Christians all over the country met to pray. Joey and I were part of such a group in Windhoek. There was also a rumour that trouble would break out even after the election. It was said that, should SWAPO win, the Hereros, the archenemies of the Ovambos and thus of SWAPO, would continue with the struggle because they would not accept a SWAPO government. But nothing of the kind happened. In fact, some Hereros were even included in the Cabinet. Since SWAPO had not gained a two-thirds majority, they decided on a policy of reconciliation. And there was a good relationship between black and white that exists even to this day.

Before the election, Piet Basson and I had placed the following advertisement in all the newspapers:

THE NAMIBIA WE LONG FOR

A Namibia which will be governed by men who are governed by God.

A Namibia where people will be judged by character, not colour.

A Namibia where enough jobs will be created to eliminate poverty and hunger, and where the spiritual hunger of people will also be satisfied.

A Namibia where there will be peace, freedom, reconciliation and prosperity.

Peace is more than absence of war. It exists where tolerance and love reign - love, even for enemies, and where the right to exist is granted to everyone.

Freedom is only possible where Christ has liberated us to live according to His standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, and to obey God's will.

Reconciliation demands that we will forgive what others have done to us and that we ask forgiveness for what we have done to them.

Prosperity will follow when we put the needs of our country before our own.

*"Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."
Joshua 24:15.*

This call comes from Namibians who are involved in Moral Re-Armament, a movement at work in different countries, also in Africa, with the purpose of establishing God's rule in the lives of people and nations.

The Afrikaans paper, "Die Republikein" was so impressed with the above, that they publicised it on a full page, without cost, while the SWAPO paper, "The New Namibian" printed it at half-price in English, Afrikaans and the Ovambo language.

After seven very worthwhile years in Namibia, God showed us that it was time for the next move.

Chapter 13

RETIREMENT HOME - AND AFTER

In April 1990 we received a letter from Mr Cas van Antwerpen, the manager of the retirement home, Huis Herfsblaar in Queenswood, Pretoria, to say that our names were next on the list and that the next vacant flat would be ours. Three or four years earlier my sister Kitty who was

then living at Huis Herfsblaar, and who wanted us to join her there, had put our names on the waiting list of about 200 people. We decided to accept and started packing. Before we left, Coen and Ingrid van Graan invited about 20 of us to a farewell party. We appreciated it very much especially when, a few days later, Ingrid presented us with an album containing messages and photos of all who had been there. Another friend transported all our furniture and other belongings to Pretoria in his furniture van. Our friends in Windhoek truly overloaded us with love and gifts. We are still in contact with most of them.

Shortly after our arrival in Pretoria, we started clearing up the flat at Muckleneuk Lanterns with a view to selling it. The flat at Huis Herfsblaar had only one bedroom, and it took some planning to know what to keep and what to get rid of. Fortunately we could give a lot to Marie Louise and Suzan. The rest was sold.

Selling the flat was not an easy matter. Buyers were scarce and the market value of property had fallen, so that when we eventually found a buyer we had to be satisfied with much less than we had originally hoped for. The day of our departure finally arrived. Some friends came to help us pack, especially on my birthday, August 29th. Two days later, August 31st, 1990, we moved into Huis Herfsblaar.

Shortly after that Joey and I celebrated our Golden Wedding on December 22nd, although the actual date was the 28th. But we wanted to spend a holiday with the family on the Natal South Coast and be together for Christmas. Our son-in-law Johan Steyn, the managing director of Speskom, an electronic company, kindly offered the dining room of the Speskom building in Midrand for the reception. Charlotte came from Holland with her two sons, Frits and Karel, but her daughter Hanneke could not come as she had been in South Africa earlier in the year to study photography. Charlotte, Marie Louise and Suzan were responsible for all the arrangements. They invited only close relatives and a few special friends. Joey and I were not allowed to go into the hall before everything was ready. And what a surprise

when we did go in! On the wall there were four enlarged portraits, framed, of our wedding at Ermelo 50 years before! It happened that at that time the photographer at Ermelo was on holiday, and one of the family took a few snaps with a small box camera as we came out of church. Somehow Charlotte had got hold of the snaps and had enlargements made in Holland. We could not believe our eyes - they looked like photos taken by a professional. One was given to us, and the other three to each of the girls.

