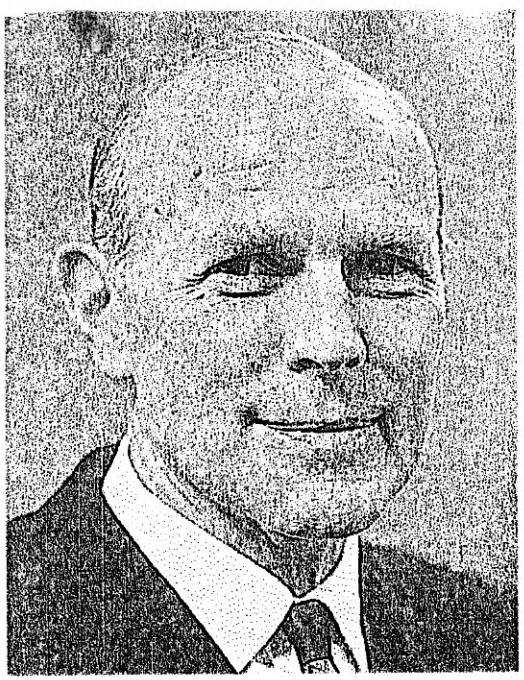
BREMER HOFMEYR'S STORY



BREMER HOFMEYR'S STORY

This story was written by Bremer himself, as he travelled the world and met the people he describes. In its pages, he vividly reveals his own deep love for the people of Africa, and his life-long efforts - through rough times and smooth - to realise Africa's God-given destiny in the world. I had the joy of accompanying him - in Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe; and of raising our family and sharing his love for his native South Africa.

I am glad to be able to publish his story and describe his life and work to all who read this memoir.

Agnes Hofmeyr

Contents

BREMER HOFMEYR'S STORY

There were eight children in our family, seven boys and a girl. Our father was Afrikaans, but had studied at Cambridge. His one snapshot from those days shows him feeding the swans at the back of Emmanuel College. His irreverent offspring captioned the picture "What I did at Cambridge".

Eight years after the Anglo-Boer war ended, South Africa became self-governing as the Union of South Africa. To commemorate the formation of the Union, a fine school was built on a farm just outside the new capital city of Pretoria. It was a bilingual school, in which subjects could be studied through the medium of English or Afrikaans. This was an idea very dear to our father's heart, and General Smuts, then Minister of Education, asked him to come from Stellenbosch, where he was head of the Victoria College (later the Paul Roos Gymnasium) to build up this new school. It continued to be a bilingual school until an Afrikaans school was built next to us, and the languages were separated. To this day, at Pretoria Boys' High School, scripture lessons are read in English and Afrikaans on big occasions.

Our father was head of School House, and we grew up in an atmosphere of games. Not unnaturally, most of us boys got our school colours. Our father strenuously propounded the view that the school is greater than the house, and attached more importance to inter-school matches. But to us inter-house matches were much more charged emotionally and the final test of nerves. Once I faced the first ball in a house match final. It was a very fast good length ball about three inches outside the off stump - that awkward distance, when you are not sure whether you can safely leave it. I wavered, played a half-hearted stroke and snicked the ball through slips for four. I should have been out first ball, but we put on 247 runs for the first wicket. Such is the luck of the game.

Conversations at our family dinner table was largely limited to sport. On one occasion at a dinner party we had the rugby Springbok George Daneel and the late Beryl Reynolds, a most generous friend of our family. Beryl had no interest in sport, and sat silent as the conversation moved from cricket to rugby to tennis. Finally she made a valiant effort and confided, "I must be honest. I cannot understand the difference between rugby and soccer." This was such a frightful thing to say to a

rugby fraternity that we all froze, and nobody could think of anything to say. Murray, the youngest brother, then about six, sensed the tension and sought to put our guest at her ease. "It's all right, Beryl," he said. "To this day I can't understand the difference between a cow and a bull." Everyone collapsed and the situation was saved.

Murray became the best sportsman in our family. He got a Rhodes Scholarship and for three years got a double blue in rugby and cricket. He also played rugby for England. In his six matches against Cambridge, at cricket and rugby, Oxford won four and lost one. In his last year he was Oxford's cricket captain, and they beat Cambridge after a very close game.

After the match Murray had to appear before the examiners for an "oral" or "viva" for his BA degree. For this, you are confronted by a very august board of "dons" in full academic garb, cap and gown. However, as Murray came in, the whole board rose as one man and raised their academic hats in tribute to his cricket performance.

One July holiday we were motoring from Rustenburg to the bushveld. The hired driver let his lorry get out of control on a steep decline, and it overturned on us. I was on the front seat next to our brother Reinold, then about six. I pulled him out of the wreckage with a badly damaged leg. Our family physician in Pretoria, Dr Saunders, was an anchor of security for his many patients. When he heard of our misfortune he got into his car and drove the sixty miles over poor gravel roads to Rustenburg to come to our aid. We returned to Pretoria and Reinold went into the Arcadia nursing home. Eventually the leg was amputated below the knee. There were harrowing moments before Reinold had been told of the amputation. He would feel the phantom leg itching and beg you to scratch his foot for him. You made some movement under the metal frame supporting the covers, asked if it felt better - and felt like hell.

Having lost a leg, Reinold informed us that he would go ahead with cricket and just try twice as hard as everybody else. He got an artificial limb, was wicket-keeper and opening bat with someone to run for him. He went straight from the under fourteen team to the first team, a feat rarely equalled. The war came when he should have been at his best. He enlisted in the army, artificial leg and all.

When Reinold was in hospital our brother Will used to sleep on two chairs in the private room. The experience turned his interest to the medical profession. He too won a Rhodes Scholarship and started to study medicine. But the English climate defeated him. He thought the idea of seven years in the rain was beyond reason. In the end Will became a teacher, as also did three other brothers, and he left a lasting imprint on Pretoria Boys' High School as our father had done before him. He was a good performer at rugby, cricket and tennis, and an outstanding cricket coach. If a boy played a poor shot in the nets, Will would not correct him at once. He kept bowling at this weak spot, trying to analyse where the boy went wrong. When he himself had figured it out, he took the boy aside and discussed the stroke.

Will produced several Springboks including Eddie Barlow. After one of Barlow's startling performances he was interviewed on the SABC. He was asked whether he attributed his success to any one influence in particular. At once he said, "Without any question, Will Hofmeyr of Pretoria Boys' High - and not only my cricket."

When Will retired from school there was a festival cricket match, between the old Springboks he had coached and the school eleven. The main field had always simply been called "A-Field". But at lunch in the pavilion that day it was christened "The Will Hofmeyr Oval".

He had very decided views on sportsmanship. I happened to see the end of a school match between Pretoria and Parktown. Parktown made, I think, 138. Pretoria lost a series of cheap wickets and the match went Parktown's way. However, one of the opening batsmen held out through the rot, and pulled the match Pretoria's way again. Eventually they were one run short of the Parktown total with three wickets still standing. The opener hit what was an easy run, but declined it. Eventually there came the winning hit, and much applause for the number one bat who had carried his bat for something in the eighties. Will sent for him: "You declined an easy run when you were one short of Parktown's score."

"Yes, sir."

"You wanted to make the winning hit yourself, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, don't let me ever see you do that again."

"No, sir."

In my first year at high school I cared little about my work, and have no idea where I came in class. Then a cousin my age, whose parents were missionaries in Nyasaland (now Malawi) joined our family. I had a head start on him in games and work, and inwardly resolved that I would stay ahead. He was clever and athletic, and made rapid progress at work and games. I made my life a misery, fearing he would beat me. Every two weeks we were placed in class on the basis of tests. Under pressure I generally came first and he second, but such was my stupid pride that I worried endlessly. I often thought how pleasant life would be if there were not these miserable fortnightly placings to torment me. However it was a spur to my work. It is sad that it took pride and jealousy to get me to take my work seriously. I suppose one can only say that even a bad motivation is better than no motivation at all.

I also ruined my tennis through this fierce determination not to let him beat me. I could slice with considerable accuracy and could be certain to win by just returning the ball until he lost his temper. But for the rest of my life I have paid the price for this meanness. I became addicted to the slice and chop, and never developed an effective return of service.

On my father's side, the Hofmeyrs are descendants of the Murray family. We trace our descent back to Andrew Murray, the great Scots divine who came to our country from Aberdeenshire in the mid-nineteenth century. Today, there are many hundreds in South Africa who share this ancestry, many of them prominent in church circles. Some Murray cousins in Pretoria were inordinately good to us. One of them, John Murray, became Chief Justice in Rhodesia. He was a splendid man but not one of the formally religious Murrays. In fact he always threatened to bring out a book "Murray Crooks I Have Known", and claimed to have the documentation. He had a quick wit, for which he was widely known. In his study he kept an oil painting of our great ancestor, Andrew Murray. One day, I ventured, "John, if you think so little of religion, why do you keep this religious ancestor looking down at you?" "Well," he said, "it keeps me from over-bidding at bridge."

Dad was a man of tremendous presence as befits a headmaster. Each school day began with a religious assembly. There was always lively chatter from 600 tongues until Dad swept round the corner in his academic gown, when a complete hush came over the school.

Once a year there was a big occasion, when parents visited the school. Dad would make a declaration of faith in what the school stood for. He never failed to mention the Africans - "We hold that they are equally entitled to their place in the sun". It is not a revolutionary statement by today's standards, but the significant thing was that he always mentioned the people who were often forgotten. And when in the "African Township" of Atteridgeville the first Secondary School for African children was opened, it was called "The Hofmeyr Secondary School".

Dad was a great enthusiast at all he did, whether work or play. When he gave a tennis party there was no tea break. Tea was served in relays, so that the court was never vacant. An elder of the Dutch Reformed Church, he did not play games or fish on Sundays. One holiday he went fishing for trout at Underberg in Natal, with two grown sons. They arrived before lunch on a Sunday, and after the meal the sons were lingering over their coffee. Dad became restless. "Aren't you going fishing?" he asked. They indicated that they would be going, but continued to laze around. Dad could not stand it any longer. "I don't like this laziness. If you think it is right to fish on Sundays you ought to get going. And I am coming to watch you."

During his headmastership he bought a farm near Somerset East, where he had been born and where a statue of his father still stands in front of the Dutch Reformed Church with the inscription "A large-hearted, broadminded man". Hofmeyrs have played a prominent part in the Cape Province: one was a Prime Minister; and Jan Hofmeyr held four posts in General Smuts' cabinets.

My father's farm consumed more money than it brought in, until Dad finally returned there. Things improved a little, though they were always scraping to make ends meet. But the days on the farm were his life's reward. He was not given to exposing his feelings, but he wrote to me overseas, "Not a day goes by when I am walking over the land, that I do not thank God that I am out here in the fresh air and not in an office over a noisy city street."

MY MOTHER, GRETA

My mother, Greta Hofmeyr, was born to a German family who emigrated to South Africa when she was eight years old. They lived in

Hopefield, where her father was a doctor, as was her brother Karl, who became Minister of Health in Dr Malan's Cabinet in 1948. Greta qualified as a teacher, and taught in Stellenbosch.

One day a new headmaster was appointed at Stellenbosch Boys' High-school. His picture appeared in the local press. The gossip among the Stellenbosch girls was how everyone was going to set her cap for this very eligible bachelor. Greta Bremer was nothing if not independent in her views, and said to herself, "I can tell you one girl who is not going to do that." She went to the opposite extreme and snubbed him on every possible occasion. This proved to be the prelude to a very happy marriage. Three boys were born in Stellenbosch before the family moved to their permanent home in the Transvaal.

School House, Pretoria, was the Hofmeyr home from 1910 till 1934. Greta took a lively interest in the house and the school. She did her best to know personally every boarder in the house. On Sunday nights after prayers, the School House boys were invited to the Hofmeyr sitting room. Some thirty would crowd in; Greta would read to them, a chapter a week from some popular book. The boys would often ask her to sing to them. In the winter, home-made ginger beer or lemon syrup were served. The home atmosphere in the midst of a fairly Spartan boarding house setting was remembered by the boys who passed through.

Three of Greta's sons were awarded the Rhodes Scholarship. When the third award was made the SABC with rare perception decided that the credit really belonged to their mother, and interviewed her. The interviewer asked her whether she had any special secret in bringing up her children. She replied, "Yes, I have. If one of the children is difficult and out of sorts, I give him a dose of castor oil. If all eight of them are difficult at the same time, I take a dose of castor oil myself."

Putting eight children through school and college on a schoolmaster's salary was not easy; but Greta set her mind to it. She cut up her husband's discarded suits to make trousers for the boys. She shopped for "remnants" and made their shirts. She knitted socks for her sons and made dresses for her daughter.

Holidays were an important part of the family life. In spring and autumn short holidays the family often camped twelve miles from Pretoria, at Swawelpoort. An ox wagon carried the tents and equipment while most of the family preferred to walk. Her plan to still the insatiable pangs of hunger in seven growing boys was to give them a big plate of "mieliepap" at the start of the meal before anything else was produced.

Greta contracted puerperal fever with the birth of one of her children. She lay at death's door for a long while, and then recovered. She had a strong sense of God having intervened in her life, and she prayed to see what tasks He might have for her. Naturally she thought of her large family; but she also had a strong sense that she was called to care for the black people of our country. She started a Bible class for the black staff. Whenever she took a car trip she had a large packet of sweets wrapped in wax paper so that she could pass them out to all the children she met on the way. Over the years this care widened; she got to know the leaders of the National Council of African women, and many of them became her close friends. Her belief was that "There may be a difference in the colour of our skins, but there is no difference in the colour of our sins." She told honestly the new things she had need to learn about herself, the many places where she, a Christian of long standing, still needed to change. She was not superior nor inferior, but held to them the same total claim as Christ had made on her. Later in her life she travelled with groups to Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe and Zambia), and made countless friends. There are many African girls, now grown up, who carry her name of Greta.

Throughout her life she had been very much in control of events, and she found old age frustrating - not being able to go where she wanted when she wanted. "Why does one have to go through this difficulty?" she asked. "You see, Mum," one of her sons suggested, "one day soon you are going to Heaven and you will be a new girl. And they don't like the new girls to arrive too much in control of the situation." She laughed, and took the point.

No sketch of Greta would be complete without a reference to her lively interest in politics and current affairs. She was a keen supporter of different political parties at different times in her life. This interest sprang from deep roots - her strong belief that there had to be a quite

fundamental change in the thinking and living in our country - a view now shared by most of the political parties.

FISHING

Fishing is my love and I divided fishermen into three classes. There are those who enjoy fishing only when you are hauling in the fish, and regard an outing as wasted that does not produce a catch. They are hardly worthy of the name of angler.

Then there is the dedicated and patient fisherman. He is content to sit by the hour with his line in still water. There is nothing to do but to wait. There are many such on the banks of the Seine in Paris.

Then there is the dedicated and energetic fisherman, the school to which I belong. At the sea he goes for the rough water and is doused by breaking waves from head to foot many times a day. He cannot let his sinker lie for long on the sea-bed, or it will be washed on to a reef and he will have to break his line. He moves from place to place rejoicing in the elements and the contest. He may come home empty-handed, bone-weary and soaked to the skin; but still have had the day of his life.

