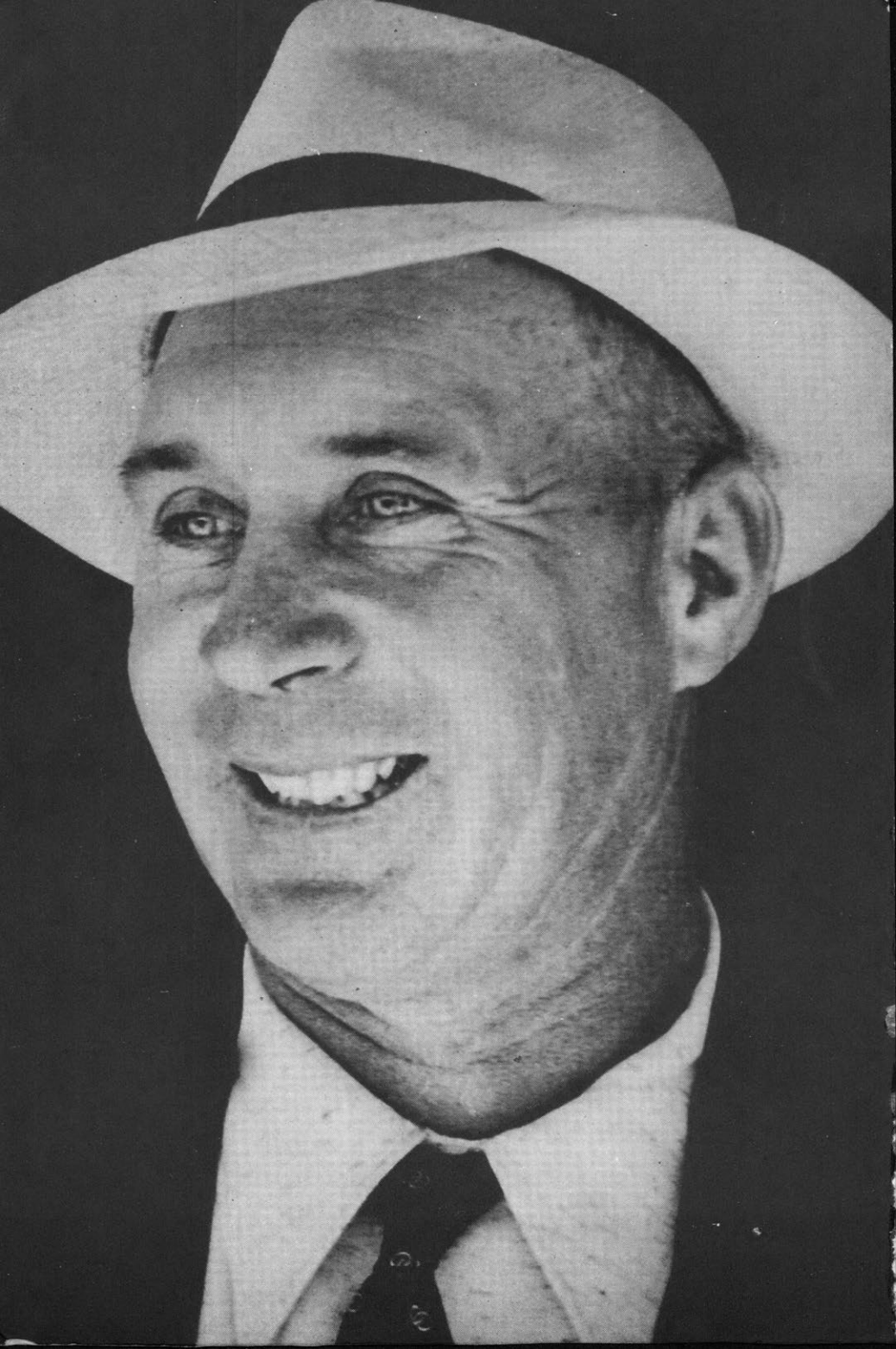


**ANCHORS
IN THE
KARROO**

**THE LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF ROLAND KINGWILL**

EDITED BY DAVID KINGWILL



Because of the urging of my daughter-in-law, Jeannette, I am sitting down to write some of my background at the end of my 90th year. To write a personal story covering a period in which such vast changes have taken place seems irrelevant. Yet, maybe some of my grandchildren could be interested. As I look back with the winter of 1990 coming to an end, I am amazed at the changes in almost every area - on land, on the oceans, and in the air.

Cart-and-horses (or ox-wagon) were the only means of transport in rural areas in those days. Any visits to "town" were planned for long in advance - and only undertaken when it was absolutely necessary. A whole day's trip, they needed at least 2 stops to give the horses feed, water, and a rest along the way. I had only traveled to Graaff-Reinet in this way once or twice before sent off to *Boarding School* in Port Elizabeth! To a small boy, traveling from town to the farm seemed endless - especially over the flat plains between mountain ranges. I can remember the horses trotting steadily with the regular 'knock, knock, knock' of the neck-bar on the shaft of the cart. I would shut my eyes for a long time. When I opened them, after what seemed an age, we were still going 'knock, knock', a long way from the mountains!

One day, in the year 1913, my father came belting down the last slope to the homestead at around 20 miles an hour - in a Ford car! Amongst the first "Internal Combustion" vehicles in the district, it was the first car in the mountains, and we all gathered around to view this beautiful new speedy machine! Later, bigger and faster motors and trucks made the Sneeuberg ever more accessible. After some years, tractors replaced the animal-drawn machinery. Our first tractor (one of the first to come into the country) was steam-driven.

Then in 1914 Great Britain declared war on Germany. The needs for transport and weapons encouraged new inventions. In 1939, the 2nd World War speeded up development of aeroplanes, missiles and ever more deadly bombs and weapon technology. The so-called "Cold War" which followed it, saw the development of rockets and spaceships. In July 1969, Neil Armstrong was the first man to walk on the Moon.

In the early 1900's we could never have dreamed of such things. Now the forces of destruction are immeasurable, the speed of travel is almost that of the speed of light! I look back from my office desk with great gratitude for having lived to see these marvellous developments.

I look ahead with some fear - but also with a great hope, that, with improved communication now possible, our moral and spiritual capabilities can be also developed to the same degree that our material resources have been. We would then use the marvellous inventions of the last 8 decades to preserve and improve our environment - and care for the needs of all the people.

September 1990

Roly Kingwill, over the past fifty years, has tackled some of the toughest issues facing a farmer in South Africa. He began with having to make a living from the rugged, inhospitable terrain of the Karroo, his land lying 6000 feet high in the Sneeuberg, freezing in Winter, baking hot in Summer; drought one moment, soil being washed away in thunderstorms the next!

