

ANNIVERSARY OF LAUNCHING OF MORAL REARMAMENT MOVEMENT

Objective of World Changing through Life Changing

NEXT week the leader of the Moral Rearmament movement, Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman, will celebrate his 70th birthday, which is also the 10th anniversary of the launching of the programme of Moral Rearmament and the occasion will be honoured by a great multitude the world over who feel they owe to him, under God, their life.

Centre of the occasion will be Los Angeles, California, where the trustees of the Hollywood Bowl have made this well-known platform for American statesmen available for the occasion.

On Thursday statesmen from many lands will speak in this open-air amphitheatre. They have been invited by a group of 37 leading Senators and Representatives in the American Congress, including Senator Barkley, Democrat leader of the Senate, and Senator Bridges and Congressman Mundt, leaders of congressional committees that dealt with different aspects of the Marshall Plan.

In their invitation they state: "In our view the developing world situation puts an overriding priority on skill in ideological warfare. Economic aid is essential for world recovery, but without the force of a superior idea, economic aid or military force of themselves hold no solution."

On Friday Dr. Buchman will give a world broadcast from Los Angeles.

First Recognition

THE presence of a Moral Rearmament team in the Union at the moment makes it opportune to recall that South Africa was the first country to give recognition on a national scale to the message of Dr. Frank Buchman. In 1928 a team of seven Oxford men, including several Rhodes scholars, came to South Africa on what was mainly a reconnaissance and to that team the Press gave the name of "The Oxford Group," under which the summons to vital Christian living became familiar in very many parts of every continent.

Frank Buchman's vision is best expressed in his own words.

"The Oxford Group is a Christian revolution whose concern is vital Christianity. Its aim is a new social order under the dictatorship of the Spirit of God, making for human relations, unselfish co-operation, for cleaner business, for cleaner politics, for the elimination of political, industrial and racial antagonisms. World changing will come through life changing."

The years from 1930 to 1938 are full of the stories of life changing on a great scale in the various countries of the British Commonwealth, in Norway, Denmark, Switzerland and Sweden, till by the latter date the work of the Group had spread to more than 50 countries.

by
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NORWAY perhaps presents the most notable instance of dramatic and radical change, especially if the gulf which separated Church and people in that country, is borne in mind. The tide of new life swept into the channels of political, ecclesiastical and industrial activity, bringing a spirit of reconciliation and unity where till then faction and division had been rampant, with the familiar concomitant of subversive materialistic propaganda. There broke forth, too, a remarkable flowering of cultural life, finding expression in poetry, drama and fiction.

The day was not far when the reality of the spiritual re-birth of Norway would be tried as by fire under the Nazi occupation, with a triumphant vindication which led Bishop Fjellbu to speak of the coming of the Oxford Group to Norway as an "intervention of Providence in history like Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain." They helped to bridge the gap between religion and the people and made it real everyday. We have been fighting more than an armed enemy. We have been fighting Godless materialism. The Oxford Group gave us men who helped us to fight for a Christian ideology.

Campaign Launched

IN 1938 at a meeting in East Ham, London, Dr. Buchman launched the campaign for Moral Rearmament. None saw more clearly that the age-old methods of diplomatic negotiation could not solve man's dilemma. In face of the urgency of the world's need he laid emphasis on the national and super-national aspects of the Oxford Group message. To this end the labours of two decades had been directed—the preparation of a force of disciplined, whole-hearted crusaders who shared his vision of a new world and were ready to give all for its realisation, on the battlefield if necessary.

Nine years later, in 1947, there was held at Caux-sur-Montreux in Switzerland a world assembly for moral rearmament, the second of its kind, which was attended by 5,000 delegates from 52 nations. From the United States of America, Denmark, France, Germany, Austria, and Greece came responsible leaders of those countries seeking a way out of their grave perplexities. From China, India, Burma, Indonesia came men who found themselves called on to find a solution for the racial and political antagonisms which be-devil their newly-born freedom.

PERHAPS nothing that was said at that assembly is more significant of its spirit than the words spoken by M. Robert Tilge, employers' representative of 14,000 industrial concerns in Northern France:—

"I came to Caux to find the means of winning the battle which we in France seem to be losing—the battle for the future of our country and the salvation of the world. Two great forces divide our country. Everybody feels that the dominating force is the class struggle. Hatred grows from day to day.

"Since being at Caux, I realise that we employers have been as materialistic as the Communists. We have often opposed to Marxism a religion of which our own hearts were empty. If we are going to defend Christian civilisation we must have Christians to do it... Anti-Communism is a defensive attitude, and the man who only defends himself is always beaten. To win, we have got to move forward with constructive planning and new faith."

These words express, and reinforce, the spirit of a warning which Dr. Buchman utters again and again against the sin of inferior thinking, of which there is no more notable illustration than the attempt to fit a new patch on an old garment, whether of individual or of nation.

Renaissance

HENCE his impatience with inadequate, arm-chair Christianity in a day when the powers of revolutionary materialism strain to their goal with passion and subtlety. And so he will meet revolution with revolution—the miracle of lives changed by the illumination of the Spirit of God and quickened by the perfect freedom which is His control. Revolution and renaissance, these alone hold the promise of renewal for a crumbling civilisation, and the spaciousness of the vision demands a like variety of resource.

They use music, revues, story and plays which have already had a profound effect on the thinking and living of nations—in short whatever the creative spirit of a dedicated fellowship can bring to make palpable to the hungry hearts of men and women the true nature of their need and its cure.

In all this is to be seen the fruit of Frank Buchman's faithful obedience to the God-given vision. He was not dismayed by the call to set his single strength to the task of calling men to a new integration of life under the guidance of God. So now, when in every part of the world there are those who look to him as their leader, he will claim or admit no leadership other than that of the Power that changed his own life and set him to his world-wide crusade.