Fishing should not be easy. The man who fishes for trout in stocked water, and casts his line hoping that he will not catch his legal limit too soon, is hardly to be envied. To work your way down a difficult stream, fishing in rough conditions, and bring home a few fish at the end of the day - this is the life.

My decision in life most often broken concerns "last cast" as daylight fades, and you know you have a rough walk home. But after "last cast" there is always some excuse for one more cast, until you snarl your line and it is too dark to unravel it. So you carry your rod and tangled line home, and sort it out by lamplight. It cannot be left for the better light of morning, for that might delay your start and the chance to get first to a promising spot.

We grew up on rock fishing at Hermanus in the Cape. Our parents and their eight children occupied two compartments on the Cape Town train. Each compartment had three tiers of berths on either side. Bedding could be hired, and meals bought in the dining car, but such

luxuries were beyond our means. We took with us rolls of rugs for bedding and a huge "kosmandjie"(hamper) full of food for the journey. A retractable table came down from the wall between the berths, and here the food was spread. We all congregated in one compartment for meals, some sitting on the top berth with feet dangling, and food passed up to them. One of the kids had to take a kettle and fetch boiling water for tea. The dining car was of course the place. On my first mission I had never heard of a dining car, so when the train stopped I went to the engine driver who, I understood, boiled water to make the engine go. So why not spare a little for me?

We bought a big watermelon for each meal for our dessert. The table was retracted, and newspaper spread on the floor. There you dropped the seeds. Those on top had to lean far forward to miss the lower echelons, and if you did not observe the rules you would forfeit your undoubtedly superior place on the top berth, when the next meal came round.

I had one terror on these journeys. The train stopped at African villages, and African children walked along the platform begging for bread. Perhaps they had eaten their maize porridge, and bread was a luxury in a remote part. But to me they were starving, and there were so many of them. Instead of talking to my parents, who were the soul of generosity, and perhaps laying in bread for distribution, I hid from the pain and lay down on the seat whenever we passed such a village. So I, like so many, hid my face from a situation I found too harrowing to face.

The train took two days and two nights from Johannesburg to Cape Town, where we had to spend a third night and then take a train to Bot River, a bus to Hermanus, and a few miles further to Voelklip where various relatives rented houses. One was an aunt, Doey van Velden, an indomitable character. She played tennis until she was eighty four, and at the age of ninety was still looking after an invalid son stricken by polio. It was a common belief among us that if any of our clothes were missing the best thing was not to fret: Aunt Doey had given them to some poor person.

Fishing was easier in those days, and we lived off our catches. Meat we hardly ever saw. If fishing failed, mother bought a large liver sausage and

mixed this into a huge bowl of rice - a sort of pilau. The pungent liver gave a semblance of flavour to the rice.

Flies were a pest, and we children each had to swot a hundred every day. The largest concentration of flies was naturally in the kitchen, but a large "coloured" cook ruled there, and forbade us to come in. We waited outside the door until her back was turned, and we saw a congregation of flies on a speck of jam or fat. Then we rushed in, gave an almighty swot and rushed out, hopefully chalking up ten to our score.

One year money was too short to hire a house. My parents and some of the younger children were invited to relatives who had secured houses. Three of the boys camped. We slept when we felt like it and ate when we felt like it. One day I lay down on the grass after lunch and woke when the sun was setting. Our daily menu was mielie porridge and fish for breakfast; potatoes and fish for lunch; mielie porridge and fish for supper. We felt a genuine sympathy for those who lived in houses and had to keep meal hours. We were horrified to hear that in certain big houses ties were worn for dinner; but this we could hardly credit.

Fishing reels were a problem. There was no question of our father buying reels for eight children. Our father's flax line (no nylon then) came on wooden spools. These we grabbed. We found some stiff wire and bent it in such a way that it could be tied to a bamboo stick, and then by further angled bending make an axle for the spool. A little screw for the handle completed the job. Of course the wire was much thinner than the hole through the spool. So we would wrap adhesive plaster round and round and kept it well greased with Vaseline. In this way we could hold our own with the regular fishermen. We also developed lighter and lighter tackle and fished for little fish on a thick grass rod and reel made out of a cotton spool and cotton for the line.

There was a favourite rock called Voelklip (Bird Rock) which was accessible only at low tide and sometimes offered good fishing. Occasionally we would remain on this rock island from one low tide until the next. This was a gamble, for even if the fishing was bad, you were committed for the day. On one short visit I was determined to spend a day on this rock, but the tides were not convenient. However I reckoned that if I went over at first light the tide would be only half way in and I could get through, waist deep in water. My calculations were

over-optimistic. The water came up to my neck. I was soaked to the skin, and my sandwiches were sodden. I had not brought a jacket as I could not afford to get it spoiled, and my theory was that when the sun came up I would soon dry out and bask in the warmth. However, the sun never came through the cloud and a South East wind sprang up, covering me with spray all morning. I was shivering so violently that I could not bait my hook unless I held the palms of my hands together to stop the shaking, and then manipulated the bait with my fingers. Despite all, the fishing was successful. Of such days are memories made.

You were always torn between the hope of a big fish and the fear of not getting back. The day I caught my first twenty-pound fish, my father and I stayed as long as we could, and then moved back to cross the gulley. We were waiting for our chance when an outsized wave hit us. Dad wrenched his knee, and I shot head first into the sea, complete with rod and fish. Once I landed in clear water and not on a rock the danger was past. I swam ashore and was violently sick. The only damage was a chipped tooth, but alas, I never saw my fish again.

Our sister Elsa held the record for the largest fish taken by one of our family. She was casting for small fish with a hook that would fit round your small finger, using white mussel for bait. There was no thought that kabeljou might be about, nor do they normally take mussel. Yet she hooked and landed a thirty-five pounder. The small hook was almost bent open, but did the job. On principle we always belittled one another's exploits; so the family verdict was that this old fish was about to die from starvation, being no longer able to forage for normal food, and so had perforce taken Elsa's mussel.

Beyond the rocks of Voelklip is a ten-mile sandy beach broken only by one rock, Spiesklip (Swigrock). Beyond the sand were some giant caves, and it was a ritual that we would walk to the caves and spend a night or two. Walking barefooted on sand at low tide is of course one of life's delights. The second day the ardent walkers went on to Danger Point Lighthouse, while the keen fishermen stayed to get the supper.

Later in life Kenya introduced me to the delights of fly fishing for trout. At the foot of Mount Kenya trout feed at the most convenient hours. In most countries you have to get up before dawn to enjoy the best fishing. But the water from Mount Kenya's snows is so cold that trout are

unlikely to move until the sun has been on the river for some hours. From nine until twelve is a good time for the angler. From noon until three they seem to lie low, and then they feed again until is it dark. Altogether the lazy man's paradise.

The largest fish I have landed was also in Kenya, - a seventy-five pound Nile perch.

One of the last Afrikaners to farm in Kenya was a cousin, Hofmeyr Retief. He farmed at Thompson's Falls and had a share in a private plane. A great sporting enthusiast, he used to fly from his farm to his club for a Saturday afternoon's tennis. He flew us to Lake Rudolph on the Northern border of Kenya - very low-lying and very hot. We fished for Nile perch, which tend to average about fifteen pounds in weight. We arrived for lunch and fished successfully in the late afternoon. Because of the heat the fish could not be kept overnight. We ate what we could and gave the rest to the local Africans. Next day we went out at first light, had good success, and got back in time for breakfast. The fish were rapidly filleted and laid in a big enamel bowl, and we took off for the cool air high above the lake. By lunch time the fish were freezing back home.

THE OXFORD GROUP

I matriculated in 1926. Things were going my way. I had played cricket for the Transvaal Combined Schools when I was still sixteen. I had got my school rugby colours. We played a lot of tennis. I worked hard for matric and did well.

Then we went for a long holiday at the sea - a complete break from the disciplines of school life. I had happily assumed that because of our strict upbringing I was a Christian. But that holiday I began to drop the standards with which I had been brought up and which in my heart I acknowledged to be right. I knew it was a pretence to keep up the facade of being a Christian and to act as I did. I pushed the thought into the background.

During first year at college in Pretoria there were some special services in St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, where a friend of ours, Dr Ebenezer Macmillan, was the minister. Our family attended the Dutch Reformed

Church, where my father was an elder, but we liked St Andrew's. During those services I became acutely aware of the gap between my profession and my performance; and I was in considerable turmoil. The aim of the services was to encourage people to give their lives to Christ. Those who wished to take this step were invited to come to the front of the church and kneel there as a visible sign of their decision. Everything in me rebelled against this - mainly, I think, because such a step would be an open admission that I was in fact not the Christian I pretended to be. Night after night I sought to make my peace with God through a silent contract with him in my heart, but nothing seemed to happen. God, it seemed, would not give me a new life while I pretended to the world that I did not need it.

Finally I went forward and knelt humbly in surrender to God and in admission of my need. Something very real happened. Words always make an inner experience sound banal. I can only say that I knew for sure that I was accepted, I was forgiven, I was cleaned.

Then immediately came an event that has often shamed and perplexed me. I went out of the church, and at the door was a man holding a collection plate. I had not expected this. I had come on my bicycle and did not normally carry money with me, as we had so little. I was acutely embarrassed, and asked the church official if he could lend me something. To my still greater embarrassment he handed me a half-crown (12½p). In relation to my budget this was an astronomical sum. All this was very public with the congregation filing out. I was very unhappy and did not know what to do. So I took the money and dropped it in the plate.

To this day I find it hard to comprehend, but I never thought of returning the half-crown. I simply let it pass out of my mind. Many years later I tried to make amends, but the man had died. Looking back on this episode, it does highlight that there was still a big gap in my experience.

Despite this lapse so soon after my beginning, many things became new to me, entirely contrary to all my reasoning up to that point. When I attended confirmation classes we were told that forgiveness came not through our own efforts but through the sacrifice of Christ. I argued strongly against this. In my arrogance I said, "I will do my best. I will

take the consequences. I don't need anyone to take the consequences of my misdeeds." And now something was happening to me that I knew with complete certainty was not my doing but a gift from above.

For some reason the last chapters of the book of Revelation fascinated me. After breakfast I would go to a favourite rock above our house. I must have read a hundred times, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth... Behold I make all things new... He showed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal... There was a tree of life... and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." To this day no sentence in the English language stirs me more than those words, "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

I had little idea of how to make these truths the basis of a new daily life. I dreamed great dreams, but these were for the future. I would be a missionary in the heart of Africa. I pictured myself as a lone, heroic figure with my back to the wall. The weakness of course was that I was the centre of the picture. I did think of doing something for the Africans at the school where I still lived, but never got around to doing it. Instead of sharing with others the experience I had found, I tried to get into a religious conversation. They were embarrassed and I was embarrassed. I meant well but clearly I was going about it in the wrong way.

Almost as an answer to my dilemma, there arrived in South Africa a group of men from Oxford who had one aim: to share a Christian experience that had changed their lives. Because they talked about the practicalities of life rather than the religious theories, people found them very easy to talk to, even about things they were ashamed of and never referred to. I was drawn to what they were doing, but also on the defensive. My approach was to agree - "I believe exactly what you do," but this did not solve my problem. I still felt ineffective. Slowly I began to drop my guard and talk about my longings and my great feeling of bafflement.

As we talked, many things became clear. There was nothing wrong with my experience as far as it went. Some things in my life had indeed changed. But equally a lot had not changed, and escaped my notice. I had long kept up a bluff with my father and pretended to be what I was not. I had a bitter rivalry with my arch opponent on the tennis court, and there was a lot of bad feeling, I cut corners on honesty. My pride

was immense and it made me very slow to admit where I was wrong. Although I had sincerely given my life to Christ, yet when the chips were down I still did what I wanted to do in my daily life.

The Oxford men made a simple point: that it does not mean much to give your life to God, unless each day you take time to consider what in fact He wants you to do. It is said that John Wesley complained about the religious people of his day, that they believed in the guidance of God everywhere in general but nowhere in particular. This seemed to epitomise my life.

Their conception, that prayer is communication with God and that communication is a two-way process, was not wholly new to me although I did not practice it. Our great forbear, Andrew Murray, made this one of the main themes of his writing, in "The Secret of Silence" and similar works. He was also, I was to learn later, one of the inspirers of Frank Buchman. Andrew Murray wrote, "If you have five minutes to be with God, be silent for three minutes and let Him reveal Himself to you. Then speak to Him for two minutes."

They had another helpful suggestion. As I had in general given my life to God, why not look at the different facets and see that each one really was given to God. So one day I prayed, "God, I give You myself, my career, my time, my money, my friendships, the question of marriage, my pleasures, my mind, my assets. If You will show me what You want, I am ready to do it." I took a very deep breath before saying all that. It meant that I would no longer be my own master. For a young men full of the joy of life, this was a tough proposition.

So life became a search for what God wanted. One morning I got up early, renewed my decision, read my Bible and asked God to show me anything He wanted. I sat with a pencil and paper to note any thought that might be from God. I heard the clock ticking, a cock crowing and felt a little strange in my new experiment. Then one thought came into my mind - just the name of my arch rival of the tennis court, with whom I had really fallen out. Clearly this was where I had to start.

Being now committed to obedience and to action, I went straight to the telephone, rang him up and asked if he would join me for a cup of tea at the college tea shop. He was clearly surprised but agreed, and we met

during the morning. I had not given much thought to what to say, so I just took the bull by the horns, and said, "Ray, I'm sorry we have not got on together. I am trying to put my life on a new basis, so I wanted to tell you." He was quite cool, and after a half-hearted "Oh thanks", he took his leave. I did not feel anything much had happened. At least I had done what I saw.

A few days later I ran into Ray and he stopped me. There was something on his mind, and I waited. With some hesitation he said, "You remember what you said the other day? Well, it wasn't all your fault. Get on my motor bike and I'll run you home." We got home. I dismounted. He stopped the machine. There was still something on his mind. At last he asked, "What made you come to me the other day?"

I told him honestly, "Ray, I don't know much about this, but I have met people who say that if you listen to God, He can show you what to do. I am trying it and I had the idea to ring you. That was why I did it." He asked more questions and I told him some of the other things that I had needed to sort out. To my utter amazement he began to talk about some very sore points in his life. Here was my worst enemy opening his heart to me. We became good friends, and tried to help each other work things out. We were often seen together at college. Our feud was well known, so our reconciliation was quite a bombshell in our little world. Various of our friends followed suit and sorted things out with their enemies. Nothing quite like this had happened in my life. What surprised me most was how very naturally it had all worked out after I followed the first thought to get in touch with him.

The following year another group came out from Europe and America, including Frank Buchman, who had inspired the first group. This visit threw a lot of light on the relation between change in the individual and change in the nation.