But, more important, he has opened the way for new policies on many crucial questions: Soil Erosion; the relationship between white bosses and black workers and the quality of life for these workers; universal unemployment. What he began as individual initiatives in these spheres has become, in many cases, Government Policy.

What impelled him to these initiatives? More was needed than merely liberal goodwill, or even a vigorous Social Conscience. What held him firm in face of much opposition, discouragement, hardship and doubt? It all began in 1937...

Note by the *Compiler/Editor*: David M Kingwill

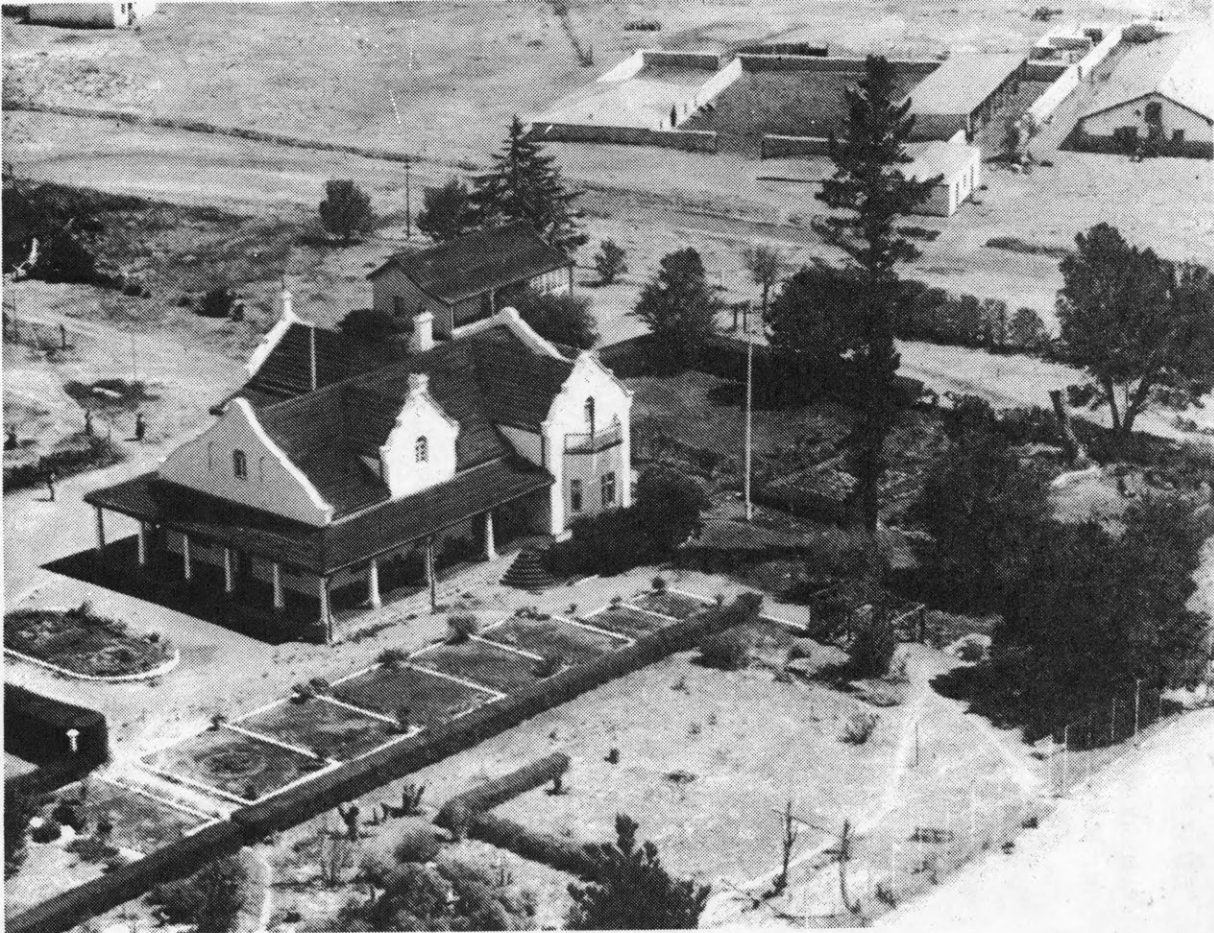
April 1997

I have tried to put some of Dad's writings together into a combined document. Most of the following is just as he wrote it. In some cases I have added certain points in the light of my own knowledge of the matter - or as I had heard it told through the years. This mostly takes the form of *Footnotes* here and there to make it more understandable to those of Dad's friends who do not know the words, events, or references made in the body of the work. Often I have made some editorial comment in those notes, as Dad has not always told the full part he has had to play in bringing Hope and Healing to this country and its peoples.

A reader may find a certain amount of overlapping or repeating of certain events or thoughts. This is unavoidable, as various *themes* are established, taking up the thread again at another stage. Such things are inevitably interlinked.

This is but a small part of his writings. The greater bulk lies in the articles, letters, News Leaders, books on spiritual matters, Family Histories, plays and poems he has written with a specific purpose through more than 60 years. Much of these, too, I have tried to put together into a document (as *Addenda*) that can be read and appreciated by those who come after. He died on September 7th, 1997, soon after *proof-reading* and correcting this work.

¹ Peter Hannon, from Northern Ireland knows Africa well and has written books and articles on his experiences. He spent 10 years in *Nigeria* where he knew many of the leadership including Sardauna of Sokoto & Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, the country's first President. He and his family also lived for 15 years in South Africa. He married Lady Fiona Graham, whose father, Lord Graham, once held the post of Minister of Agriculture in *Rhodesia*, now *Zimbabwe*.



The Homestead - 1946

WHERE WE ARE

To the casual visitor, these grass covered mountains, the long vista down the valley over the thickly grassed *vleis*¹ to the distant mountains would say little. But to me it speaks of many things. It speaks of the long road we have come, of the hard lessons learned, of failures, victories, struggle, vision, pain - and of unexpected and undeserved reward.

It speaks of my early days on this farm, watching my father as he developed the land, erected new sheds, outhouses, imported a herd of cattle, entertained family and friends. It speaks of those early days when cart and horses (or wagons²) were the only means of transport; of struggles when markets were distant and poor, of bad seasons and floods. I think of my parents and their steady courage and determination to master all obstacles in order to establish this farm and build a sound home.