It was a very pleasant function. Bremer Hofmeyr proposed the toast and Mima Louw, a life-long friend who had been our maid-of-honour, also made a speech. Joey and I both replied.

Two days later the family all went to the South Coast. Our children and their families had two chalets while Joey and I were guests of Boet van Rensburg, proprietor of the Port Edward Hotel. Boet had a rugby museum in his house, and our friendship had begun when he had a brand new Springbok jacket made for me in exchange for my old threadbare jacket of 1928.

The holiday started with a wonderful Christmas dinner the evening we arrived. Fortunately Boet warned us that unless we arrived early for the service on Christmas day, we might not get a seat. The hall where the service was held was full to overflowing. Hundreds of people had to stand outside on the stoep. Joey was lucky enough to get a seat, but I had to share one with someone else.

For the whole of the two weeks at the South Coast we had fine weather and we could spend most of the days on the beach or play tennis. It was truly blissful to have those two weeks with the children and grand children.

The following year my brother Marthinus and his wife celebrated their Golden wedding. My sister Kitty, Joey and I decided to motor down to the Strand, visiting relations along the way. We felt that, because of our age, we should not travel more than 500 km per day. The first two nights we

spent with Kitty's daughter, Charlotte and her husband Basie du Preez in Bloemfontein. The next two with our cousins Helen Ross and Trudie Stegmann in Somerset East; then two nights at Fort Beaufort with Kitty's youngest daughter Dorothea and her husband Japie Williams, a lecturer at Fort Hare. At Knysna we had two rooms which we had booked previously, and the next morning we were on our way to George, where we were welcomed by my cousin Montagu Murray and his wife Toekie. Montagu invited three other cousins who lived in George to meet us for lunch, one being George Reyneke and his wife, as well as an old Springbok team mate, J. C. van der Westhuizen.

The next day we went to Calitzdorp specially to see my Aunt Cecile who was 98 years old. She was the last of Oupa and Ouma Murray's 16 children, and still very active with a sharp sense of humour. Dick Barry, another of the many cousins, and his wife, with whom we were staying invited Aunt Cecile for lunch. Next morning we went to say goodbye to her and Kitty said, "Aunt Cecile you must hold on till your 100th birthday. We want to come and celebrate it with you!" Her reply was "Sorry. Can't oblige!" She died 6 months later.

Our last stop was at the Strand, the day before the Golden Wedding. It was a joy to meet so many relatives and old friends at the reception. Kitty flew back to Pretoria the next day but we stayed on a few days longer to see something of my two sisters, Charlie and Marie at Stellenbosch. On our return journey we spent a few nights with Rev. and Mrs Paul de Villiers in Beaufort West and two nights with Joey's sister Emmie in Bloemfontein. A friend of hers was the principal of the well-known Grey College, and when he heard that we would be there for the weekend, he announced in school, without my knowledge, that I would address the school on Monday morning! What could I say? I had to agree.

Charly died the next year at the age of 89 and we were so thankful that we had spent some time with her. I had the privilege of conducting the funeral service and my text was Phil. 2:5, "Let the same attitude be in you that was in Jesus Christ." It was certainly true of her. My brother who had

suffered from Parkinson's Disease, died in the same year. Although we lived in a retirement home we still took an active part in the work of MRA. I went to Kenya with a group of black and white South Africans for an MRA conference. I was asked to take the Sunday morning service in the Anglican Cathedral. There were 2000 people at the service. There was only one full-time worker in MRA in Kenya at that time, Alan Knight, and businessmen and professional men were responsible for the work. I still correspond with two men who gave their lives to God during that conference. After the conference I spent a few days with my cousin HOFFIE Retief and his wife Magriet who lived in Malindi on the East Coast. He and his son Renaldo farmed with tropical fruit. They were of the few South African farmers remaining in Kenya.

After that I attended a conference in Botswana and also took part in an Easter Conference in Graaff Reinet. An interesting fact of the conference was that for the first time there were more black people than whites at an MRA conference in South Africa. In the past black people had been rather sceptical of MRA, regarding it as a white organisation. It was a great encouragement to us that black people were beginning to realise that MRA was for everybody. But sadly, a day before the start of the conference Bremer Hofmeyr died of a heart attack. It was a very great loss. With his clear thinking and dedicated life he had played a leading role in MRA for many years, not only in South Africa but also in other countries. He made friends with businessmen, many of whom supported the work of MRA. He had also been the inspiration behind the Easter Conference and would certainly have led it. Special tribute was paid to him at the first meeting of the conference. A memorial service was held in Johannesburg in the church where he had been an elder for many years.