After a series of regional gatherings in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban and Johannesburg, there was a national gathering at Bloemfontein in the centre of the country. At that time the division between English and Afrikaans-speaking people in South Africa was more on people's minds than the black-white issue. Many of those present had lived through the Anglo-Boer war and the iron had entered into their souls. Yet very profound reconciliations took place between

members of the two groups. Dr Edgar Brookes, one of the country's leading thinkers on race relations, gave expression to what many were feeling, and asked the whole conference to make a solemn declaration. He spoke of a threat of war that once existed between Chile and Argentina - a war that was narrowly averted. In gratitude the two peoples melted down cannons from both sides, and from the steel the great statue "'The Christ of the Andes" was erected. Dr Brookes adapted the words inscribed on the pedestal of the statue to apply to us in South Africa. We stood and made this pledge:

> Sooner shall this endless sunshine cease,
> Sooner shall this limitless veld pass away,
> Than we English and Afrikaans-speaking people
> of South Africa
> Break the peace which we swear
> At the feet of Christ the Redeemer.

Frank Buchman attached much importance to this event, and referred to it time and again. I did not wholly see its significance. The human changes I saw around me thrilled me, but I wondered why he made so much of Edgar Brookes' declaration. I believe now it was because he glimpsed in reality what he had long believed: "This message is a programme of life that issues in personal, social, racial, national and supra-national change.'

My upbringing had been totally to compartmentalise the spiritual and the secular. I have always been allergic to divines who claim spiritual sanction for some particular political or social point of view. But this seemed to be a different dimension. From change in people a healing stream appeared to be flowing into the nation's life.

It was all very new to me.

RHODES SCHOLAR

In 1930 I went as a Rhodes Scholar to University College, Oxford. For the first time I was completely away from parental influences which had been wholesome and strict. In my first year I was selected for the teams just below the "blues" at cricket, rugby and tennis. They were known as the Authentics, the Greyhounds and the Penguins. I played for Oxford

at tennis on one occasion and occasionally at rugby. I was very ambitious to do well and to be in with the sporting fraternity. I had been elected to "Vincents", the club that was the sanctum of sporting life. We were so superior about it that we never referred to it as "Vincents". It was just "the club". No others counted.

Somehow I conceived the idea that if my spiritual commitment were known it would militate against my athletic advancement. So I began to keep a low profile. With my religious friends I kept up a good front, while in the athletic world I tried to conform to what seemed to be the norm, even if it involved a certain amount of compromise with my convictions.

Life was not satisfactory. I did not get a "blue", and I knew that I was not being true to the best I knew. So one night I thought it out and decided that what matters in life is to know what you believe and to stand for it at all times. My problem was how to get on the level with my athletic friends with whom I had created a false front.

I tackled it this way. There was to be a big meeting in the ballroom of the Randolph Hotel, and I was on the panel of speakers. I gave a dinner at Vincents and invited the top athletes to the dinner, and to come on to the meeting. Quite a powerful athletic group accepted the invitation. Sadly I was so busy working up the dinner that I gave the minimum thought to what I would say. My words were sincere but would have impressed my friends more if I had couched my ideas in a form that was less religious and more adapted to the world in which we moved. However they were very nice about it, and the occasion served a purpose. I was on record where I found it most difficult to take a stand. Also from that day if I tended to compromise they were the first to jump on me and hold me to my profession.

Those of us who were seeking to be instruments of change had a fairly rigorous discipline of life. First thing every morning we would have an unhurried time of quiet alone in our rooms to renew our commitment to God and ask what He wanted us to do, where to improve our lives, where to heighten our commitment, where to put right things we had done wrong, how to try to pass on our experience to others. In our college a group of us would meet before breakfast to talk over the ideas we had. From one thirty until two, a considerable group from all the

of the world, as it stands on the bend in High Street and forms part of the best-known view of Oxford. It was slightly unexpected in winter to find a lot of men in rugby clothes in these august surroundings, but as we had to be on the field at two thirty it was accepted.

On Thursday afternoons after games we would meet for tea and a discussion. When Frank Buchman was in England he often came to these sessions. On one occasion he brought the day's mail from around the world, and read some of his letters, outlining the issues in the different countries and how the writers of the letters were seeking to bring their experience of change to bear. He was trying to get us to think of the world and slowly our horizons began to widen.

He also tried to bring us down from high-sounding theories, which abound in Oxford, to the nitty-gritty of how we actually lived. He once quoted Henry Drummond, a great influence in the lives of many people. Drummond started a talk to a university group with these words: "Those of you who have come today with intellectual difficulties must forgive me if I address myself today to those who have come in moral degradation".

Buchman loved Oxford, but sometimes became exasperated with our intellectualism. Once he burst out, "Oxford isn't intellectual. It's immoral." An extreme statement, but we took the point.

He passed on to us many of the lessons he had learned in his lifetime. He spoke once of how in missionary circles in China he had felt the frustration of being unable to get to bedrock with people and then discovered that homosexuality had taken a deep hold - sometimes in overt action, sometimes in what he called "absorbing friendships", where people in the name of friendship and kindness actually shielded one another from the flame of God's challenge.

All this was foreign to me and left me considerably mystified. But I was soon to encounter it. My first day in Oxford I invited a man named Peter, from the next room, to lunch. We became friends. Some time later he became very attached to another member of the college, and it was commonly hinted that they were in love. Peter seemed to be going down hill, so I invited him to an evening meeting in the rooms of a Don who later became Master of St Peter's Hall. My friend was taken with

the evening and we adjourned to my rooms and continued talking. Suddenly the door burst open and his "special friend" came in in a fury. "Peter!" he cried, "either you break with Bremer and never go near the Oxford Group again, or I am through with you." It was the first time I encountered the fury of the homosexual who feels his way of living and loving is threatened.

In the summer vacations there were big house-parties in various colleges. One permanent recollection is the way Buchman poured out his heart to God and to us, seeking to make our relation with Christ a more living thing. He often quoted verses which fed his own inner life. One was:

O Thou best gift of heaven,
Thou, Who Thyself has given,
    For Thou has died,
This has Thou done for me;
What have I done for Thee,
    Thou Crucified?

Words like these became for me a foundation of my life. Today, fifty years later, when at break of day I turn to God in silence, my first thought is generally such a verse. Another one that is often with me is this:

Jesus, I my cross have taken
    All to leave and follow Thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
    Thou from hence my all shalt be.

I took my Oxford degree in two years, which left me with the Rhodes money for another year. I went to Cambridge to study at the Presbyterian college, Westminster. I was also a member of Trinity Hall, a college of the university, and I played rugby, cricket and tennis for them. The captain of our cricket team was Donald McLean, best known to the world as one of the trio, with Burgess and Philby, who supported Communism from within the British establishment and later defected to Russia. McLean declared openly for Communism at Cambridge. I tried to win him to my ideology, and invited him to various meetings. What he said made me think: "There was a time when you could have got me,

but I have made up my mind." His words highlighted for me the great issues at stake and the thin line between effectiveness and failure.

There was constant interplay between Oxford and Cambridge, and in both places we maintained a fairly strenuous discipline of life. Some thirty of us of that era in the two universities decided after graduation to devote our lives to the world battle that came to be known as Moral Re-Armament.

Graduates from a university generally hope and expect that the friendships formed there will be maintained through life. But it rarely works out that way. We, however, were fortunate that the common task we undertook kept us in close touch around the world over the years. It is now more than fifty years since I graduated, but the friendships have grown with time.

I came to Oxford through the beneficence of the Empire-builder, Cecil Rhodes. He was possessed by a vision. He amassed great wealth in the terms of his day, but he was not a materialist. Money was not an end, but an instrument of power. Nor was power an end. It was the means to fulfil his dream. So great was his obsession with his vision, that he was prepared to bend integrity to its claims. His relation to the Jameson Raid and his dealings with Chief Lobengula in establishing Rhodesia are open to the greatest questioning. But he sincerely believed that the British Empire had a world mission. In an early will, he left money for the reabsorption of the United States into the British Empire "by force if necessary". Even the Church of England, he thought, should be a sort of "spiritual arm of the Empire".

Imperialism today is in disrepute. The British Empire has liquidated itself, and few would argue the necessity or the rightness of the process. Yet one cannot deny that in many cases the vision produced greatness.

If Oxford and Cambridge did not imbue me with Rhodes' philosophy, they did link my life with a world fellowship in a world task. Rhodes was driven by the vision of an Empire from the Cape to Cairo. My heart was captured by the vision of Africa with all its races and cultures under the government of God. I do not mean this in a vague, abstract way. I have given my life to the proposition that if enough men and women in Africa will lay down their personal ambitions, and seek with singleness

of mind to bring God's direction into personal lives and public affairs, then Africa, "the continent that God held in reserve", may be the unexpected source of an answer in the world.

With this vision and this belief it has been my greatest joy and privilege to work in twenty-seven countries in Africa. In the early days of our travels, aeroplanes used to touch down far more frequently as they made their way across the continent. I would find myself walking up and down airports in different African countries, simply saying to myself with deep emotion, "Africa, Africa". I understand very well those who on their return to our continent kneel and kiss the soil.

I treasure the knowledge of Christ's links with Africa. Tradition has it that one of the three Wise Men who brought gifts to the Babe in Bethlehem came from Ethiopia. Certain it is that within days of His birth the infant Jesus was on his way to Africa to live as a refugee in Egypt. Most poignant of all is that it was an African from Cyrene who carried the cross to Calvary.

WAR YEARS - MARRIAGE

In 1934, studies completed, I decided to give my life to the work of the Oxford Group, soon to be known as Moral Re-Armament. I worked in Britain, Norway, Switzerland, Germany and America.

As this book is a personal memoir and not a history, I must pass over these eventful years with only a brief reference to far-reaching developments which opened up then. These took place as the threat of war drew closer.

In Norway, the foundations were laid for the united spiritual resistance against the Nazi occupation. The same was true in Holland and Denmark. When war came, many men and women whose lives had been changed through the work of the Oxford Group served with distinction in the Allied forces. Others, in the occupied countries, fought with the resistance.

Meanwhile, in Germany, Hitler and his staff became convinced that this work had to be destroyed. We learned this first by the onslaught on our colleagues and friends in the occupied countries; and later by the

discovery of a secret Gestapo handbook of 122 pages which analysed MRA and called for its liquidation, as it "opposed the cross of the swastika with the Cross of Christ". My name was one of those listed, to be dealt with.

In Switzerland, whose neutrality had saved her from the destruction of war, a number of Swiss inspired by the Oxford Group saw that their country might play a part in "healing the hurts and hates of Europe." Ninety-five Swiss families pooled their resources in order to buy a hotel at Caux-sur-Montreux, in the mountains high above Lake Geneva. This is today the world centre where international assemblies have gathered every year since 1946, to "heal the past and build the future".

I was in the United States with Frank Buchman when war broke out in September 1939. Inevitable as it had become, it was still a stunning blow when the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, announced that Britain was now at war with Germany. We sat in silence, facing the cost and knowing that "somebody, somewhere would have to make the peace." Our immediate task would be to help America and the allies understand that we were now in something much bigger than merely a war of arms; it was also a world-wide war of ideas.

The democratic nations went to war to destroy Hitler and all he stood for. Russia and her satellites shared this aim, but were also fighting to implant their faith and sway in the key centres of Europe. Without a powerful moral and spiritual ideology we might win a war but never win the peace.

Statesmen in the free world only dimly perceived these realities. Buchman strove to bring them home to America. I joined the small group around him, to try and carry some of the load. In 1942, I was with him when he had a stroke. For weeks he seemed to be at death's door. Then, suddenly, he seemed to turn back. He said, "I have seen the outstretched arms of Christ, and they are wonderful." He had no later recollection of saying this.

At such a time your thoughts are not of your choosing. They flood your mind uncontrolled. My overwhelming feeling was one of gratitude for the discipline Buchman had lived, and imparted to those around him, and the question how it would continue.

I was very conscious that although I had sincerely given my life to God, yet the pulls towards my own desires and inclinations were still very strong. But, for the next years, I lived with Buchman, helping him to recover. The demands of the situation were such that I could never take time off, never take a holiday and never commit myself to any personal plan. Moment by moment I had to do just what needed to be done.

Living close to Buchman, one's selfish desires had the minimum chance to determine one's life and action, It gave one's commitment to God's will and way the best chance to grow. This experience, and Frank's expectancy of everyone who chose to work with him, was perhaps the most characteristic feature of Buchman's life.

In June 1944 I was with him in Philadelphia, where he was to celebrate his birthday at an old colonial mansion, Wyck House. There I received a cable telling me that my father had died, in Somerset East. He had been born there, and there he had retired with my mother, to some of the happiest days of his life. He had built a thatched cottage of rare charm, and my mother had made the desert bloom with flowers. I had not seen the farm, but I always carried a picture of it with me. My mind often wandered to the day when I would meet my family there, and my father and mother would show me round the farm. It was fourteen years since I had left home.

The cable literally struck me dumb. I was so choked with emotion that for hours I could not utter a word. It was as though a great dam of feeling had burst. My mind kept repeating, "It's all so long ago and so far away."

The following Sunday Frank Buchman suggested that the 150-odd who were with him should have a time of remembrance for my father. Several of those present had been entertained by my parents and stayed in our home. Before our general gathering a few of us were talking about the morning and preparing for it. I still found it very difficult to speak. I told how my father would be carried to his burial by six sons. The service would be in the church in front of which stood the statue of his father.

I told of our descent from Andrew Murray, who had come from Aberdeenshire to the little town of Graaff-Reinet, not far from Somerset

East. He and his brother had walked the twelve miles from their sheep farm to the point where he would catch the stage-coach to Edinburgh. At the roadside, waiting for the coach they knelt and prayed together. Then they sang the Scottish Paraphrase, "O God of Bethel, by Whose hand Thy people still are fed..." Andrew Murray never saw his homeland again, but this became the family hymn for all his descendants. We sang it every Sunday night, and at every family occasion.

In all the years since I left home I had not heard that hymn sung. As I was telling my friends all this before the service, the bells of the church across the street began to peal out - "O God of Bethel". I was shattered; but in the depths of my sorrow was the certainty that I was not forgotten.

I have often wondered what the mathematical chances were of this happening by sheer coincidence. Certainly one in millions. At the memorial service we all sang the hymn together. To me in a far country, the last lines were specially moving:

> O spread Thy covering wings around
> Till all our wanderings cease,
> And at our Father's loved abode
> Our souls arrive in peace.

My feelings were very raw and vulnerable, and I became very fond of one of our fellow workers. Despite my strong feeling for her, I could not find any certainty that she and I were meant for each other. Yet the pull was so strong that I did not want to consider giving her up. I prayed about it, but with a heart closed to the possibility of laying it down. I did everything except the one thing that mattered - to ask God whether this was His plan for me.

Things did not go well in my life. I was conscious that I was not being straight - not with God. Finally I decided I could not go on in this way. I went off by myself to sort it out. The difficult thing was to become willing for whatever was right, whether it pleased me or not. Then I prayed, "Please tell me what is right." Within a few moments I wrote down these thoughts:

> The answer is No.

Leave her and your heart in God's hand.
Have a greater love and care for all around you.
Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee,
Even though it be a Cross that raiseth me.