Many who come from other parts of South Africa - or even from across the seas - are captured by the rough beauty of these mountains with their changing lights and strange shadows. This is the *Sneeuberg*³ range of the Karroo. Many ask "*What is the Karroo?*" Those of us who have grown up here have learned to love and to understand the Karroo. We know the rugged climate and the value of the sparse and hardy veldt⁴. We know the burning suns of Summer and the blasting winds and killing frosts of Winter. We have learned the anxiety of long droughts when we have had to watch thin sheep and weak cattle scruffing among the blackened bushes and withered grasses. We have sheltered from sudden storms with angry bolts of lightning and crashing thunder that can come up in the Summer, lighting raging fires in tinder-dry veldt - or bucketing down streams of pouring rain or hail. We have anxiously watched as snowdrifts piled higher and higher, covering fences and threatening lives of the stock. Unprepared travellers have died of exposure in these mountains.

This is the Karroo⁵. The very name, which means "*Place of Great Dryness*" is derived from the language of the Hottentots, who, with the Bushmen⁶, lived here occasionally before the White Man arrived. They had adapted to (and understood) the great droughts of this rough land. The Bushmen hunted by waylaying game at the widely separated permanent springs.

When the first "*trek-boere*"⁷ moved into these areas they found them to be a healthy climate for man and animal - but they got no welcome from the Bushmen, who lived

1 *Vlei* - essentially a Water Course - but many would have been *Wetlands* in the past

2 Pulled by up to 16 Mules or oxen

3 *Sneeuberg* - "*Snow Mountains*"

4 *Veldt* or *Veld* - prairie; open country; also used to denote grasses & shrubs grazed by animals

5 *Karroo* - Today it is spelled with only 1 R. I prefer the old spelling with 2 R's !

6 *Hottentots & Bushmen (Khoi-Khoi)* were in South Africa at the arrival of Europeans

7 *Trek-boere: "nomad-farmers"* were European Settlers who moved around with their flocks

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in some of the mountain caves. Of course there were inevitable clashes between settler and Bushman - and I was told of hunts that had been organised to rid the mountains of the "scourge" of Bushmen!

Slowly the Karroo was colonised. Sheep and goats did especially well. Today much of the best wool and almost all the Mohair is derived from the "Karoo Areas". It is grown on what, to the uninitiated, looks like barren earth. The Karroo extends Eastwards from the West Coast, across wide plains, over several mountain ranges, and cut up by many rivers - which seldom have any water in them! "Karoo" veldt is seen almost as East as Queenstown and as North as Steynsburg.

The veldt varies greatly in quality and type. It is a Botanist's paradise - and the many fossils under its surface have proved to be so for *Paleontologists* as well! But, though fascinating and rugged, within it, lies an abiding threat to the whole country. Since the beginning of the century, the Karroo has doubled in size - from 207 000 square kilometres to 400 000. It is said⁸ to be moving east at 1,8 km a year. If effective steps are not taken to stem the advance, desertification will threaten the most fertile and productive parts of the country as well.

In those early, post-school years I understood little more than that it was a good place to live and a very hard battle to keep things going effectively. I just did my job and entered into the life of the district. It was much later that I began to see that we, in these farming areas, had an important part to play in the destiny of our country.



⁸ Westaway lies west of Middelburg, ⁹ Gordonville to the southwest

⁸ John Acocks, Botanist who classified the Vegetation of SA wrote much on the subject

BORN TO PRIVILEGE

As I sit and revue some of the things that have happened over the last 90 years, I am aware of the fact that I have been greatly privileged. However, most of the things I have lived through seemed anything but *Privilege* at the time!

It was only in 1895 that the railway was extended up Lootsberg to Middelburg and Rosmead. No doubt this made that part of the Sneeu Berg more attractive from a farming point of view. In 1904 *Zuurfontein* and *Sewefontein*, belonging to the widow du Plessis came up for sale. My father was interested but he could not go to the sale as he was lying in hospital with a broken knee-cap (repaired by Dr Massey), so his father went to the sale, bought the properties. They had been farmed for some time as a unit and he named it *Gordonville* (he was an admirer of General *Chinese* Gordon, who was a practicing Christian).

My father's life was spared when returning from a trip with cart and horses from Graaff-Reinet via *Goliadskraal*, the farm belonging to the Brent family, where there were three young men and five young ladies. He was engaged at the time to the eldest girl, Norah. He was returning to the farm *Steilkrantz*, just north of New Bethesda, which he was hiring. At a sharp bend near the top of the steep hill, the horses took fright and the whole outfit fell over the edge of the almost sheer mountainside. Fortunately, Father fell on a rock which broke his fall. The horses were killed. The fall shattered his knee-cap. Someone came on the accident soon after it had happened and he was rescued and taken to the home of Mr Billy Hartzenberg where he was cared for until moved to hospital in Graaff-Reinet.

No doubt, as soon as he was able, he returned to the farm he had been hiring, packed the bits of furniture and farm implements he owned and arranged for a wagon with 10 oxen to take his load to the new farm, *Gordonville*. On arrival, the frustrated wagon driver expressed his feelings when he said to my father, "*Why buy a farm which a Baboon with walking-stick can barely reach!*" But Dad was a man of determination and courage, with the ability to work and plan. Here he was, in possibly the highest farm in the Sneeu Berg, with no fences, no telephone and a small house with 3 front rooms under a pitched roof, and 3 small rooms with a flat leaky roof. There was a passage between two of the front rooms. This became a much loved home when, in 1904, he brought his bride, Norah Brent, to share it with him.

I was born late (15th November) in 1905 in Graaff-Reinet. Dr David Massey was not only our doctor, but a friend of my father - a keen shot who loved the chance to shoot partridges⁹. I remember days when I followed him and Dad on shooting expeditions to *Zuurfontein*. It was much later than this that I had reason to be anxious about how he would react to a nervous query from me - but that belongs to another part of the story.

⁹ *Partridge: Grey-winged Francolin*, fast-flying game bird which makes good eating

No doubt my mother brought me by train as far as Blaauwater Siding¹⁰. From there a buggy and 2 horses driven by my father landed me on the farm of my early life. As I grew older, I remember playing down at the sheds, and a kind black *nanny* who later watched over my two sisters as well. Often we went to the *sloot*¹¹ and played in the mud or waded in the fountain water. One day as we arrived and looked down into the deep hollow, we saw a snake travelling fast up near the water. We shouted for help in fear of the snake and some men came running to deal with it. After that, it was not such a popular place to play!