I also want to pay tribute to Sam Pono who for many years was the only black person in the full-time team. The fact that many young black people have become interested is largely due to his faithfulness and perseverance. It cannot have been easy for him to be the only black person in a team of

whites. Of special interest at this conference was that, at Sam's invitation, two black leaders in the ANC attended it, and took an active part in the proceedings.

To get back to our family; my sister Charly was the first in our family of seven children to die. After retiring from the Bloemhof School in Stellenbosch, she continued to live in Stellenbosch. Although we had lived far apart, we were a close-knit family and have had three family reunions within the past few years. When Charly became weaker, it was Marthinus' conviction that Marie, who had been living in Australia, should come back to South Africa to care for Charly. So Marie came and shared a flat with Charly. But things did not work out as expected. Marie sprained her knee and as a result fell down the steps in the flat one day and broke her hip. Now she was forced to walk with crutches and it was Charly who had to look after her! It became too much for both of them so they moved into a retirement home, Azaleahof, in Stellenbosch. There they shared a flat until Charly died in 1990 at the age of 89.

That same year Alec died in a retirement home at Warmbaths. After the death of his wife Tina he went to live with his daughter Sinie-Marie, but their two small children were too lively for him, so he went to the retirement home. There he met and married one of the other residents.

Kitty who also lived in Huis Herfsblaar was the next to go. She knew she had an aneurysm that could cause her death any moment, but that did not stop her from caring for others or visiting patients in the Frail Care. It was a great joy to have her with us at Huis Herfsblaar. As she had hoped, the end came suddenly. Nearly all the people at the Home came to the funeral. Marthinus and his second wife Lydia happened to be in Pretoria just then.

Marthinus' first wife Ella had been an invalid for some years and was confined to a wheelchair. Marthinus cared for her for many years until she died at a ripe old age. When they were still missionaries in Zimbabwe, the Bouwers, Lydia and her husband, had been their staunchest supporters. A few

years after her husband's death, Lydia and Marthinus were married, but their newfound joy did not last long, as Marthinus died only nine months later.

I also lost some of my best friends, like Mima Louw, who often came to spend a weekend with us at Huis Herfsblaar. Another great friend was Prof. Ben Marais. We knew each other as students at Wilgenhof in Stellenbosch. He was one of the first D. R. ministers to take a strong stand against Apartheid and the first to propose that the D. R. Church should open its doors to all nationalities. He lost a leg due to gangrene and was confined to his wheelchair until his death.

Huis Herfsblaar was like home to us. We had gone there in 1990 with the idea of spending the rest of our lives there. Joey always maintained that she would never live with her children - she would only be a burden to them. They would never feel free to come and go as they liked. But that is precisely what happened! But more of that later.

In 1996 we went to visit Charlotte and Derk in Franschoek and on our return were shocked to hear that the manager of Huis Herfsblaar, Mr Cas van Antwerpen, had been dismissed. We simply could not believe it! But it was a fact and the residents were dismayed. In our opinion Cas had not only been a good manager, but together with his wife, had been a good friend. What upset us most was that the Board of Trustees could not give us a satisfactory reason for his dismissal, except that they did not consider him a suitable person for the position of Manager. We did not agree with this at all, and the result was a strained relationship between the residents and the Board. However, some of the residents took sides against Mr Van Antwerpen and the discord greatly affected the atmosphere in the Home. Previously we had lived as one family; now there was division between those for or against Mr van Antwerpen, especially when the matter was finally taken to court. Mr van Antwerpen accepted the decision of the court. I did my best to bring about reconciliation, but to no avail. All we could do was to organise a farewell function for him which was attended by the large majority of the residents. In this way

we could express our appreciation for what he had done for Huis Herfsblaar.