The lines of the hymn "Nearer, my God, to Thee" came out of the blue, and left me perplexed. I had always associated them with death. In a deathbed scene on the movies the background music always seemed to be "Nearer, my God, to Thee". Then it struck me what the words really said. Nothing about death. Just that I really want to be nearer to God, even if it seems like a cross. I opted for this. I did make the choice, and that was the end of the matter.

A year went by, and I fell in love with Agnes Leakey from Kenya. The war ended, and a large party travelled by train from Los Angeles to New York, to embark for England on a troopship. I had plenty of time to think about her, and as surely and clearly as once in my life the answer had been No, I wrote down "The answer is Yes." She was also in Frank Buchman's entourage and he was very much "in loco parentis" to her, so I thought I had better go down the train and talk to him about it. I told him I was in love with her and it was my belief that I should ask her to marry me. He was quiet for a while, and to my astonishment he used the same words, "The answer is Yes."

The only remaining question was how to propose to her on a crowded train. I enlisted some good friends and they invited her to tea in one of the compartments. After tea the train stopped at the town of Trinidad in Colorado. We all got out for a brisk stroll on the platform, and when the train started up again the others had disappeared, and we were the only ones in the compartment. Agnes seemed surprised, and felt some conversation was needed. She asked, "Is there any chance of your mother coming to Europe this summer?" Strangely, I had not thought how to propose. However, I thought fast and said, "You know, Agnes, that is the one place you can help me." She seemed surprised and said, "Certainly, I would like to help, but what can I do?" I said, "The only thing that would bring my mother to Europe is if you would marry me." What else we said is classified material. But Agnes still maintains that she was tricked.

Our party stopped off at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to put on a stage production for the military base. I cabled from there to my family, "My heart has found its home."

My mother did come to London. Agnes' father, Gray Leakey, came from Kenya at the expense of the British government, to receive from King George VI the Victoria Cross for his son Nigel, who had been killed in Abyssinia.

Agnes' brother, Major General Rea Leakey (then Colonel) was also due to come to Buckingham Palace to receive the DSO. Each recipient of a medal could invite two guests to the investiture. Agnes and I were invited along with Frank Buchman and Nigel's godmother. To the dismay of the family who had extended the four invitations, it turned out that when a medal is received for a deceased warrior, extra guests are not invited. However, the Leakeys had a relative working in Buckingham Palace and they told him of their embarrassing situation. He arranged for Agnes and me to come in through the tradesmen's entrance to the Palace, then through the boiler room and underground passages, to a side door of the reception room where the investiture was being held. When everyone was present and the band struck up "God Save the King", he slipped two chairs from behind a screen into the aisle, and all was well.

The British are masters of ceremonial, and the occasion was profoundly moving. The recipients of decorations came up one by one as the string orchestra played resonant music. The citation was read out and the decoration presented. When Agnes' brother Rea came forward, the King said, "I have seen you before." He had indeed received previous decorations, but they chatted about the time the King had visited the tanks in North Africa. The VC for Nigel Leakey was presented at a private ceremony after other guests had left, and Gray Leakey had a quiet conversation with the King.

We had one further visit to Buckingham Palace. Agnes was "presented at Court". In fact, all it meant was that we were present at a garden party which served as the presentation. There was such a backlog from the war years that the traditional ceremonial in the Palace would have involved too many such occasions. None the less, it was a very happy affair on a lovely English summer afternoon and everyone was in good humour after the rigours of the war years.

We were married at Christ Church, Down Street, Mayfair. It was a short walk from 45 Berkeley Square where we were staying and still working with Frank Buchman. The morning of our wedding I carried his breakfast to him in bed as usual. He seemed pleased with this, and said, "So things are going to be just the same". He had us as his guests to lunch before the wedding, dismissing Agnes' plea that she needed longer to dress than this would allow. He in turn assured us that we would be better married after a good meal.

The Rev Alan Thornhill, Oxford don and playwright, performed the marriage ceremony, and Frank Buchman pronounced the benediction:

> The Lord bless Thee and keep Thee.
> The Lord make His face shine upon Thee
> and be gracious unto Thee.
> The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon Thee,
> And give Thee peace, now and ever more.

The Mackinac Singers, of whom I had long been a member, sang Bach's "Jesu, Joy of man's desiring", with a second verse I had written for the occasion:

> Jesu, Star of mankind's hoping
> For a dawning breaking bright,
> Nations, in the darkness groping,
> Find in Thee their perfect light.
> O possess our every yearning,
> Fire our hearts with passion burning,
> Till our lands at last shall see
> In Thy will their destiny.

The reception was held at 45 Berkeley Square, the house that belonged to Clive of India. He is reputed to have fought a duel in one of the corridors. The house is famous for its Adam fireplaces and carved ceilings, covered with gold leaf - all under the control of the National Trust. Our problem was how to cater for hundreds of guests, when rationing was still strictly in force. However, our friends got together and countless people produced ration stamps or groceries and went to work, to provide a goodly spread for the multitude. The house is built

round a stair-well and the singers sang from the top gallery, the music echoing through the house until you hardly knew where it originated.

We drove off to the inevitable rattling of tin cans behind our car. Our luggage was sprinkled inside and out with confetti. One object in Agnes' suitcase was a folded umbrella. It was a dry summer and this did not come out until the autumn. We happened to be passing Buckingham Palace when a royal car drove out. At that moment the rain descended. Agnes hurriedly opened the umbrella, and a shower of confetti flew out, much to her embarrassment.

We headed for the South Coast for the first few days of our honeymoon. As we got out of London, a strong burning odour assailed our nostrils. Agnes blissfully thought it was just new mown hay. But soon it became clear that it was a lot more than that, and we pulled into a garage. The attendant opened our bonnet, and there, wired to the engine, were the charred remains of a once-juicy kippered herring. The attendant cut it loose for us, sadly shaking his head, and murmuring, "My favourite food".

RETURN TO AFRICA

Our first year of marriage was spent in London. It was the terrible winter of 1946-47. For a whole month the sun did not appear, a penance to the lovers of the African sunshine. The temperature refused to move above freezing point. Even midday produced only a hazy half-light. Electricity was rationed and the houses were cold and dark.

The Westminster Theatre had been acquired as a memorial to our fallen comrades, to encourage the living to carry through into peacetime the spirit of dedication and sacrifice others had so magnificently shown in combat. Agnes had spoken at the dedication, quoting a letter from her VC brother Nigel. "If the sacrifices we are called on to make will give you a chance to build a better world, then I am ready to give everything." That was what the theatre was all about.
We were presenting the industrial play "The Forgotten Factor" to capacity houses in the theatre every night. Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, had said, "Give me coal, and I'll give you a foreign policy." He needed something to bargain with. Every night miners from the coal-face, who were building teamwork and raising production

dramatically, spoke with the play, rooting in reality the truths presented from the stage. The evening opened with three songs from the chorus of which I was a member.

Agnes' and my family life centred round our evening meal. She was pregnant and when I returned from the choral introduction for the evening, she was generally in bed. Friends in America kept sending us food parcels, so I would select some delicacy and in the quiet of our room we would improve on our staid rations. Then I would walk back to the theatre through St James' Park to be at the final curtain, and to discuss with members of the audience the concepts of the play.

Our first child, Murray, was born in April. Friends had invited us to stay with them in Surrey, as Agnes had booked in at a nursing home in Purley. When labour started I took her to the hospital, and felt very aggrieved that I was not allowed to stay with her. I bought some forget-me-nots and sent them in to her with the lines:

> Though parting at this greatest hour
> Of life, if needs must be our lot,
> My spokesman be this tender flower
> To say that I forget thee not.

I am sure she did not take it in, as she had a lot of other things on her mind. But I felt better. To settle my nerves, our good host took me out on the golf-course. Sooner than we expected, his wife and family came running across the fairway. "It's a boy! It's a boy." I relaxed, sank a long putt, and we headed for the hospital.

Agnes was still sedated, but next to her was our son. We had expected the baby to be red and wrinkled as is normal. But here he was, smooth-skinned and peach-coloured. Agnes could not believe it and marvelled, "But he's a beautiful baby!" No doubt all parents feel a profound emotion looking down for the first time on this tiny, helpless creation of theirs. I remember thinking:

> Sleep peacefully my baby,
> In this world of strife;
> For battles lie before Thee
> On the path of life.

In June we went to Switzerland and spent the next months in Caux. There we met three adventurous friends who had spent the previous year in Africa. Group Captain Pat Foss had fought in the Battle of Britain, led the first bomber squadron on Malta, developed Transport Command and was involved in planning Churchill's flights to meet world leaders. Andrew Strang had been held for years in a concentration camp. Charles Burns had broken his neck in a riding accident.

Theoretically, Africa was to have been a time of recuperation for them. But clearly they had been far from idle. They had bought a single-engine Percival Proctor plane and hopped all the way down Africa, linking people up who had been isolated though the war years. They were convinced that Africa was ready to move into a new era, and that we should be part of the move.

So it was arranged that seventeen of us should fly to Kenya in a small charter plane, and from there to South Africa. The plane was a Dakota DC3, one of the most durable aircraft ever built. After seventeen years I was going back to South Africa, with a wife and son, and a splendid international group who worked valiantly at our side for the next years.

A year after our return to South Africa, our second son, Gray, was born. We had no guaranteed income and no base in the world for our family. It seemed an impossible situation.

The answer came through Charles Burns, who had pioneered this move to the country. Charles was an old Etonian, had served in the Indian Army and was the "laird" of his Scottish village. Coming from a background of a very formal and not very real faith, he came to the point where one day he knelt down and gave his life unconditionally to God. He began to live by consciously asking every day, "What does God want me to do?" and following the convictions that came to him. It was very new territory and very much of an experiment.

Then disaster struck. He was a very keen and accomplished horseman, but one day his horse refused a fence and Charles landed in hospital, paralysed from the neck down. It was a shattering experience for one with a fledgling's faith. He had given his life, as he thought, to a loving God, and this was the outcome. Was it all an illusion? Was he barking up the wrong tree? These thoughts filled his mind. Then it occurred to

him that he had made no conditions when he gave his life to God. In fact a commitment with conditions was no commitment at all. He renewed his promise to God, ready to accept whatever measure of strength he was given. In fact, he made a remarkable recovery for one who had broken his neck, and later in life he played a decent game of tennis.

Charles had come to South Africa to recuperate, but decided to pitch his tent in the country. He married Barbara Burns of Pretoria, and sold his Scottish home. Together they bought a house in Johannesburg, much larger than suited their own convenience. With unbelievable generosity they simply invited us to share the home. When we had to travel they would look after our children. When they had to travel we could look after theirs. There could not have been a happier solution to our problem and we lived happily together for some eight years.

Then suddenly Charles died. His widow was provided for, and opted to bring up the children in Charles' Scottish milieu. The home was left in his will for the work of Moral Re-Armament, and we lived there for thirty-two years in all.

Like us, the Burns had two children, Delscey and Geoffrey. Geoffrey was my godson, a relationship I treasured. One night we had a big dinner party. Geoffrey knew most of the guests, and was allowed to come in his dressing-gown to greet them as they sat around the table. Naturally he drew this greeting out as long as he could to delay going to bed. Finally he could prolong it no longer, and took his leave. Half-way up the stairs he paused on the landing and gave a great sigh of contentment saying to himself, "Everybody is my friend".

Delscey was a bit younger than our Gray, and suffered much at his hands. One day she was found folding up Gray's pyjamas. Agnes asked whatever she was doing. "Oh," she said, "Gray and I are playing a game. It's called 'Slaves'. Gray is the master and I am the slave. He tells me what to do and as I am the slave I do it." The game came to an abrupt end.

Gray had a very quick mind. One day we were walking along a road chatting, and he informed me, "Yesterday I climbed up that lamp-post." It was an unlikely tale so I said, "Show me how you did it". Without any

hesitation he replied, "No, it was magic. But it doesn't work when there are grown-ups around."

He had an endearing openness. He was often in trouble but it always all came out. When Agnes and I were going overseas and they were staying home, he asked, "Mom, whom shall I tell all my troubles to when you are away?" One day Agnes was making up their beds when he came in and hung around, clearly with something on his mind. Finally it came out, "Mom, if I tell you something very bad that I did will you spank me?" "No," she said, "Not if you are honest with me." He considered the position for a moment and then decided, "I think I'll get under the bed before I tell you, just in case you change your mind."

Murray used to get nightmares about a monkey jumping on to his bed, and he would wake screaming. We would dash into his room and get him fully awake, and point out that there was no monkey. He was not in the least convinced. "But you were not here", he pointed out with unassailable logic. So we discussed what to do. Finally he thought that if we prayed every night that the monkey would not come, it might help. Sure enough, when we prayed, he did not have the dream. If we forgot, the monkey jumped on his bed. So prayer became a matter of some importance. Some time later he announced, "Jesus said to me that I don't have to bother about the monkey any more. He is not coming back." And sure enough that was the end of the dream.

As is common with a pair of children, Murray the older was quiet and thoughtful; Gray was an ebullient extrovert, and well able to look after himself when he went to school. Murray was smaller, and found it difficult. One day he refused to go to school. His mother sat down and talked about school and how things were going, and what was worrying. It all came out in the third person. "Mom, what should little boys do if there is a big boy who beats them up?" They talked about what might be going on in the mind of the big boy. Perhaps he was not very bright and didn't know what to do with himself, so he just beat up the other boys. Murray had the thought that if they could get a game going as soon as break began, the big boy might find something to do. So quite cheerfully Murray set off for school. Some weeks later he asked, "Mom, can I have a friend to play with me on Saturday?" It was arranged, and inevitably it was a boy about twice Murray's weight who turned up - clearly the object of Murray's fears, though he never let on.

An international group of clean-cut young people, very attractive personalities, coming "on the give" to South Africa naturally drew a warm welcome. Both parties in Parliament entertained them. A slide show about the work was shown in the library of Parliament. Members encouraged us to develop the programme, so we brought a series of such groups to the country.

In 1949 we brought a play "The Forgotten Factor", and took it round the country. A gala occasion was planned, with the Speaker of the Parliament and his wife as hosts, and the Governor-General and Mrs Brand van Zyl as guests of honour. It was early in the parliamentary session, and night sittings were ordered, so we went to the Speaker to see what could be done. "Don't worry," he said. "I will see to it." We were on tenterhooks, as officially the night setting was still on. However, when the clock showed six, the Speaker simply banged the gavel and announced that the House stood adjourned until 2.30 next day.

The Governor-General was delighted with the play, which was followed by an uproarious party. The official chauffeur, hearing the Governor-General's loud laughter, let on that he feared the "old man" had had a few too many. In fact, he had only drunk tea. The further tour through the country took place under his patronage.

One of the most colourful characters we encountered on the tour was the President of the mineworkers' union, "Kommandant-Generaal" Rassie Erasmus. His title went back to the mineworkers' strike in 1922. At that time only white mineworkers were involved. General Smuts, as Prime Minister, ordered the men back to the mines, and when they refused he proclaimed martial law, and brought out the troops declaring it to be a rebellion. Pitched battles were fought at Fordsburg and other points on the Reef. The mine owners were under siege in the Rand Club, and the bullet marks in the walls are still pointed out today. Eventually the strike collapsed. Erasmus as the Kommandant-Generaal, was arrested, tried for treason, convicted and sentenced to death. He was imprisoned in "death row", but the sentence was commuted, and he lived to lead the mineworkers once more. He took to his heart the concept of the play, that in industrial strife God is often the "forgotten factor", and he sought seriously how to bring God into industry. The Mineworkers' Union was the first body to give financial support to our venture.