The time came when my education had to be begin. The Brents were still on *Goliatskraal*, my uncle Lyn was running the farm and my grandmother and the two youngest daughters were in the home. I was taken by cart and horses, left in Granny's tender care, and told that I was to go to school with my two very youthful aunts. I cannot now remember anything much about that time except that I began to learn my *ABC* etc. I could not have been there very long - probably about a year. Plans were made for me to go to the farm *Coloniesplaats* where Dad's older brother Arthur lived with his family. His two younger sons were near my age and Mr Green was tutoring them. I was little more than a year there, when my two sisters, Enid and Joyce, were old enough to start school themselves and so we had a governess come to live on the farm. Thus my further education was on the farm for the next year or two.

We had various governesses on the farm. Some strict and able - others who liked their backs scratched (literally! a couple of them insisted on my sister actually sitting and doing that - sometimes during lessons!) and had little idea of the needs of a lonely farm boy. Time came when I needed to go to a "*proper school*". This meant "*Boarding School*" at some distant town. My father had studied under Mr W.A. Way at the Graaff-Reinet College and decided that I must study under him as well. However, Mr Way was now Rector of the Grey High Institute in Port Elizabeth.

This meant a steam train journey with my father all the way from Blaauwater Siding to Port Elizabeth. There he purchased the necessary uniform of jacket, stockings, grey trousers etc, including a strange and new straw "*boater*", which is still today the official headdress of this fine school. I remember the long gray stockings, ties (which I had seldom worn on the farm!), and the white loose-collared shirts (that needed studs to attach to the neck!). I also remember the emotions of fear of the unknown and feelings of inadequacy as we strolled on the pier before saying final goodbyes - and the horror as my boater was taken by a gust of wind to float in the oily waters of the harbour¹²....!

¹⁰ Meaning "*Blue Water*", today **Blouwater**, little railway siding 14 km from *Gordonville*

¹¹ *Sloot*: Afrikaans for deep gully or drywash

¹² Grandpa reportedly went back & bought 2 of them - just to be safe!

Living on the farm, 50 miles from town had meant that visits to Graaff-Reinet had been very few¹³. So, for a shy and raw boy to try and adjust to City Life and a dormitory with a lot of other boys was traumatic indeed! I had known only quiet mountains and the many children of the labourers. Even my own name, "Roland", seemed to be out of place here! The stern-looking class teacher asked us all our names, and when he came to me, I blurted out "*Piet!*" (a much safer-sounding name). As a result, this was the name by which I was known by school acquaintances and teachers throughout my school days!

Thanks to the inheritance of a good physical constitution, the discipline of my father, and the integrity of our Headmaster, Mr Way, I was eventually able to win a place in the First Rugby team, run for the School Athletics Team for 5 years¹⁴, win the Gymnastics Cup, and master my school work so as to finally pass out with a good record¹⁵ (not fully deserved). The Head wrote to my father, "*the boy has done well in every way.*"

Then on to the University of Cape Town for a year of great experience, much sport, and little serious study. I lived in College House, and remember walking down Adderley Street, with a lot of other men, following an ox-wagon which had the Prince of Wales¹⁶ on the front seat with Les Guthrie (I think) and a number of others dressed to look like well-known politicians. We all sang when the Prince laid the Corner-stone of the new University building.

Naturally, I joined the Rugby Club and played for the 3rd and 4th teams. It was a great honor being chosen to join the First team on a fortnight's tour to the Orange Free State. I played in only one match - but it was excellent experience! In those days, my stock answer to those who asked me what I studied at University was: "*Girls and Rugby...*" But I also did play a lot of Bridge!

I was soon satisfied that my future ability to farm would not be improved or guaranteed by a B.A. degree - even if I could pass the necessary examinations! I therefore did not return to the University after the first year, but stayed on the farm to learn by practice - under the strict supervision and eagle eye of my father. I found there was deep satisfaction in a good day of physical work, reaping wheat with a sickle in the field, building a fence, and even digging or cleaning a furrow with a spade. When sunset comes and it is time to stop work, even if muscles are aching, a heart is filled with countryside content. A countryside which is beautiful.

¹³ Bear in mind, when he went to P Elizabeth, RBK could only remember being in Graaff-Reinet twice before, as his farm school (*Goliadskraal*) was north of the town.

¹⁴ Played for the 1st Rugby team 3 years, obtaining both "*Colours*" and a rare "*Honours Cap*"; Athletics (EP champion Hurdler); 1920 to 1924 he was only beaten in the 100 & 220 sprint by school mate, W B Legg, S A Champion, & Olympic Athlete whose National record for *100 Yard Dash* was equalled but never broken.

¹⁵ RBK does not tell us he was also Prefect, honour only given to a few leading boys each year

¹⁶ Edward, Prince of Wales: Later became King of England, abdicating 10th December 1936, to marry Mrs Simpson, American divorcee

AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

Now back from University, I began to settle down and take on the jobs around the farm. To my surprise my father came home from town one day and said: "*Would you like to be delegate from the Swartruggens Farmers Association¹ on the S.A. Farmers' Tour which is going Overseas?*" It was a wonderful opportunity and I was glad to accept. I began collecting the necessary clothes and ordered a new suit from the tailor!

It proved to be a wonderful experience and a privilege. Farmers from all over the country had been selected for the tour. On my return I wrote a long report² for our Association with some detail. "*On the 13th June 1927, the South African Farmers woke to find the 'Balmoral Castle' firmly moored at Southhampton... we were welcomed to England by the Mayor of Southhampton, Sir Peter Bam and others...*" In those days we were still part of the Commonwealth and seen - and treated - as honoured guests!

We disembarked and caught the Express to London and then by *charabanc*³ to the Imperial Hotel. At 2 p.m., a fleet of Crossley cars lined up in front of the hotel to convey us to St. James' Palace, where we had the honour of being presented to the Prince of Wales. That evening we had dinner at the Mayfair Hotel. Among the guests present were Lord Buxton, Mr Amery, M. P., and Mr and Mrs Smit (the South African High Commissioner at the time).

The following day at 4 p.m., nineteen of us (volunteers only) left by passenger plane for Paris, doing the journey in 2 1/2 hours! A wonderful experience for a farm lad (perhaps the very first Graaff-Reinet citizen to fly from London to Paris?). We had some days in Paris and around France, visiting the famous *Rambouillet Merino Stud*⁴. We visited several French farms and wool factories. I remember walking up the drive of the Palace of Versailles and admiring the view of the gardens and avenues of trees from its steps. We were shown some of the Night Life of Paris (including the exotic *Folies Bergere*).

From Paris we went to Holland to see many Friesland Cattle Studs and were welcomed on some of the farms. Then on to Germany (Bremen, Magdeburg, Hamburg) before going across to Denmark, where we visited the Copenhagen Agricultural school, as well as farms and co-operatives. Everywhere we were given a warm welcome and marvellous care.