Early in 1997 a new house committee had to be appointed and to my surprise, and Joey's dismay, I was elected chairman. Although it was against her wish, I accepted because I felt it might be a way to calm the strained atmosphere, and bring about new unity among the residents. At the beginning of 1998 there was already a definite change in the atmosphere. My annual report which I read to the residents was as follows:

"1997 was a year of crisis in the history of Huis Herfsblaar. Those of us who returned from holiday at the end of January were shocked to hear that Mr Cas van Antwerpen, Director of Huis Herfsblaar, had been dismissed. We could not believe it, as we had been living in harmony where most of the residents were concerned. Mr van Antwerpen had been like a father who cared for his children. Herfsblaar was our home and as far as we were concerned there was nothing wrong in the administration. We knew that there were personal differences but that is quite normal in any organisation. But the question was -Why? Why dismiss a man who was trusted by the majority? In our opinion he was a good manager. The Board of Trustees somehow could not give us a satisfactory answer, especially, as it later appeared, he had done nothing in his private or public life for which he could be blamed.

The result was that there was an atmosphere of uncertainty and unhappiness, and under these circumstances, I was chosen as Chairman of the House Committee. I knew very little about the workings of the committee and my first step was to go to the previous chairman for advice. I prayed about it and asked God not to let this cause a rift in our community, but that a spirit of reconciliation would overcome our problems.

At one of our first meetings it was unanimously decided that we could not allow Mr and Mrs van Antwerpen to leave the Home for which they had sacrificed so much and given so

much love and care, without telling them what they had meant to us and how much we appreciated them. It was decided to organise a farewell function, which we did, in the sitting room.

After the van Antwerpens had left and finality had been reached by the Court in the case "Van Antwerpen vs Board of Trustees", we hoped that there would be a declaration of reconciliation. This did not happen. However, as time went by, the tension decreased. The appointment of Mr Frank Julyan as the new Manager of Huis Herfsblaar, brought a new era into the life of the Home. The House Committee welcomed him warmly and thanked him for the way he took over the reins; also for the way he did his best to win the confidence of the residents. We hope he and Mrs Julyan will be very happy among us and may there be good years ahead."

In 1997 something happened that gave us great joy, namely the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the D. R. Church in Calvinia. When I received an invitation to attend it, I told Joey how keen I was to go. But - how to get there? Trains did not pass that way any more and it was too far for me to drive. But to my joy I found that there was a bus service to Calvinia via Upington. So off I went and stayed with the local minister for the weekend. There were 10 other ministers, most of them retired, who had at some time or other served in Calvinia. Several of the older people still remembered me. They had been at school when I was there. I was 27 at the time. One elderly lady told me how she and the other girls in the Matric class had been in love with this young minister! Fortunately I had not been conscious of it.

Several functions were held that weekend, the most important being the Communion Service on Sunday morning. As the oldest of the retired ministers, I had the privilege of delivering the sermon.

My bus was due to leave only on Tuesday, and on Monday I was taken to the beautiful farm of the leading elder. As we were on our way back to town, this man said that in his time

of quiet that morning, the Lord had spoken to him: "You can't allow this elderly minister to go back by bus. You must take him yourself by car!" I could not believe that I had heard him aright! Of course I was very grateful, not only for his wonderful offers but also that I had followed my conviction before leaving Pretoria, to buy a single ticket. So on Tuesday the farmer and his wife fetched me, and what made the trip so interesting was that they drove through Victoria West, and I could see the old familiar places once again.

Joey did not go to Calvinia with me as she felt that travelling in the bus would be too exhausting. But added to that she had a lot of pain in her back and also in her head. I managed to care for her for some months, but she became so weak that she herself decided to go to the Frail Care unit. There she had to share a room with a dear old lady who was permanently confined to her wheel chair. A short while later Charlotte came to visit her mother and could not bear to think of Joey spending the rest of her life in those circumstances. So she invited Joey to come and live with her and Derk in her home at Franschoek. But Joey insisted that she did not want to be a burden to her children, and refused Charlotte's offer.

In the beginning of February 1998 Marie Louise and Johan invited me to accompany them to Stellenbosch. They were taking their eldest daughter Jeanne to the Stellenbosch University. We spent the weekend with Charlotte and Derk in their home in Franschoek near Stellenbosch. On Sunday Charlotte invited all the Daneel relations for lunch and about 30 turned up. It was good to meet them all - some I had never met before.