On the management side a veteran of the industry, C S McLean of General Mining, more than once President of the Chamber of Mines, worked for better and more human relationships. A weekly informal luncheon for management and union was established, and continued for a considerable time. The McLeans were always generous hosts to members of the cast of the play.

In the mining town of Welkom, in what was then known as the Orange Free State, the women on the mine had somehow drifted into two camps. The head of one faction saw the play with her husband. When they got home she asked him, "Darling, do you think this might work in Welkom?" "You mean, with the women? Why don't you try it out?" Next day she went to her rival in the spirit of the play, and they sorted the matter out. Later her husband moved to Head Office in Johannesburg and became head of his group. He was a life-long friend, and more than helpful in what we were trying to do.

We met a lively group of theological students at Pretoria University. They came from a very conservative background, but had accepted the view that any idea that was not valid for all men everywhere was not big enough for the age in which we live. So they travelled with us to Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), Kenya and Uganda, working selflessly backstage. After the final curtain, various members of the cast said a word, and then introduced the backstage crew - Afrikaners from Pretoria University. This always caught the attention of the audiences, throwing perhaps a glimpse of a futures when South Africa will find her true task in serving the forward march of the whole African continent.

After one performance I talked to an Afrikaans farmer in Rhodesia, who was also a member of parliament. "Man!" he said, "all through that play it was like a hammer hitting me on the head with one thought - how I treat my black workers."

In Kenya the most controversial character was Jomo Kenyatta. He was the father of the nationalist movement, and was regarded by most of the white administration as Public Enemy Number One. He had spent a year in Moscow, and this was chalked up against him. He felt that education was too limited and weighted with colonial philosophy. So he founded the independent schools system of over one thousand schools meeting in the most limited accommodation and taught by teachers with

very little qualification for the job. None the less it met the aspirations of the nationalist movement, in that it carried their thinking widely through the country.

We invited Jomo Kenyatta to see "The Forgotten Factor", and he accepted. He in turn invited us to visit his home in the Kikuyu country. He gave us a good African meal, and then asked us to address the people of his village. He himself was our interpreter, and in every way a gracious host.

We went on tour to Nakuru, Kitale and on to Uganda. We hired a bus of doubtful vintage. The driver was an African who did not speak English, nor did we speak his language. So we communicated by signs. We pointed to the baggage compartment, indicating that we would like to put the baggage in there. He shook his head and pointed to the luggage rack on the roof. The pantomime continued for some minutes. However, as he had the key for the baggage compartment he had the upper hand. We stacked the luggage up top, and set forth. Lunch time came and we stopped for a picnic. He opened the baggage compartment and his hens came running out. They grazed in the grass while we ate. Then we all set to, to catch the hens before we could set out again.

There was also a lorry with our scenery, and a private car. At one point I was in this car, and we got behind a lorry laden with bananas. Sitting on top of the bananas was a little African boy. The roads were of gravel and it was the dry season. So we were enveloped in dust, and the driver could not see us. Eventually we caught the eye of the boy on the bananas, and signalled that we would very much like to pass. He picked a banana from a bunch, lobbed it over the cab to land on the radiator. This was the signal to the driver to pull over.

We learned a lot on that tour.

The Afrikaans theological students, long familiar with prayer to God, learned the further truth that prayer is not just petitioning God, but communicating with Him, and communicating in two ways. So in quiet they began to ask God for direction. The man in Pretoria whom they all hated and feared was Dr William Nkomo, who resided in an area called Lady Selborne. Without notice, that area was suddenly declared a white area, and Dr Nkomo had to move with his family to Atteridgeville.

He believed sincerely that violence held the only hope for the black people of South Africa. The African National Congress of his day, he felt, was not militant enough. So with others he founded the African National Congress Youth League, to make the parent body more militant.

Certainly he and the Afrikaans students represented two poles of South African society. The young theologians were feeling their way into a new concept for the country, and felt they must go and meet Dr Nkomo. But what to say? The only starting point they could see was to tell honestly how they had come to realise their selfishness and arrogance and to apologise to him for these attitudes. Nkomo said later, "They seemed sincere. It seemed senseless to liquidate such people". Nkomo and the students went together to a conference in Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia).

On his return, Dr Nkomo addressed a mass rally of 2,000 people in the Cape Town City Hall. "I have seen white men change," he said. "I have seen black men change. And I myself have decided to change." Afrikaners spoke in the same vein. Standing with Nkomo when he spoke was Ds George Daneel, a former Springbok rugby 'great'. He and Nkomo made common cause for the rest of their lives.

At a conference in Swaziland, William Nkomo told a further tale of his personal Odyssey. Even after he began to follow God's direction, he found it very difficult to give up drinking. Liquor had gained a deep hold on him. Speaking to a group of young people, he said, "I am going to tell you something that I am very ashamed of. Perhaps it may help someone. One Christmas Eve I went to bed drunk. It is the night our Saviour was born, and I was drunk. In the middle of the night I woke up. I felt as though I was on a boat and the boat was sinking. A voice said to me, "Whither are you sinking?" I felt terrible. Then before my mind's eye there passed Abraham Lincoln, William Wilberforce, Aggrey of Ghana, Kagawa of Japan, a host of men who had done great things for their fellow men. The voice said to me, 'There you belong'. I never took another drink."

Inevitably, Daneel and Nkomo both incurred vehement criticism from the extremists among their own people. Blacks accused Nkomo of being a sell-out. Whites accused Daneel of softening up the Afrikaners so that

the blacks could take over. Both men won through, and Nkomo lived to be honoured by the whole of Atteridgeville in a "Nkomo Day" celebration in gratitude for all he had done for the community.

The experience of Nkomo and the theological students seems to me to touch the heart of our South African situation, where most of us claim to be Christian and yet our faith mostly fails to bridge the gulfs that divide us. It is more than race. Nkomo was a prominent Methodist. The students are today serving the Dutch Reformed Church. But they felt Nkomo was an agent of Communism; and he felt that they were agents of Fascism. All of them had to find a revolution in their Christian conception and commitment.

William experienced that break-through in revolutionary philosophy. He opposed the powers that be. More difficult, he stood up to his own comrades in arms, when he felt their conception fell short of the vision he saw. He was his own man. On his death I wrote these lines:

> You called no man your master as you trod
> The lonely road - the footsteps of your God.
> Restless, you longed to see all wrong put right,
> Yet cast out hate and violence from your fight.
> Ever opposing evil in our land,
> To alien foes you never gave your hand.
> You fought that those who claim to criticise
> Equip their heart with truth and not with lies.
> Your whole heart longed to see all people freed
> Yet cared for those with whom you disagreed.
> The fabric of our land you sought to mend,
> In every enemy you sought a friend.
> Deeply you loved those of your blood and bone,
> Yet made the human family your own,
> Living in faith that men, with mercy shod,
> Would one day walk as children of their God.

"FREEDOM"

The Moral Re-Armament assemblies at Caux in Switzerland have been a great meeting-place for Africans from all over the continent. In 1955

there was a large contingent, and they spent several weeks there. The time came when they began to think of returning home to their work.

Frank Buchman always cared greatly for Africa. While many spoke of it as "the dark continent", or "the question mark", he spoke of it as "the answer continent". One night, he woke in the early morning hours, thinking about Africa and the African people at Caux. He had a sense that God wanted to give him some direction, so he put on the light and took a note-book and pencil. He wrote down the thoughts that came: "Africa is not meant to be torn apart between rival ideologies of East and West. The people of Africa have a message to give to the world. It may come in the form of a play. It will come out of their own hearts and experience. It will go round the world. "He put out the light and went to sleep again. Next morning, he invited the African group to meet with him. He told them of his thoughts in the night. "I believe the thoughts came from God." he said. "Would you go off together and see what you think?"

The group went into conference, fascinated by this vision for them and for their continent. They discussed what they most wanted to say to the world. Not surprisingly, the theme was "Freedom". They discussed a possible story. When ideas became too rampant they stopped and were quiet, trying to sift out what was really from God, and what was just the product of lively imaginations. By the end of the day they had agreed on the theme, on the story and on the characters, and the construction of a play in three acts.

Time was against them, as they wanted to get back to Africa. So they delegated three of their number, one from Ghana, one from Nigeria and one from South Africa, to write the three acts simultaneously. For two days the three men wrote. Because of their unanimity, and the clear theme they had outlined, the three acts fitted together most naturally. By the end of three days the play was written. They decided that in three more days they would present it on the stage of the Caux theatre.

The night was a gala occasion, and their presentation greeted with round after round of applause. A group of people from London at once put their heads together and invited the group to present the play in the Westminster Theatre. This caused heart-searching, for the Africans were

overstaying their leave. But they had a great sense of mission about what they were doing, and agreed to go to London.

In London, the Westminster Theatre was packed for the performance. The German Ambassador to Britain was in the audience. When he got home, late at night, he phoned Bonn and urged that the government should invite the play. The invitation came, and this caused further problems for the cast. A performance in Paris followed. Ways and means were found to keep the cast together with certain replacements, and the play stayed on the road.

Further invitations poured in, including a bid from Scandinavia. They went to Sweden in mid-winter. The Swedish army lent them white sheepskin coats. The white sheepskin and the black faces made a lively contrast. Several performances were given in Kiruna, the iron-ore centre in the Arctic circle. There was a special afternoon performance for the Lapps, who came in many miles from herding their reindeer. If ever there was electricity in the air it was during this performance, - perhaps because each was a legendary people to the other; perhaps because both have been oppressed, and they felt this kinship. But I have never known a more remarkable rapport. One felt waves of feeling flowing back and forth.

Rickard Tegstrom, one of Walt Disney's ace cameramen, was in the Arctic, filming reindeer. He felt for the Africans, as the Lapps did, and offered to film the story free of charge if they ever decided on such a project. In fact, soon it became apparent that this was the only way to cope with the demand, and we set about making preparations to film "Freedom" in Nigeria.

The time that suited the actors best coincided with a visit to Nigeria by Queen Elizabeth, and the colonial government was not keen to allow a considerable group such as we would be, to enter the country when accommodation was bound to be strained. Various people who had seen the play, or knew its content, felt the urgency of the project, and the need to complete it before the rainy season. Princess Alice, an aunt of the Queen, invited a group to Kensington Palace where she lived. Her husband, the Earl of Athlone, had been Governor-General of South Africa and they were great lovers of Africa. She met us in her drawing room, with its fine collection of South African paintings. She asked us to

show a film, "African Tale", on the work of Moral Re-Armament in Africa, and to discuss the projected filming of "Freedom". One of the guests was the Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd, and we considered it with him. Whether through his encouragement, or for other reasons, the permits were granted.

As the authors of the play were also the chief actors and would be heavily involved on the sets, I was asked to correlate the different aspects of the venture, so that filming could go on speedily. We chartered a plane and flew with actors, cameras, crews and props to Lagos, Nigeria, arriving late at night. The properties were put in bond for clearing through the Customs in the morning.

Some person out to embarrass us was much sharper than we were. One of the props was a map of Africa which the leading revolutionary in the story had on his wall. The caption on the map was "FREEDOM - ALL ALIENS QUIT". The Lagos newspaper next morning greeted us with the story of our arrival and a picture of this map, with the unstated implication that this was the theme of the film. With a royal visit about to take place this understandably caused a considerable flutter in colonial government circles. Embarrassing as it was, I could not but tip my hat to the skill of the adversary who knew about the map and got it photographed illegally during the one night that our props were in bond.

John McGovern, the British MP and a stormy petrel of Westminster, had offered to come out with us in case he could help in any way in our dealings with officialdom. Rightly or wrongly, he felt that they were not as helpful as they might be. However, he signed the Governor's book for himself and his wife, and in due course he, alone, was invited to lunch at Government House, a diplomatic error of some magnitude, as it was a mixed luncheon. In the course of lunch the Governor-General asked whether "the lady" was in Scotland. Awaiting a quiet moment, John McGovern said, audibly to everyone, "No, she's here in Lagos. She sends you and your wife her greetings." Consternation abounded. However, from then on, McGovern felt that more cooperation was forthcoming.

Finding the right cast was the first big job. Ifoghale Amata of Nigeria and Manasseh Moerane of South Africa, two of the three authors, were to take the two largest parts. Lionel Jardine, a retired Resident of Baroda in India, came out with us to take the one white part in the film, as the

colonial administrator in the mythical country of Bokondo. The character is an efficient but fairly brusque administrator. It drew a protest from some colonial officials that "we are not like that". To which Jardine answered, "I am glad if you are not like that. I was.'

Dr William Nkomo, the South African nationalist leader, had agreed to fly to Nigeria if we could film his scenes in quick sequence. For the rest, we had to find a cast in Nigeria from among those who had played on stage in Europe, or others who could do justice to the parts. An excellent cast was assembled. Matthew Elebesunu, who played the king, is from a royal family. Elsie Chiwuzie plays his wife with infinite charm. Keziah Fashina sometimes stole the show as leader of the Market Women; she only had to be herself, for in life she had led many a Market Women's demonstration in Lagos.

The problem was that all these recruits to the cast had their regular work to do, and had to fit in the filming as best they could. The difficulty was to gather them all at one time and place - especially for the climactic scene of the film where they were all involved. So we decided to film this first, and work backwards from there to the smaller gatherings. The final scene was laid on the bank of the Niger River in the Onitsha market place. Thanks to the encouragement of the local River Chief, Alhaji Umoro, some ten thousand people turned out for the scene. The weather was kind; we had almost unbroken sunshine. Only one disaster threatened - Dr Nkomo's plane from Johannesburg was delayed. Though filmed later, he plays his part in the final scene as though he had been in fact there - such "cheating" is part of the movie game.

After the climactic River scene, Chief Alhaji Umoru, who had been so very helpful, came to call on us. "Are you doing this for money?" he asked. "No, we are doing it for God." "I understand," he said. He asked about the ideas in the film. We spoke of listening to God. Some time later he came to see us again. He told us how he had taken this idea of listening to God into the different areas of his life - his relationships with his wife, his relations with his brothers, the conduct of his judicial court. In each instance he had clear ideas on how to bring a new honesty and unity into his daily affairs.

Nigeria is blessed with unique traditional palaces, each with its own treasures. So for the film we created a composite palace, drawing on their

combined richness - the mural painting of the Obi of Onitsha, the wood-carving and the beaded throne of the Alake of Abeakuta, the picturesque balcony of the Ewi of Ado Ekiti, the royal drums of the Oba of Lagos. These, with many traditional chiefs in person, gorgeously clad, fill the screen in "Freedom", and give a wonderful combined impression of Africa.