¹ One of the first Farmers' Associations, *Swartruggens*, the Association of the Graaff-Reinet farmers, where Pannell took a leading rôle

² The report was published as the official account of this group of farmers.

³ *Charabanc*: A large bus used for sight-seeing

⁴ *Rambouillet Stud* furnished some of early Merino blood for South African sheep improvement schemes

We returned to London by boat and were accommodated in the Cecil Hotel. At 11 a.m. we were each presented to His Majesty, King George V, Queen Mary and Princess Alice.

After tea at the Palace, we were taken to the Mansion House where and received by the Lord Mayor and Mayoress of London, then driven to the Guildhall⁵ and entertained to lunch in the famous cellar. Here we were welcomed by the Lord Mayor and leading members of the Corporation. Another memorable visit was to Windsor Castle and the Royal Farms. Indeed, we were much honoured.

After the days in London, we divided into 4 parties of about 20 men, each visiting different parts of England and Scotland. Our party first travelled South-East - by Devonshire and Somerset to Cornwall. At the farm of Mr Putnam, Farringdon, we inspected his Friesland herd which we found included 2 animals which had been imported from A.A. Kingwill⁶, *Coloniesplaats*! In Somerset we stopped at farms and towns including Yeoville and Taunton, but I did not realise in those days that this was the area in which my grandfather was born, before the family emigrated to South Africa in 1848!

We then travelled North, viewing wool mills in Bradford, the great Livestock Show at Darlington, and York Minister - to mention a few high points. We ended this part at the Hydro Hotel, Windermere. Next day we moved to Scotland for 2 days at the Highland Show and were treated to a lunch by the National Farmers' Union and dinner by the Highland Agricultural Society. We saw many farms in Scotland - herds of cattle, studs of Clydesdale Horses (even a Shetland Pony stud).

Officially the tour ended on 1st August, with an official lunch given by the Union Castle Lines on the *Edinburgh Castle* (on which many of us travelled back home)

⁵ Meeting hall of the Corporation of the City of London

⁶ A A Kingwill, leading Friesland breeder in Graaff-Reinet, & elder brother of Pannell Kingwill (RBK's father) farmed *Coloniesplaats* where RBK had been to school for a while

A SPECIAL MEETING

There must have been a kind of magic in the air the night we went to the New Year Dance at *Roodebloem*¹ in 1927. Though I was hardly an experienced driver, I took Marie Trollip and my two sisters² from home to the dance in my Dad's old *Buick*. Tall and handsome Tim Murray was our host and this was the first time for him to meet Marie. Later they were married and lived happily on *Roodebloem* for many years³!

The dance progressed merrily. In those days one asked to dance with a different partner each dance, and then sat on the *stoep* (patio), smoked and sipped drinks, or walked about the garden. Suddenly I found myself walking up and down the gravel paths with a girl I did not know very well at all, quoting poetry and discussing favourite authors. I know not if it was Keats or Tennyson that lit the spark - but I suddenly knew (I think we both knew!) that a little flame had begun to burn that could not ever be quenched. I realised that here was a girl I would like to have with me always.

The friendship between Moira Massey and myself deepened. But it was not all smooth going. I was at the beginning of my farming career, with hardly any experience and even less Capital! She was determined to train as a nurse before thinking of marriage. Many crosswinds and dusty whirlwinds were to sweep through the Karroo (and my life) before a clear decision was made.

But there were good signs too - as welcome as soft rains during a drought. There was the time when I had to go to see Doctor about a poisoned thumb. He took a serious view of it and ordered me to stay in town for some days. An infected hand, luckily, did not keep me from enjoying the company of the good Doctor's daughter - even taking her to the "*Bioscope*" (an innovation in those days, the "*Gem Bioscope*" was the original Town Hall, and very close to Dr Massey's home. It was later demolished and a garage⁴ built where it stood.)

Our friendship deepened and the sense that we were meant to marry grew. But she remained determined to train as a nurse - a four-year course, in Johannesburg, with very little pay, and only 4 weeks vacation a year. It was a gloomy prospect for me. My strong objections had no effect on her determination and ideals. So one day I took the truck to *Blaauwater Siding* to say good-bye and watch the slow train puff its way up the long, steep curve of the Lootsberg Pass, carrying my loved one to distant Johannesburg. *Blaauwater Siding* seemed truly blue that day!

1 *Roodebloem*: Farm of the Murray family, a few miles north of town

2 Enid, 20 years, and Joyce 18

3 Until his death in 1993

4 "*Drostly Motors*", Caledon Street, Graaff-Reinet

Letters from the Johannesburg General Hospital came fairly regularly. Some were cheerful; many told of the terrific re-adjustment, the hard work and the sad and ailing people who had to be cared for. Then one would come which seemed to shine with a special lustre. It seemed to me that the time had come to take the next step. This entailed another visit to Doctor Massey's surgery - but not to talk about a sore thumb!

Dr Massey⁵ was a popular sportsman, a great outgoing personality and a skilled doctor. So it was with some trepidation that I, shy young fellow that I was, to say that it was not **my** hand but his daughter's in which I was interested! Permission to marry was immediate, warm, and encouraging - a memory I always have treasured. His wife, Helena, whom we were later to call *Ouma*, was just as warm.

The next step was to get 10 days' leave from my Dad, with whom I was still serving an apprenticeship on the farm, in order to visit Johannesburg. He knew what was afoot and helped me. Soon that same train was carrying me up the Lootsberg and on to the Big City! It was quite a frightening experience to find myself in such a huge and bustling place, in the hotel where I knew not a soul. But I was on hand for every hour of "*off time*" from the hospital duties - and we had one whole, wonderful day on the *Vaal River*, boating!

Time slipped by and the long return journey came only too soon. I went home with a promise: "*Yes. But I must finish my training first.*" I knew it was not her inclination but a deep sense of conviction, to do what was right. So I was happy to honour that and return to the farm and steadily get on with my work. But there was a difference: we were privately engaged. I needed to think ahead, to become independent, to find a home of my own. We continued to write many letters - some replies came filled with joy, but many still came telling of aching muscles, tired feet, and vast amounts of hard work.

Suddenly there was an unexpected turn of events. Dr Massey became seriously ill. Because her sisters were in England, Moira had to be recalled urgently to come and help the family. It was not easy to get leave from the Hospital, but eventually she arrived to be with her mother in the crisis. After careful nursing, her father recovered enough to travel to Cape Town, and there underwent surgery. It was several weeks before he could get back to his work.