On Monday morning when we had to take Jeanne to Stellenbosch, I had such a stomach upset that I could not get up, and the next day Marie Louise and Johan had to leave without me. I was very ill and had to stay in bed for the whole of the following week. Fortunately Charlotte remembered a coloured lady, Sally Walters, who had looked after one of their friends for 5 years, a very capable person. It happened that, some months before, Charlotte was

looking for a housekeeper and offered Sally the position. But Sally refused, saying that she was only prepared to look after the ill and elderly and not to run a house. This time when Charlotte rang her saying that her father of 93 was very ill, and would she be prepared to look after him, she accepted immediately. And strangely enough, that is what brought Joey to Franschoek.

As I began to improve, Charlotte thought it would be a good opportunity to persuade Joey to join me. She rang Marie Louise, asking her to go and see Joey. She should tell Joey of my illness and of Sally who was so good at looking after sick people. Joey would get the best possible attention here. Marie Louise did so, offering to accompany Joey by air if she was willing to come. To our great joy Joey agreed and not long after that she arrived in Franschoek. By that time I had recovered completely and Sally could give all her attention to Joey. Sally slept in a room next to ours and could attend to Joey any time she needed her, day or night.

A few days later I went to Pretoria to clear the flat. Marie Louise and Suzan were a wonderful help. They could take what they needed for themselves and the various items belonging to MRA were returned. The rest was donated to the hospice where Suzan was working. On the 1st of March I was back in Franschoek.

Joey's fear that she would be a burden to Charlotte proved to be totally unfounded. Sally took full responsibility for Joey leaving Charlotte free to attend to her business. Sally even undertook to cook our meals which was a great relief to Charlotte who could now give more time to her mother. This meant so much to Joey after having been separated from Charlotte for so many years.

Dr Moller, a personal friend of Charlotte and Derk, could not discover the cause of Joey's pain but could give her medication which gave her some relief, and we could spend many hours together on the veranda. enjoying the wonderful view of the mountains. Fortunately Joey slept a lot which gave her some relief from the pain, but gradually she

became weaker so that Charlotte eventually had to get her a wheel chair. Sally was simply wonderful and did everything to make things easier for Joey. The two became great friends.

The end came on Friday, May 22nd 1998. That morning she told Sally she wanted to put on her best dress because she had to go to church! We went to have breakfast on the veranda. She had a good breakfast; stewed fruit, mealie-meal porridge, toast and marmalade. But when she wanted to drink her tea, I noticed there was something wrong. She could not swallow. Sally immediately rang the doctor, but before he could come, the Lord had already taken her. It is amazing that she had the thought to prepare for church, as she said. Her 'church' was heaven.

The undertaker put her in the casket in her best Sunday dress, and we put the casket on a table in the sitting room, surrounded by flowers. It was cool and she lay there till Monday, the day of the funeral. As we did not know people in Franschoek, we decided to have the service right there in the sitting room. We expected only relatives and close friends. About 50 people turned up but there was room for everyone. Our son-in-law John Burrell took the service. Charlotte's two sons were there, having come from overseas, Frits from Holland and Karel from New York. Many of the Daneel family in the Cape were there, also Marie Louise and Suzan with their families from Pretoria. There was an intimate atmosphere at the service and several took part, including Sally who spontaneously paid tribute to Joey. She was buried in the local cemetery next to the Huguenot Monument.

Joey was a wonderful companion. In our 57 years of marriage, we had only one serious difference of opinion, and that was in connection with going full-time in MRA, without salary. But at the Lusaka conference she had the conviction that Christ was not only our Saviour, but also our Lord and Master with full control of our lives. And it was her own conviction that God was asking us to work full-time with MRA. After that she never doubted it although it was not

always easy, with three little girls to care for. She was always very economical and somehow we never incurred debt even when we had so many guests from overseas to help in our MRA work. She was not strong physically, but she never hesitated if she could help someone else. She really cared for people and enriched their lives; as one friend wrote, "Joey was to us much, much more than an ordinary friend. She was such a special person who enriched our lives for many years. Her faith, her humility, her sense of humour, just to mention a few characteristics, will always inspire us." She had an amazing gift of perseverance, like the time she decided to take typing lessons. To Joey, a thing was either right or wrong. There was no thought of compromise. One could always rely on her word and in everything she sought the will of God, and obeyed Him. I miss her, but I rejoice that she can be with her Lord and enjoy peace and freedom from pain. It was a wonderful release after all she had suffered. I shall always thank the Lord for her beautiful life and what she meant to me.