Communications were extremely difficult and time-consuming. One of the players was a Member of Parliament who lived a day's journey out into the bush. The only way to reach him when needed was for one of our party to drive out into the bush over gravel tracks, asking the way as he went, trusting to find him at home and able to arrange his affairs so that he could return with the driver next day.

The royal palace of the Ewi in Ado Ekiti, some 200 miles from Lagos, was one of our scenic venues. Most of the actors could only leave Lagos after their work on Friday, and had to be at their desks on Monday morning. So we got to Ado Ekiti late on Friday; Saturday opened with pelting rain and our spirits were low. We dawdled over breakfast, with no sense of marché, and suddenly somebody looked out and yelled, "The sun is coming out!" We gathered people and equipment and hurried to the palace. The day was beautiful, but we had forfeited an hour we could ill afford. We tried through pressure to make up for lost time, and only succeeded in losing more time. The day was a disaster, and we only completed about one fourth of what had to be accomplished in two days.

That night we took stock, all feeling we had been slovenly and done a rotten job. We resolved that, rain or shine, we would be at the palace at 8.00 a.m. ready to start. On arrival we asked the Ewi if we might use a room to plan the day together. We had a time of quiet, to be sure our spirits were right, with no "grit" in the machine made up of so many diverse and difficult mortals, and to get any final thoughts on the sequences. While we were sitting quietly, the Ewi came in and joined us unobtrusively. When we asked if there were any thoughts we should share, he was the first to speak up. He asked if he might pray for us all, that things would be done in the best possible way. He also suggested certain ceremonial objects from the palace that might be appropriate in certain scenes.

Teamwork that day was excellent and we got shot after shot, always wondering if we could complete the work. After lunch the clouds began to appear from all sides. Still we got shot after shot. 'The clouds were nearly blotting out the sun by now, but remarkably the small remaining piece of blue sky surrounded the sun, and we got the second last shot.

As we were setting up the final shot, the clouds covered the sun. All was ready. The photographer waited, hoping the clouds might open again. Then I saw a tropical wall of water sweeping up the drive. I yelled to him to shoot. He gave all the exposure he could, and shot. As the director called "Cut!" the rain hit us. We grabbed the camera and ran for cover. And the final shot proved usable.

When the rain subsided, the Ewi came out on to the balcony and the villagers, led by the rain-maker in his ceremonial garb, came to celebrate. There was much rejoicing. Whatever the rain-maker thought, the Ewi believed our presence had something to do with the welcome rain.

I often lay awake at night with the knowledge that in a film, unlike in a stage play, the same group of characters has to participate from start to finish. The actors were all unpaid, not under any contract, subject to the demands of their homes and work. They were also often under much more severe ideological pressure from those who, from the moment of our arrival, tried to embarrass us, and throughout put pressure on the actors to withdraw. So from time to time, there would be a crisis, when one of the actors would announce that he was unable to continue, and would we please get a substitute! Happily each crisis was weathered and the day came when the basic filming was complete, and nothing now could stop the completion of the job. It was one of the great moments of relief in my life.

The premiere of "Freedom" took place in Hollywood, in a theatre generously given by the old veteran movie-maker, Spiros Skouros. It was a glittering occasion. One of Hollywood's hard-bitten film critics wrote, "Africa, once known as the dark continent, is through this film throwing a light on the path of humanity which, if we follow, may save all that we hold dear in civilisation."

The film did go round the world, in 20 languages, and today, forty years later, it is as topical, in many situations, as the day it was born.

CONGO INDEPENDENCE

In 1960 a number of us from Africa, black and white, were working in Europe. We had been invited to address meetings in various countries and were heading for Norway. In Brussels we had a lay-over between planes, and spent the time at a central hotel. Soon it became apparent that the hotel was alive with Africans. They were from the then Belgian Congo, now Zaire, attending a constitutional conference on the independence of the country.

Two of our party were leading actors in "Freedom". They met the delegates and told them about the film, which was also available in French. The delegates were very eager to see it as it threw light on the struggle in which they were engaged. Clearly such a showing might be of importance. So, despite the inconvenience, one of the Africans flew back from Norway to Brussels a few days later and presented the film to the delegates. It portrayed the very problems with which they were wrestling - tribal rivalries, political strife, the efforts of subversive forces to set one group against another while pretending to be the friends of freedom.

The Congolese were quick to see the relevance of the film, and begged us to come to their country before independence and see if we could not perhaps help them surmount the vast barriers that lay ahead. One of the delegates was a student from Luluabourg and he volunteered to interrupt his studies to make the preparations for such a visit. So Luluabourg was our first base.

At the suggestion of our host we began to show the film "Freedom". One evening we went to a village out in the bush. We had difficulty in connecting up the electricity for the open air showing. A storm came up. It got dark and our work was complicated. The wind blew the screen down. The crowd got restive. In this difficult situation the Belgian administrator, who still held the final power, rushed up in something of a panic. Did we realise that the previous week a suitcase with human remains had been discovered right where we were? We did not, but tried to keep calm. The storm subsided. The moon came up and all was well. However it brought a hard note of realism into our planning.

People with an ideology, we found, were hard at work. Two tribes in the area overlapped, and there were natural reasons for friction. Also we learned that three men - one from Moscow, one from Brazzaville and one from Belgium - were fanning the flames. They went to the Lulua leaders and said, "You are the most educated people here. You understand modern civilisation. Clearly it is in the best interest of everyone that you should rule. But face the fact. The Baluba are more numerous. You are going to need protection. We will supply you with arms."

The same trio went to the Baluba and said, "You are the most numerous tribe here. By the elementary concepts of democracy you ought to rule. But the Lulua think they know everything. They look down on you as ignorant people, and they are out to seize power. Your one hope is to hit them before they get their hands on everything.

"We are for justice. We are for democracy. We are for you. We will help you to get arms." In no time they were at each other's throats.

Our Congolese host felt we should meet Grand Chief Kalamba of the Lulua, and we had several discussions on these situations with him. On one occasion, when we visited him in his village, he told us that the previous week a lorry-load of his followers had been massacred by the Baluba. How could you forgive such wickedness? We had a deep talk. Suddenly a group of the villagers came rushing up to his place. A Baluba lorry had broken down in the village. They were at the mercy of the Lulua. This was the time for revenge. At once the Grand Chief went down and spoke to his people, "We have got to do things in a new way in the Congo. Someone has got to begin. Let it be us. Don't kill these people. Take their names, help them to repair the lorry, and let them go." There was a lot of murmuring about the old man going soft. However they obeyed his word and sent the Baluba on their way.

That night when we got back to Luluabourg, we told the news service at the radio station what had happened. They were sceptical. "Things like that don't happen in the Congo," they said. However they sent a reporter to investigate and found that the facts were correct. So over the radio, in the midst of stories of death and violence, the nation heard of this new initiative.

In this situation of tribal conflict the film "Freedom" proved invaluable. The two Africans who played the lead parts in the film were with us. They portrayed rival tribal leaders, each dressed in the distinctive robes of his tribe. The film ended with their reconciliation. Immediately the lights went on and the two men, clad in the very robes they wore in the film, strode on from opposite sides and shook hands amid great cheers from the audience. Then the rest of the party were introduced - Mau Mau leaders and Kenya settlers, black and white South Africans, giving evidence that when people change age-old enmities can be resolved.

We were extremely perturbed at the thoughtless behaviour of some of the whites in our hotel. The women were scantily dressed, often drinking too much on the terrace after sundown, often noisy and thoughtless, acting as though they owned the country. Once I asked in exasperation, "Are you deliberately trying to get your self raped one of these days?" They thought I was crazy.

With independence approaching we decided to do a quick tour of the capitals of the six regions. We generally stayed with the Catholic Bishop or Archbishop, who were generosity itself. The Archbishop of Stanleyville, as it then was, took us to his heart. The Africans in our party told him that they had given their lives, regardless of cost, to fulfil God's plan for Africa. Tears came into the old man's eyes. "You do not know what those words mean to me in this situation," he said. He asked how we lived, and we told him that our world-wide moves were based on voluntary donations. He went to his safe and took out some money. "Keep this," he said. "It is Belgian money. It will soon be worth more than Congolese money." How right he was. Soon there was massive inflation in the Congolese currency. None of the bishops would ever allow us to pay for our stay. "We're in the same battle," they said. The value of the tour was that we got to know most of the political leaders of the country who would soon be centring in the capital, where we returned before the day of Independence.

There were over twenty political parties taking part in the independence elections and it was extremely difficult for any leader to form a majority government. Eventually Patrice Lumumba succeeded, and became Prime Minister-elect, while Joseph Kasavubu was elected the first President. Lumumba's trouble was that he had to make so many promises of ministries to party leaders to attract them to his side, that there were

eventually not enough portfolios to go round. Herein lay the seeds of crises to come.

Lumumba was under great pressure from right and left, and we believed that the "Freedom" film might give him some helpful ideas on how to turn enemies into friends, so we were on the look-out for a chance to extend an invitation to him. Happily, I received an invitation to a luncheon where he was to be present. Communications were fairly chaotic and the invitation reached me at the very hour that the function was to start. I hastened over and arrived as the guests were being seated, so there was no chance to have a word with Lumumba before lunch. Proceedings dragged on. Lumumba became restive and it was apparent that he would leave as soon as the speeches were over. I took the only chance I saw, and on my menu card I wrote a word about the film, and invited him to see it. The waiter kindly handed my menu card to him. Lumumba looked over to me and nodded agreement, so in principle it was agreed.

The showing of the film took place before a most distinguished audience. The cabinet were there. The diplomats were there, and as we began in came Lumumba as he had promised. The film was introduced by a great French lady, Madame Irene Laure, who had been Secretary General of the Socialist Women of France. She told of her sufferings under the German occupation, the torture of her children, her implacable hatred - and then the challenge to lay down all bitterness in order to build a new world for her children and all children everywhere. Lumumba was visibly moved. After the film presentation, he said to the Africans who had created it, "You are giving Africa stature in the eyes of the world. My door is always open to you."

Things looked promising. But an exceedingly able woman, half French and half Guinean, called Madame Blouin, succeeded in getting herself appointed as Lumumba's chief of protocol, responsible for his appointments. Her aims for the Congo were the opposite of ours, and an iron curtain came down between Lumumba's office and ourselves. But for that, there might have been an influence to save him from his tragic end. (He was assassinated.)

Our party had been joined by three gifted young Americans, Steve, Paul and Ralph Colwell. In no time they had written a series of lyrics highly

relevant to the national situation. A Congolese friend translated them into the local languages, and to the amazement of the people three young Americans were singing songs in Congolese languages, humorously pointing answers to the pressing problems. They were soon top rating and were invited to sing at the great Independence Banquet. It was an outdoor function, and the platform from which they were to sing was some distance from the banquet tables. Their song, "Vive le Congo", brought in the different parts of the country and was an immediate sensation. The dinner guests rushed from the tables to surround the singers' platform. The Colwells became the talk of the town.

Next morning King Baudouin officially handed over power and at once Lumumba launched into a vicious attack on the Belgian government. It did not augur well for teamwork in the future.

Our party had an interview with General Janssen, the Belgian who still headed the National Congolese Army, generally known as the Force Publique. As some of us were from South Africa, General Janssen was at pains to explain that in the Congo things were not like in South Africa. There was no colour sense in the army. They were all one. None the less, within a week the General was running for his life, and barely got out of the country in the clothes he was wearing.

Within a week of Independence we were awakened one night by shouting and shooting. We turned on the radio. The Army had mutinied. The troops had broken open the arsenal and taken quantities of ammunition. Foreigners were advised to take one small bag and make their way to the Memling Hotel, in the centre of the city. We did this, and waited for some hours until things calmed down a little and it seemed safe to return to our home.

When morning came, we found that no authority existed. Each army band was a law unto itself . Some joined their tribes. Some rampaged on their own. Murder and robbery were rife. The Belgian exodus began. Cars began to queue up for the ferry across the Congo river to Brazzaville. The queue got longer and longer until there was a three day wait in line to get on to the boat. People would offer you their house keys if you wanted a house; but there were no takers, with security gone. We counted heavily on the two former Mau Mau fighters from Kenya who were in our party. This atmosphere was meat and drink to them.

They undertook to go out and get provisions for us, and they also supplied other whites in our block of flats.

Belgian paratroopers landed outside Leopoldville, and fought their way into the city to protect the Belgian nationals. Gunfire could be heard at all hours in pitched battles or in sporadic fighting in the city. The big city hospital was a mile from our flat. With war escalating and Belgian doctors fleeing the country we knew there must be a medical and surgical crisis in these services. The surgeon in our party decided to take a chance and make his way to the hospital, relying on his black medical bag to get him through. He found the Belgian Catholic nursing sisters devotedly at their posts, working round the clock. But the surgery for the vast hospital in a war situation was in the hands of the one old Belgian doctor who was also soon forced to leave. There was no authority left in the hospital, so our doctor donned a white coat, took over the surgery, and began to operate on the queues of wounded lying everywhere. Soldiers wandered in and out of the surgery at will, and he worked with an armed soldier at his back.

The theatre sister was a Belgian. The male orderly was a Congolese of revolutionary training. When he found that an American surgeon was at work he went from ward to ward warning the patients that if they fell into his hands they would surely die. He led radical political demonstrations outside the hospital, and announced that the answer for the country came over Radio Moscow twice a day.

The tension between the sister and the orderly was such that you could cut the atmosphere with a knife. With a man near death on the operating table, teamwork between the two completely broke down. None the less the doctor stopped and said to the Congolese, "Sam, I was thinking about you early this morning. I want you to know that I realise that it is selfish white men like me that create a bitter black man like you, and I am sorry." "That is true," said Sam, and instantly he began to pitch again and the work went on.

At the end of a rough morning, the doctor asked Sam for some gauze to clean the plaster of Paris that he had spattered on his shoes. Sam got some gauze, sat down on the floor, and began to clean the shoes. The doctor sat down on the floor and they began to talk. Sam started out,

"What are you doing in the Congo?"
"Helping the Congolese."
"Who sent you here?"
"We were invited by the Congolese leaders."
"Who pays you?"
"Nobody pays me. I get no salary."

Sam was incredulous, but became the doctor's best ally. Still his antipathy to the Belgian sister died hard. He talked to the doctor, who suggested that God might show him what to do. He chewed on this one, and decided to take the initiative and talk to the sister. He waylaid her one Saturday as she went off duty, and said, "You have done a lot for my people, but I only saw a Belgian imperialist in you, and I am sorry." She was so flabbergasted that she stood speechless, and then rushed for the convent. She says she spent the week-end on her knees fighting with her pride. On Monday morning, she went straight to Sam and said, "You were bigger than I was. I should have come to you first. Please forgive me."

The Belgian sister, the Congolese orderly and the American surgeon became a remarkable team and through the dark months that followed they kept the surgical work of the hospital going.

The flat to which we had moved was right across the street from the Post Office. One morning I went to buy some stamps. As I came out of the Post Office a Congolese soldier arrested me. There was a suspicion that some Belgian paratroopers were hiding in our building and I was taken for one. Arrest by the soldiers was a bad business. There were gruesome tales of people being arrested and locked up in prison with no records kept and then completely forgotten. Fortunately the Congolese who sold me the stamps was a friend of ours and saw what was happening. He leapt over the counter and came to my assistance before I was carted off. He managed to persuade the soldier that I was not a Belgian and happily he did not discover that I was a South African. So after much discussion I was released.