Now, I argued, it was better to set up home on the farm than contemplate going back to Hospital for training. Duty pulled one way, inclination another. But eventually she decided to stay on in Graaff-Reinet.

Dad and I had been looking at some farms with a view to buying. Now it became urgent to make a decision and get a farm where I could begin to build for the future. Eventually we went to see a big farm on the Middelburg / Richmond boundary:

⁵ Railway Doctor, President of the *Mens' Club*, & Chairman of *Midlands Board of Executors*.

After some hesitation, a lot of calculation, and negotiation with lending-houses and Banks, I bought *Westaway*.

I had to take a full bond on the farm and borrow extra Capital to buy sheep and equipment. Uncle Gray⁶ decided to join me in a formal partnership, which made things easier. There followed many plans, visits to other farms to make purchases of sheep, and arrangements for the droving of the sheep to *Westaway*.

Came the day of 1st April 1929 when I loaded a few possessions onto a mule-wagon at *Gordonville* (a plough, harrow, some pieces of furniture, bags of meal and maize meal) and sent the wagon off to the new home. I had recently acquired a slightly used "*Oakland*" car and set off behind the wagon.

I had hired some men to help offload the goods and a couple of maids to clean up the house, I set up my first home, alone. It was strange, exciting, and a little frightening to go to bed in this lonely, strange house, with only a few flickering candles for light. Tired from the hard work and the anxieties of the day, I was soon asleep - only to be awoken at 4 a.m. in the dark by the most blood-curdling screams!

They rose from a low note to a high crescendo and then seemed to unsteadily go lower and lower - and then start over again! With wildly beating heart and deeply troubled, I sat up in the dark and listened. Gradually the screams faded and then the early-morning silence of the Karroo took over again. In the morning my men informed me that it was the call of the "*Draai Jakkals*"⁷. It catches mostly small animals and reptiles - but has been accused of catching the occasional new-born lamb.

It was certainly a dramatic welcome to my new home.....

⁶ Graham Kingwill, Pannell's younger brother, who farmed on "*Reques*" north of *Gordonville*.
Abrilliant scholar he had topped the Cape Province Matric Results in his year.

⁷ *Draai Jakkals* (*Turning Jackal*) or *Cape Fox*, gets its name from the way it flings its tail in flight, doubling back on its tracks & so losing pursuers.

FINDING MY FEET ON NEW GROUND

Gordonville, where I had had all my farming experience, is a mountainous area, fairly well grassed, with natural springs of water. *Westaway* was a totally different proposition. It had not a single mountain, and the flat, wide plains were covered with many different Karroo shrubs, with but a little grass in between here and there. All stock water had to come from boreholes with windmills.

In those first days I had to explore the farm from the back of a horse. This was a very pleasant way of doing things, but I soon realised that much work and development lay ahead of me. The 7000 morgen⁸ were divided into 5 camps or paddocks. Most of them well over 1000 morgen. Though I had but hazy ideas on Soil Conservation at the time, I realised this was no way to farm. My Dad and Uncle Gray came to give their advice from time to time - which was a great encouragement.

Gradually, the stock began to settle down: sheep and cattle from *Gordonville*, some riding horses. I began to find my way around the place and soon even my Bachelor Establishment was quite a going concern. A faithful African maid cooked porridge for breakfast; meat and veg or two for lunch; egg and bread for supper. She knew more about such things than I did and I lived in tolerable comfort. I was keen to build up home and farm, busy and not too lonely. At night there was bookkeeping to do and reading to catch up. In those days, there was no radio or telephone - and all transport slow. Mail had to be fetched at "*The Willows*", a farm 7 miles (and many gates!) away - and that only came once a week! But *Mail Day* was the high point of each week: Moira's letters were of supreme importance.

News was slow and scarce - but in 1929 the news that DID come through was very bad! The slump that had followed the *Great Wall Street Crash* began to effect us farmers. Wool had been selling comparatively well. Now prices were falling rapidly. My first wool-clip was lying in the Brokers' Stores in Port Elizabeth and I waited anxiously for news of the sale. One December evening the mail came in. The Account Sales from "*James Lamb & Co*", Wool Brokers had arrived. I eagerly tore it open to see how the wool had sold.

As I read it, tears rolled down my cheeks. Huge debts had been incurred in buying land, purchasing stock, making improvements to the house - and here was the wool cheque, completely inadequate! It would not even pay the interest on the debts! It had sold for less than I had paid for it on the sheeps' backs, six months ago! Here I was, on the brink of marriage, and the whole year's work, enthusiasm and planning was ending in a grievous loss!

⁸ Morgen: 2,1 Acre or 0,84 Hectare

However, a new round of loans, and credit guaranteed by my Dad, helped to bridge the gap and plans went forward. I gave my few workers detailed instructions for the next fortnight, washed my motor-car, and set off for Graaff-Reinet.

There was a farewell party with bachelor friends at the Hotel that night - and then to a restless sleep. Saturday, 21st December, dawned bright and sunny. Much about that day remains blurred in my memory. I do remember sitting nervously early in the front pew of St. James' Church. I also remember a beautiful and radiant bride.

We went through the ceremony successfully and I said "*I will*" in the right places, and then went on to a happy reception on Granny Wille's⁹ lawn at 4 Muller Street. Two Grandmothers and one Great-Grandmother were there to join in drinking our health, to enjoy the warm-hearted reception and throw (that terrible stuff) confetti! We struggled through showers of confetti to the car, and then away to the open road. Confetti was in every crack and crevice, in our hair, down our necks (since then, I have never been able to throw confetti with any joy or conviction!).

Several young men, in an assortment of vehicles, followed close behind us in the dust for several miles. (I suspect that they could not believe that I had managed to get away safely with her!). It was good to be on the open road, travelling South, with a new life before us - but we felt very self-conscious and decided to call in at the little Hotel at *Kruitfontein*¹⁰ (as it was then). Here we did our best to get rid of the tell-tale multi-coloured paper. We felt better, but I suppose all could recognise this newly-wed country couple, very much in love, as being on their "*honeymoon*"!

There followed many wonderful days at East London - and some bad sunburn! After a week we returned to Graaff-Reinet. Here we were welcomed by the family. We then hired a big lorry, packed up all our wedding presents, some furniture, supplies of groceries and other farm needs, and then set off for Home. For *Westaway*, the place which would always hold a special place in our hearts.

Even though we knew we would have to practice the utmost thrift while living far away from our old friends, with poor lines of communication and dusty roads, we were happy, eager to work our new life together.