It was very difficult to know what we could do constructively in the chaotic situation. Each morning we would put our heads together, take stock of the situation and with a feeling of total helplessness look to God for direction. One morning our thoughts focussed on a political leader,

Jean Bolikango. We had got to know him before Independence. He was the political head of a very powerful and warlike tribe, the Bangalla, and had joined the Lumumba government on being promised a major ministry. When the portfolios were allocated he ended up as a junior minister, and we knew what a dim view he would take of this.

One morning as we planned our campaign it occurred to us that he was no longer around, and we decided we must find him and discover what was afoot. Three of our party set off by car to look for him. He was not at his house nor at his office. Everybody was evasive about his whereabouts, until a cousin of his who knew and trusted us volunteered to take the party to Bolikango, who was at a forest hide-out. They found him, surrounded by the military leaders of the Banga who had left the army to join their tribe. Bolikango was very worked up. They had been double-crossed by Lumumba, he said. The tribe had been insulted. Their honour was at stake and they could not allow this to go unchallenged. They were going to attack Leopoldville (now Kinshasa) withdraw and then create a Bangalla state. They would show the world which was the best tribe.

Our trio fought like tigers to give a bigger conception of what the world awaited from Africa. At last Bolikango said, "They are right. We cannot do this." He ordered the military leaders to go and keep the soldiers quiet. He himself headed for parliament where his followers were gathering for a demonstration. He leapt on to a lorry and harangued the crowd. Finally he persuaded them to disperse. Later Bolikango told us, "Within half an hour of your coming I would have given the order to march on the capital. Your coming at that moment was an intervention of Providence."

The return of the Belgian paratroopers to Kinshasa provided a small degree of order. But it would not do for the imperial power to be back in control of the newly-independent country. So President Kasavubu called in the United Nations. Soon detachments of Ghanaians, Nigerians, Sudanese, Irish, Ethiopians and many others were patrolling the country.

Lack of trust in the United Nations on the part of the Congolese was focussed on United Nations day. The UN planned a splendid display of marching and counter-marching in the great stadium to celebrate the day.

The Congolese quietly spread the word to boycott the event. So the day ended with the military in the centre of a vast, empty stadium, themselves giving three cheers for the United Nations.

Life continued exciting and hazardous. The battle for control in the country was getting hotter. President Kasavubu believed that the freedom of Zaire was in jeopardy, and he dissolved Lumumba's government. Lumumba retaliated by declaring the President removed from office. The outcome was in the balance.

All the politicians now wanted to get on the air to put their cases to the country. The President ruled that no politician could broadcast without written authority from the President himself; and the country was placed under a dusk to dawn curfew.

The curfew posed a problem for us. We did a lot of our work at night and did not relish being confined to our flat. So we sent word to the commanding officer of the UN, Brigadier Arthur Ankrah, offering to take films to the army posts in the evenings. "Just what we need," he said. "A bit of entertainment for the troops." At dusk each evening a UN patrol would come to our flat, load us and our film equipment into a jeep, and we would do a full coverage of all the UN camps. In fact we went the rounds twice.

Our host at one Ghanaian camp was Colonel Nathan Aferi. After seeing the film "Freedom", he talked with us about the kind of leadership his soldiers and his country needed. He decided that at any point in his life when he felt something was right, he would do it, and let the chips fall where they may.
Some extraordinary events followed. It was at this point that Colonel Aferi had to protect the radio station from unauthorised broadcasting.

Things were so dicey that he used to sleep with his clothes on, ready for action. One night he felt as though someone had forcibly shaken him awake with the question, "Is the radio station really defended?" He leaped up, called a captain to join him, and they headed for the radio station. His soldiers were there on duty. Not a soul was about except the staff. Everything was normal and peaceful. Still he had the strongest conviction that there was something behind his sudden awakening from sleep. He asked himself whether the station could be held in the event of

a real attack on it. He decided it would fall. So he immediately got a platoon of men out of bed, digging trenches, and laying barbed wire; and he brought in more armed men. When the sun came up he had a real fortification, and he retired for some rest.

We joined him for lunch at the officers' mess. In the middle of the meal a message came that there was trouble at the radio station. Aferi excused himself and dashed off to see what was afoot. He found things in a turmoil. Lumumba had come with two lorry-loads of soldiers to force his way in. Clearly he was taken aback to find a defended position when the night before there had been none. He tackled Colonel Aferi:

"Let me in!"
"You can only get in with a written authorisation from President Kasavuu."
"I am Patrice Lumumba. Let me in!"
"You will have to get authority from the President."
"You are an imperialist and a savage."
"That's all right. But you can't go in."

To complicate matters there arrived on the scene a Ghanaian Brigadier, (who of course outranked the colonel). He instructed Aferi to let Lumumba in. Aferi thought hard. "I am sorry," he said, "I have written instructions from the UN that you can enter only with the authority of the President. I will have to have written instructions countermanding the order." The Brigadier was chancing his arm, and could produce no warrant.

Lumumba turned to the officer commanding the detachment of troops and ordered him to attack. "Just a minute," said Aferi, "Do you see my men in the trenches with their blue UN helmets and their weapons showing? Do you see your men entirely exposed up on the trucks? Who is going to get shot?"

When Lumumba repeated, "Attack!" The commanding officer refused and withdrew his troops. Lumumba had to leave, and the radio station was held.

We were concerned how to reach out beyond Kinshasa, the national capital. The radio was the obvious channel. Our trump card was the

Colwell brothers with their brilliant music and their now considerable repertoire of songs in Congolese languages. And everyone knew of their triumph at the Independence Celebrations. We offered their services to the radio, and this was immediately accepted. Each morning we would record a fifteen minute programme built round the songs. It would be broadcast at 8.15 in the evening right after the news, and repeated again the following day

Soon the Colwells were a household word. Along with the music there was always one short story. It might be from their own lives, or from anywhere in the world. But it was always relevant to the current situation in the country - stories of reconciliation, stories of people who stood firm against threats, bribes, or the lure of ideologically-trained women who sought to seduce men not for money but for political ends. It was well-known that such women had become the mistresses of some of the cabinet. So the programme drew a sharp battle line, and we realised that at any point it might be taken off the air. So as we planned each programme, we asked ourselves what we would want to say if this was our last public word.

Sure enough the crisis came. One morning we recorded as usual, and at 8.15 p.m. we turned on the radio to listen to the programme. Instead of the Colwells' music, there were martial tunes, interspersed with the voice of the well-known Guinean woman, Madame Blouin. Her statements were not calculated to produce peace or reconciliation, but to inflame feelings and promote strife.

The two Mau Mau leaders from Kenya leaped to their feet, and headed off to the radio station to confront the director. They learned from him what was afoot. Just before the Colwell programme, Madame Blouin had arrived with a note from the Minister of Information, saying that she was to broadcast instead of the scheduled programme.

"What could I do?" asked the director.
"Was it right?" asked the Mau Mau men.
"I don't say it was right, but what could I do? I cannot disobey my minister."

The Kenyans responded with their conviction. "Millions of people are today living under tyranny and cannot say what they believe because

they did not fight for what they knew to be right when they still had the freedom to do so. If you do not fight for what you see is right, here and now, the time may come when you are condemned to silence while your country is taken over."

At home we were listening, and wondering how our black comrades were getting on. As soon as Madame Blouin finished, we sat up with a jolt. The former Mau Mau men were on the air. They had convinced the director that he must fight. He vowed that this lady would never again speak over the radio as long as he was in control; and he would turn the mike over to the Mau Mau men to answer her. So here they were on the air. "We fought with the Mau Mau in Kenya. We battled in the forests. We faced bullets for our belief in freedom. We were imprisoned for our convictions. We love Africa. We are 100% African; we are totally black (this in contrast to Madame Blouin who was known to be half French and light-skinned). We are out for the freedom and unity of Africa. We will have nothing to do with movements that set one African against another, and build on hatred. We too were full of hate, but we have changed. We are not fighting against others. We are fighting for what is right. Nations that are morally disarmed will lose their freedom. We believe in freedom and that is why we are in this country, fighting for the moral rearmament of Africa and the world."

Madame Blouin was expelled from the country; and the Colwells went on broadcasting. And eventually peace was signed between the tribes, in the presence of President Kasavubu and the leaders of the nation. The climax of the occasion was a showing of "Liberté" ("Freedom").

MAU MAU

Agnes and I were in America staying in a country house near New York. One morning a cable arrived from Kenya. Agnes' father had been abducted by the Mau Mau.

We learned later that a contingent of some fifty had attacked the farm. In the house were Agnes' father, Gray Leakey, his wife Mary and her daughter; the cook and his son. The cook was a loyal Catholic, and had refused to join Mau Mau. The invading party took him, hanged him from a tree and disembowelled him. Mary Leakey tried to get her daughter to safety, and hoisted her up to a loft above the bathroom, but

she had not the strength to get herself there. She was murdered on the spot, but her daughter was saved. Agnes' father they carried off into the bush.

I took Agnes into the garden, and showed her the cable. Strangely, it was signed by David Waruhiu. His father, Chief Waruhiu, had been a monumental figure, known as the Churchill of Kenya, who had also refused to traffic with the Mau Mau. One day his car was ambushed, and he was riddled with bullets. At the time I was in Caux in Switzerland with his son David; and it fell to my lot to tell him of his father's death. Now, by strange fate, David had to let us know of the abduction of Agnes' father. Agnes wept. I took her hand, and we sat in silence for some minutes. Almost certainly her father was dead. But was he? Had he been tortured? We knew he could not live many days because he was diabetic; he was dependent on insulin. We faced life's eternal riddle. Why does God allow such things? Why should one who had changed and sought to put right what was wrong, who tried to find and follow God's will, - why should he be the one to suffer?

We were quiet, and turned to God. Through the turmoil of Agnes' mind, two thoughts emerged, so clear that she wrote them down. The first was that she should have no hatred or bitterness. The second was that she should fight harder than ever to bring change to white and black alike in Africa, or all the continent would know something like Mau Mau. A strange thought kept coming to me - the word of Caiaphas, the High Priest in Jesus' time who "deemed it expedient that one man should die for the people".

Within days we had further news. The small son of the cook who had been murdered trailed the Mau Mau band to see what would happen to Gray. They headed up Mount Kenya, a sacred mountain to the Kikuyu. From time to time, Gray spoke to them in Kikuyu. Things were wrong in the country, he said. They had to change. But people had to change. Violence would not bring a better country in the long run.

On the side of the mountain a shallow grave was dug. Gray Leakey was laid in it. Still he spoke to them, but they covered him over with earth and buried him alive, as a ritual sacrifice to the gods of Mau Mau. Dogs and goats were also buried in the grave.

The cook's son later brought others to the site of the grave; and Gray's body was brought to Nyeri, where he lies next to Mary in the Anglican cemetery which looks up to Mount Kenya.

The shattering tragedy made us think about our fellow whites in Africa, and where we had failed. Agnes recalled a visit she and her father had made to a camp where captured Mau Mau leaders were interned. The Commandant of the camp was Colonel Alan Knight, who had taken the job with the conviction that he could do something for these potential leaders of the future. Agnes' father had recognised one of the prisoners as coming from the mission school founded by his uncle, Canon Leakey. Gray asked the man, "You were a good Christian. Why did you join Mau Mau?"

The man told of going out from school with a good education and often being treated as a second-class citizen by whites who did not have as good an education as he had.

Another man had said to Gray, "A white man shot my dog because it barked at him. I have had a lot of white men's dogs bark at me. What would have happened if I had shot a white man's dog?" And another said, "We were taught that to be civilised we must clothe our nakedness. But when we see white women on the beaches we wonder why we should do what the white man teaches, when he does not do it himself."

Agnes and I thought of these things with much turmoil and heart-searching, and a deep conviction began to grow in our hearts. When we looked at wrongs inflicted by whites on blacks we inwardly said, "We are not like that". But when we looked at constructive things that whites have done, we inwardly identified ourselves with the good things done. We realised that we were not just individuals who had to take responsibility for our sins. We were part of a white community in Africa, and had to identify ourselves with its mistakes and carry the responsibility for them.

Within a year we were back in Kenya, with an international Moral Re-Armament force. They had circled the globe in three chartered planes. Africa was well represented. Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Tunisia were part of the ensemble. David Waruhiu's sister Mary was a striking figure, in her Kikuyu Costume. Our previous stop had been Cairo. We

had given a late night performance, packed up the scenery and props, loaded the planes and taken off at dawn. Around eight o'clock, the sun's position in relation to our plane began to move, and soon it was on the opposite side of the plane. We had turned 180 degrees.

We enquired of the captain what had happened. The radio equipment of one of the planes had failed, and he did not think we should risk going on in this state. They would repair it in Cairo. The trouble was that we were due for a gala presentation in Nairobi that night before the leadership of Kenya. A return to Cairo would rule that out.

Agnes had an idea, which we presented to the captain. Why not continue to Khartoum; and there, put all the principals of the play in the two serviceable planes, and leave the one in Khartoum until it was repaired?

The captain had reason to take our suggestions very seriously, because of a previous incident. Among the travelling group were several World War II pilots. They were convinced that when we took off from Teheran one of the planes had been far too long in lifting off, and then climbed very slowly. They discussed this with the captain of the planes. He agreed to have his mechanic go carefully over the plane in question.
The mechanic's report was that the plane was in perfect order. Our war pilots were convinced that this was not the case. They conferred together, and were confirmed on the evidence and on their sense of God's guidance, that something was wrong. They went back to the captain with their convictions.
He said, "I'm sorry. I have had the plane checked. We find nothing wrong. If you are dissatisfied, I can only suggest that you ask Washington that I be relieved of my command, and someone else be sent out." Our pilots said they would not consider such a suggestion. They had great confidence in him. But they were convinced that there was something wrong.

The conference broke up with nothing decided, and relations somewhat strained. But the conviction of the pilots so impressed the mechanic that on his own authority he went back and checked the plane with a fine tooth comb. To his horror he found a defect that precluded that plane taking to the air until a whole new engine had been flown out from Frankfurt to replace the defective one.

With that background, the captain considered our request to come down in Khartoum, and decided it was sound. We were delayed in our landing, and had to jettison fuel, but we came to earth. Happily they were able to repair the radio with the help of the other planes and we were once more on our way. The last plane landed in Nairobi at 7.15 p.m. and at 8.15 p.m. the curtain went up on the show.

We could move freely in Nairobi. But in the Kikuyu country all public meetings had been banned. David Waruhiu asked for permission to hold a mass gathering there, and for the first time in years this was allowed. Ten thousand people gathered on a hillside. They clustered like birds in the surrounding trees. David Waruhiu presided, and introduced people from around the world. Then he came to Agnes. Her father had been known to the Kikuyu as "Marungaru", meaning "tall and upright" Everyone knew of his death.