⁹ Moira's Granny (nee' Baumann), Widow of Karl Wille, mother of Mrs David Massey

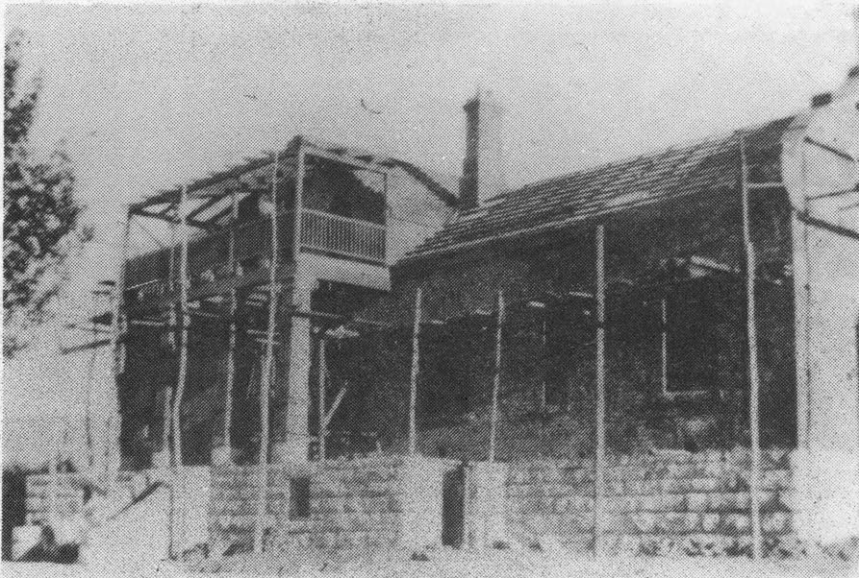
¹⁰ *Kruitfontein*: 14 km south of Graaff-Reinet, used to be a hotel, offering Sulphur water baths is now just a ruin



*RBK, mother
Norah, Pannell
with Con, Enid,
Joyce, Keith in
1923 on
building site.*

*Pannell & Norah
in the Gordonville
garden - 1930*





1923 - Building of the Gordonville House



Gordonville - 1947

WESTAWAY - OUR HOME

The name "*Westaway*" has an appealing - almost romantic sense. The house stands high on a rocky outcrop at the centre of the vast flatland. From the terrace, you can see for many miles as the horizon reaches to distant blue hills. It had been built on the usual Eastern Province fashion: 3 front rooms under a steep-sloping roof (which leaked!), and a big addition with a loft on the south side. Tradition has it that this had been a sort of hotel section used by travelers when the wagons passed on their way north to the Diamond Fields¹.

In front, a stone-flagged stoep led to a small enclosed, high-walled garden. Earth had been ridden in to a depth of 5 feet. Below this, there was 100 yards of bare gravel stretching to a small dam, filled by an excellent artesian borehole. Beyond the dam, were some poplars and a few cultivated lands. The 7000 morgen of scrubby veldt, covered with many small bushes, did not look very promising - but the place had a good name as a sheep farm. So with a lovely view from the front door, a big piece of land, massive debts and high hopes, we began our new life together.

Westaway had distinct advantages from a management point of view. I could inspect almost every square yard of the farm from the back of a horse. The place had only been used as an outpost by the previous owner for many years, so there had been little development. It certainly was a challenge which we accepted with the enthusiasm of youth - and quite some ignorance of the battles which would lie ahead!

We found later that there was more history to the place than we had realised. The *Westaway* homestead stood on a section of the farm registered as "*Zaayfontein*" (written also as *Zaifontein*). Originally it had been 7700 morgen in extent and was bought by Mr William Southey for 337 Pounds in 1846. As the farm was so far from town, undeveloped and dangerous, Southey sold it again in 1862 for 1000 Pounds (R2000).

Earlier, Sparman² had written, "*Because this area has so much game - springbok, hartebeest, eland - the early hunters found Bushmen here in great numbers.*" In fact, this area from *Cephanespoort*, past *The Willows*, to *Paardevelei* and *Bokfontein*³ was known as a Bushman area and described by Lichtenstein and Barrow⁴ as "*Little Bushmanland*". Between 1770 and 1800 the plundering of the Bushmen made it impossible for farmers to live on these farms.

¹ Diamonds were discovered in the 1860's in the Kimberley area, & wagons passed this way from Port Elizabeth northwards some of them may well have gone through *Gordonville* too

² Sparman: author of early book on travels in this part of the world

³ Farm names - many have now changed

⁴ Writers of early books on the Cape

In the 1930's, when we were scooping ground for the making of a dam near the bottom fountain, we found hundreds of Bushmen Artifacts - arrowheads, grinding stones, and other stone tools. Because of the spring this must have been a favourite hideaway as the little men waited for the game to come to water. While waiting, it would appear that they spent their time chipping new tools.

Commando expeditions killed or drove the Bushmen out of the area and farmers began to settle the farms. Carel Krieger was one pioneer who lived on *Westaway* (as *Zaaifontein*). Sparman writes, further "*Carel Krieger was a fearless man and an excellent marksman. He often ventured into the most dangerous situations. One day, 7 miles from Driekoppen, in the direction of Zaaifontein, having with his party P Aucamp, Burgers, van Jaarsveld, and Pienaar, pursued an elephant which had been wounded. The irritated animal suddenly turned round and singled out from the rest the person by whom he had been wounded, seized him with his trunk and lifting his wretched victim high in the air, dashed him to the ground. His companions, struck with horror, fled the scene, unable to do anything. On the following day, they returned where they collected the few bones that could be found and buried him near the spring. Such is the sad story of Carel Krieger, once the fearless pioneer of the Seacow⁵ flats.*"

Years later Barrow was to write of *Zaaifontein*: "*Scarcely were we under roof, before there fell as violent and heavy a storm of rain and hail as I have ever witnessed. The master himself was absent on Commando - but his wife and children received us with the most willing hospitality. After leaving this camp we travelled along the Seekoei river over a plain nearly 9 miles past Zaaifontein of Coetsee, Klein Cephaneespoort of Aucamp, and nearly surrounded by mountains, we had a sight... pleasing to us all: that of the tracks of wagons (sic), some of the Voortrekkers on their way north to the Orange River Colony all along the river.*"

However, conditions in the early 1800's were not our immediate concern. We had to get our home and farm going. We had been given and had bought a few good articles of furniture - but by no means was the house furnished. We used paraffin boxes⁶ and ceiling boards and manufactured a "side-board", some dressing tables and shelves. We thought it just wonderful. My woodwork master at Grey may well have been critical about the end result - but his lessons had been well learnt!