When Waruhiu said that the next speaker would be the daughter of Marungaru, a great murmur went through the vast throng. Then, in an electric hush, Agnes stepped forward. "First of all, I want to apologise," she said. "I feel we white people have lived wrongly. We have often been arrogant and superior. We have acted as though the best things were all for us, and as though it was our right to have others serve us. I am sorry. I and my husband have needed to face this and change. We are here with this great company because we all want to change things, and build a just Africa and a new world."

When the meeting broke up, scores of the Kikuyu came to Agnes saying "Forgive us. Forgive us. We did wrong. We want to work with you to build this new kind of Africa." For us this morning was a healing of the heart.

We decided to go to the family farm near Nyeri. Dr William Nkomo, who was travelling with the Moral Re-Armament party, asked us if he could come with us. We got a military guard in Nyeri and they took us to the farm. The doors were broken, furniture broken or removed. The place was derelict. We sat together on the stoep amid the desolation. The day was peaceful. Mount Kenya, with her long sloping shoulders and her snow crown in cloud, was as beautiful and impressive as ever. Somehow, as we sat there, black and white together, it seemed the end of a chapter and the beginning of a new one. A great peace rested on us.

Agnes and I kept a few articles from the house. A silver teapot and hot water jug were removed by the Mau Mau and carried away. They must have tired of carrying them, for they were found, dirty and battered, in the grass. They have been restored, and on special occasions they grace our tea parties.

The international group were also invited to present their play, "The Vanishing Island", at the Mau Mau detention camp at Athi River. After it, some of the group spoke. The Mau Mau at first covered their ears. Many of the visitors were white, and they knew what white men would say. One of the speakers, the playwright and author, Peter Howard, said, "I was born white. I couldn't help that, could I? But I am a proud man and I come from a proud people. We have often hurt other people's feelings, and sometimes not even known that we were doing it. That is why we need to change. That is why my family and I are here today - to build something new." Gradually, everyone began to listen.

Before the party left, one of the prisoners came to Peter Howard with a crumpled brown paper packet. "What is that?" asked Howard. "It is money", the prisoner said. "It is for your people. We cannot go with you, but we want to take part in building a new world."

A few days later, in an act of great courage, Colonel Knight, the camp commandant, stood up before the 1,800 prisoners. They were in a hollow square, and he stood at the centre in his colonel's uniform, and spoke to the prisoners and staff. "I want you to know," he said, "that I have decided to accept fully the challenge that Peter Howard and his people brought us. I have often been wrong. If you see me doing something that is against the truth that they brought, come and tell me and I will change."

One by one, Mau Mau men came to him quietly. If he could change, they wanted to know how they could change. He told them what it meant for him to apply honesty, purity and love to his life and to put right the wrongs. These men began to change. They knew they did so at the risk of their lives, for it was the duty of a Mau Mau adherent to kill anyone who defected. Colonel Knight said, "I know the danger in which you walk. Would you like to be put in a separate compound for your safety?" "No," they said. "We risked our lives every day for Mau Mau.

Should we not be willing to risk our lives for God? We only ask that we cook our own food, so that we cannot be poisoned."

At first they were ostracised by their fellow-prisoners. But slowly others began to come to them in the dark and discuss the affair. In the end, some 500 publicly abandoned Mau Mau, and took the cleansing ceremony.

Two of them, after their release, got permission to spend a day with Jomo Kenyatta, who was still under house arrest. They told him of their experience with Mau Mau, and of the revolution of change in which they now put their faith. They showed him the film "Freedom".

Kenyatta asked the two former Mau Mau men to put the film into Swahili for all in East Africa to see and understand. They went to London, raised the money, and dubbed the film into Swahili.

By this time Kenyatta was a free man. They took the film to him. He had it shown at his home to the leaders of the Kikuyu people, and asked them to get it to their people. Starting with mass showings in the Nairobi Stadium, "Freedom" was shown, in a daylight film unit, on market days in the towns and villages. An estimated million people saw it. Nine cabinet ministers paid tribute to the part it played in preparing the country for a peaceful transition to black rule.

The white farmers were terrified of Jomo Kenyatta as he came to power. A Kenya Governor had characterised him as "a leader to darkness and death". Kenyatta gathered the white farmers at Nakuru and spoke to them. If he had hurt anyone, he asked for their forgiveness. If anyone had hurt him, he wanted to forgive. The past was past. They had to build the future together. That meeting was one of the great acts of statesmanship in Africa.

Africa has an extraordinary capacity for reconciliation after a conflict is over. Some twenty years after the Athi River Mau Mau detention camp was closed, a group of ex-detainees arranged a dinner in Nairobi to reminisce about old times - rather like an "old boys" reunion. Who should they invite to be guest of honour for the occasion? None other than Colonel Alan Knight, the camp commandant.

Twenty years after Gray Leakey's death there was one more sequel. At a conference in Caux, Agnes and I were at a dinner table with a former Mau Mau leader, Stanley Kinga. His life had been changed, and he has played a part in the world work of Moral Re-Armament. During the meal he turned to Agnes and said, "There is one thing I have never told you, which I think you ought to know. I was one of the committee that chose your father to be a ritual sacrifice, and planned his death. I feel deeply sorry for it." Agnes was so shaken by this that she asked Stanley to repeat what he had said. Then she said, "Thank God we have both learned the meaning of forgiveness. Otherwise we could not go on sitting at this table." Kinga was a member of the committee who selected Agnes' cousin, Philip Leakey, as a candidate for election in a black constituency, which elected him.

Some time later, Laurens van der Post, the author, invited Agnes and me to tea at his London flat. He knew the family history. No sooner were we seated than he turned to Agnes and said, "I want to make sure you understand that it was the greatest compliment that could be paid to your father, that he was chosen for the sacrifice. Only the best is good enough for the gods." We had known this, but felt the graciousness of van der Post's gesture.

Somewhere in all this, Agnes' travails had played their part. Her suffering and her commitment to the healing of Africa have touched hundreds of hearts up and down the continent, and beyond. Strangely, through his death, her father's influence was far greater than it could have been through living a few more years.

To us, the experience has helped to answer one of life questions - the riddle of suffering. We do not believe that God causes it. Man's selfishness and cruelty mostly do. When God gave men free will, he inevitably allowed us to hurt each other if we chose. But of this we are convinced. In the darkest hour and the most inexplicable tragedy, if we will open our hearts to pain, and open our minds to God's whisperings, He will in unimagined ways - bring good out of evil, a positive out of pain, and weave it into the tapestry of a great Master plan.

THE CRUNCH

My life involved much travel. I had a sense of responsibility for the whole African continent and it was my privilege to work in twenty African countries. For many years, I lived with the pain of knowing what black Africa felt about South Africa, and what South Africa felt about black Africa.

The pain for all of us who sought change in South Africa in those days was not so much the difficulty of doing the right things, but of knowing what was the right thing to do. For me, as for many, this was the burden of my life.

One simple thought has been much with me in these difficulties. It is that those of us - black, brown and white - who live in this country, if we truly seek God's will, are meant to <u>be</u> the new society. Hemmed in as we were in South Africa by countless laws, and now that these laws are being removed, it is how we live, not just how we talk, that matters.

Our first move was to make our home, with Charles and Barbara Burns, a home for all races - where all were equally welcome, could break bread together, stay together and meet and plan together. When we took this decision in 1949, it was not "the done thing". But neither our neighbours nor the security police objected. In fact we were pleasantly surprised to find how many of our friends were eager to get to know black South Africans, but did not know how to go about it. Today it is normal for whites and blacks to visit one another in their homes; but when we began we were breaking new ground

Then we moved into large conferences for all races. Public buildings were not available for such gatherings at that time. So we had to operate on our own ground. The Johannesburg City Council had made available to us for some years an unused area in what is now part of the City Health Department. It had one large room where we held conferences. Also we had a property at Witkoppen, outside Johannesburg, where we met under canvas in two large marquees. We erected a stage for dramatic presentations as well. Today most hotels offer such facilities, but we had to create our own setting.

At one meeting in Witkoppen we were launching a mobile move in the country, for which we had to raise the money. My mother was present, along with a considerable contingent of brothers, nephews and nieces.

My mother had a small amount of capital, and lived off the interest. It was generally understood that after her death this would be divided among the eight children. She was not eager to alter this arrangement. But she took seriously the view that if you give your life to God and mean it, you also give your possessions and talents to Him, and let Him show you how to use them. We, her children, had all had a good education and none had financial problems - except myself, who worked without salary.

My mother asked leave to speak, and came to the microphone. She offered to give £25 to the projected move. But then she went further. "I think a lot about the future of my grandchildren and the world they are going to grow up in. I believe the best thing I can do for them is to invest my money, when I die, in this work, and that is what I intend to do." So she publicly disinherited us all.

It was a big step for my mother, thus to risk the disapproval of her children, for she had no idea how they would take it. Then my oldest brother rose and said, "Well, if our mother feels so strongly about this, I will give £50." Another pledged £25. Money apart, in her own spirit, it was a big move forward .

At the conference, Peter Howard's play, "The Ladder", was presented by a cast of all races. Two parts were played by prominent Afrikaners, Justice C J Claassen and Advocate John Trengove, QC. A leading part was taken by P Q Vundla, a leader in the African National Congress until it was banned.

A public performance of this play in Pretoria was a lively occasion. It was just after the big Treason Trial of 23 men, which went on for several years. John Trengove had taken the State's case in the trial. When he appeared on stage there were calls of "Treason Trial" from the audience. At the end of the performance he sought out the hecklers, and had a frank and friendly discussion. Shortly before the Pretoria performance, the Minister of Justice asked Justice Claassen to withdraw from the play, as his presence had become a matter of lively public controversy.

The Minister's request also became a matter of common knowledge, so everyone was eager to know whether he would appear on stage. In fact, he did appear in the play, and loud applause from the audience greeted his entry. He had informed his minister that in deference to his wishes he would withdraw from the cast after this performance, but it was not fair to expect him to withdraw at such short notice.

All these events made it abundantly clear that we were serious about patterning a new society for all races. As long as the government leaders thought of us as a force only raising the level of life and Christian commitment in individuals, we posed no problem. But if men and women of all races met as friends and equals, seeking God's new ways for the country, it was a different story.

When men like Dr William Nkomo began to work for the unity of the country, the white leaders were delighted. When we whites admitted where we were wrong, and how much we needed to change in our racial attitudes, it was not so popular. The Broederbond passed a resolution against us, and this went to every cell in the country. Dr Verwoerd, as Prime Minister, spoke strongly against us in the Cabinet, and a lot of doors were shut in our faces.

I wrote a careful letter to Dr Verwoerd, trying to give a picture of our action in the world, and specially in Africa. He had rightly pointed out that there was a continent-wide strategy to reach every leader with a Marxist philosophy. We were trying to reach every leader with a philosophy of God's guidance. Unless some people undertook this vast task, communism would be the only relevant force in the field. I thought the logic was unanswerable, but I received a reply from the Prime Minister's secretary: Dr Verwoerd had instructed him to inform me that unless we supported apartheid, we were promoting the very communism we claimed to answer. They were difficult days.

Every man and woman who worked in those days to bring change in South Africa fervently wished we were able to do more. But it is an encouragement to realise that many of the things we fought for in the teeth of prevailing policies are now being accepted as normal, by government and opposition alike.

There have been many times in my life when I did not know which way to turn. One of the most difficult issues centred round a youth programme in our work known as "Springbok Stampede". Such a programme grew up in many countries, following an American musical programme known as "Up With People". The American programme was born at a MRA conference, was youth oriented, strongly patriotic and largely built round songs created by the cast. It had a lively popular appeal, and spread widely in the United States. The time came when its leaders decided their programme should be entirely separated from Moral Re-Armament. It was incorporated as an educational, rather than a religious foundation.

South Africa caught the spark, and "Springbok Stampede" was born. It was a lively musical show, Afrikaans and English with one item of African music sung by whites. There were separate white and black casts. The African saw this separation as a concession to apartheid. The whites felt the separation was necessary in an attempt to reach the heart of conservative Afrikanerdom.

Often, when we went into an Afrikaans community with Moral Re-Armament we found a ready response to the uncompromising Christian challenge we stood for. But within days an iron curtain came down. Clearly the community leaders had checked with some national body, probably the Broederbond, and got a negative. Some of the Afrikaners in our team felt that a new organisation, dissociated from MRA, would provide a better chance to reach Afrikanerdom.

While Agnes and I were travelling overseas, we received a seemingly routine letter saying that some of our people were meeting to consider the future of our work. In fact, the aim of the meeting was to form a new organisation without the name of MRA. This was decided at the meeting, and we were faced with a fait accompli.

We had done a lot to help "Springbok Stampede" go forward. But suddenly, there was no place for us, who believed deeply in Moral Re-Armament. I lay awake at nights. I wrestled with the issue by day, and did not see which way to turn. We kept in touch with our African friends, who felt equally hurt by the development. But it seemed that what we had given our lives to build up had crumbled overnight.

One morning at 3.00 a.m. I was lying awake, so I put on my bath robe and went down to the sitting room to seek if there was anything God was trying to say to me. One thought came - that some of the young people in "Springbok Stampede" ought to get the chance to see MRA in its full world dimension.

But I could see no way this could be done. None the less, I mentioned the thought to Agnes next morning, and it chanced that she was having tea with a lady who was active with "Springbok Stampede". Agnes mentioned to her my nocturnal thought, and a few days later Agnes' friend came on the phone to say that several of the young people were ready to go to Caux to the world conference.

It turned out that this was a time of reorganisation for "Springbok Stampede". They felt that the musical show had done its work. So each of the cast had to decide what he or she was meant to do next in life. The upshot was that six of them went to the Caux conference, and then stayed on to work with MRA in Europe.

My relations with the leader of this youth move were none too happy at the outset. He had not favoured the young people going to work with MRA in Europe, and he had held this against me. I had come to realise how much my insensitivity to his difficulties had contributed to our division. He came from a conservative Afrikaner family; and had done valiant work seeking along with Africans new relationships for our country. His father had at first driven him out of the house as a traitor.

So I apologised to him for my insensitivity. Responding, he said, "I want you to know that there is now no barrier between us about our difficulties."
Ds George Daneel and Dr William Nkomo set to work, with Agnes and me, to rekindle the flame of Moral Re-Armament in South Africa. They were with us at the Caux conference, and one day, Dr Nkomo took the platform. He asked George Daneel and me to join him. We reaffirmed our commitment to work together for a new nationhood based not on what the whites wanted, nor what the blacks wanted, but what God in his wisdom wanted for all of us together.

Not long after, George Daneel had the conviction that we should hold a world assembly for Moral Re-Armament in South Africa. We secured the Burgers Park Hotel in Pretoria; and held one of the first major

conferences where black and white lived under the same roof for ten days. The opening session took place in the Great Hall of the University of South Africa.

Maoris from New Zealand, Jews and Arabs, French and Germans, British and Americans came to the gathering, drawn together by a common loyalty to the Father of all of us. As I watched and met the delegates, my mind went back to the time when we did not know which way to turn. And I knew in my heart that this is God's work and His pattern for the land I love.