On the lands below the dam there was grassy lucerne to cut and the old horse-drawn mower could not rally cope with it. One "asset" we got with the farm was a flock of turkeys. They spent their time in the lucerne lands, eating insects - but trampling down the lucerne so that the mower could not deal with it.

⁵ *Seacow*: "Seekoei", Afrikaans for *Hippopotamus*. The area north of the Sneeuberg is drained by this tributary to the Orange River

⁶ 4 gallon tins of paraffin came in a neat wooden box. Some of the pieces RBK made then are still in use today on *Gordonville*

There were lands to plow, irrigation furrows to clean right up to the artesian borehole at the bottom of a wide, rough *donga*⁷. This fountain supplied us with 3000 gallons of water per hour - a valuable asset in the dry Karroo.

In spite of *The Depression* and little rain, work went ahead with enthusiasm. We had to borrow the money, but improvements to the land were imperative. We made the most important embankments to stop dongas - especially to turn run-off water away from the artesian well. The camps, which were all too big, had to have division fences erected so that some farming system could be applied to slow down erosion.

Rigid economy was essential. We spent a minimum on personal expenses. In 1933 total "*living costs*" were 110 Pounds out of which 47 went to travel and car repairs, 8 on Groceries and 20 on Clothing. By 1937 annual living costs had risen to 212 Pounds - Groceries rising to 17 and clothing to 31! I wrote in my books: "*costs are definitely rising due to 3 main reasons: 1. Lack of rigid economy 2. Rise in the cost of food and, 3. Increase in the number in the family.*"

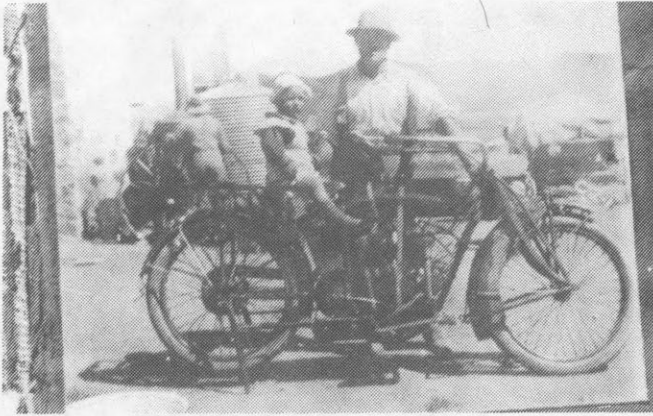
Babies arrived and were welcomed and loved. Janet, born in the old Massey home in Caledon Street; Clare at Nurse Crawford's Nursing Home, during a bitterly cold night; David by *Caesarian Section* in Graaff-Reinet, by expert surgery. Moira's father, Dr Massey, was delighted and proud when our first child, Janet, was born. He often held her and took great interest in her development. He was also very interested in the farm and often gave good advice (gleaned from contacts with the farmers of the district) and practical help in our early struggling days.

But Janet was the only one of our four children he could enjoy. He was once more struck down by the ulcers which had plagued him for so many years and had to go to Port Elizabeth for a serious operation. Moira and I went to be with her mother in Port Elizabeth. After the operation he began to rally - and then took a bad turn from which he did not recover.

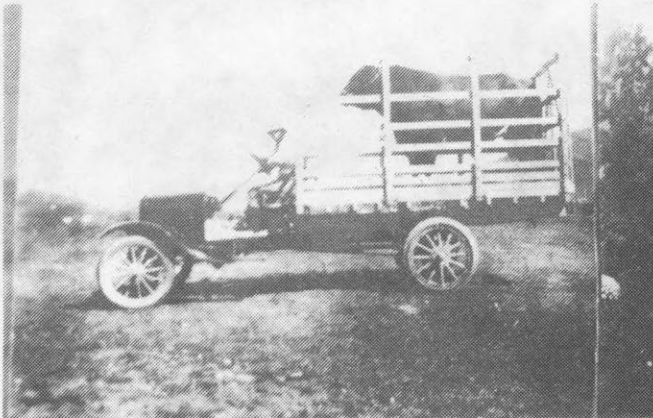
A friend of his⁸ wrote in his diary at that time: "*At 5 p.m. in the Church of England Cemetery we laid to rest our beloved friend, doctor and advisor. For 32 years, practically his whole medical career, he practised in Graaff-Reinet. No doctor ever had patients (and there were many) whose love was more intense. And well he deserved it. Can I recall, without deepest emotion, the many times of anxiety in our own little family circle? On 31st May, 1909, myself shattered in the hunting field, with my features broken and unrecognisable, day and night he watched over and repaired me, and for what?*"

⁷ **Donga** or **Sloot**: Dry-wash or deep gully - though *Donga* usually denotes more dramatic ones

⁸ Sidney Rubidge (World-famous for his collection of fossils found in the area) farmed at *Welwood*, 30 km North of Graaff-Reinet, with one of the oldest & best Merino Studs in the country - is still farmed by his grandson Robert in 1997



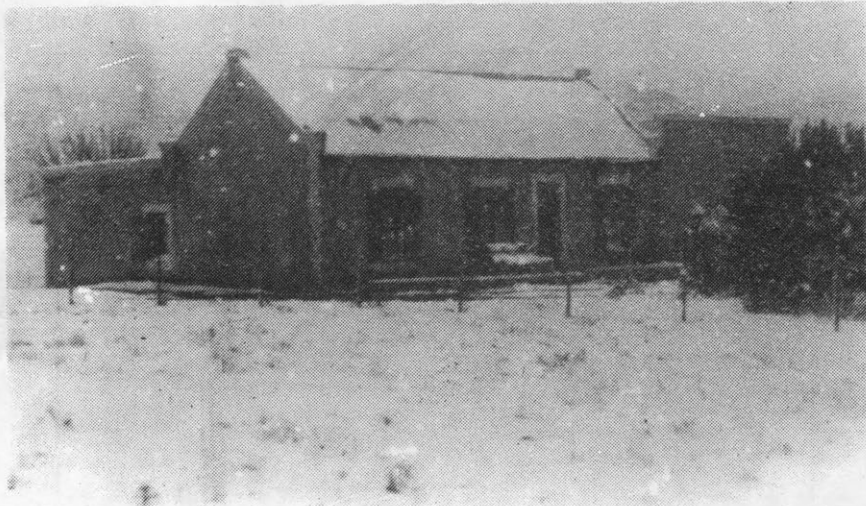
Pannell with RBK on CAZ 1, the first motorbike in the Sneeuberg, 1910.



The first motortruck on Gordonville - 1915



***Gordonville 1904
Pannell with two brothers,
his wife, two sisters.***



***Gordonville in a 1920
Snowstorm.***

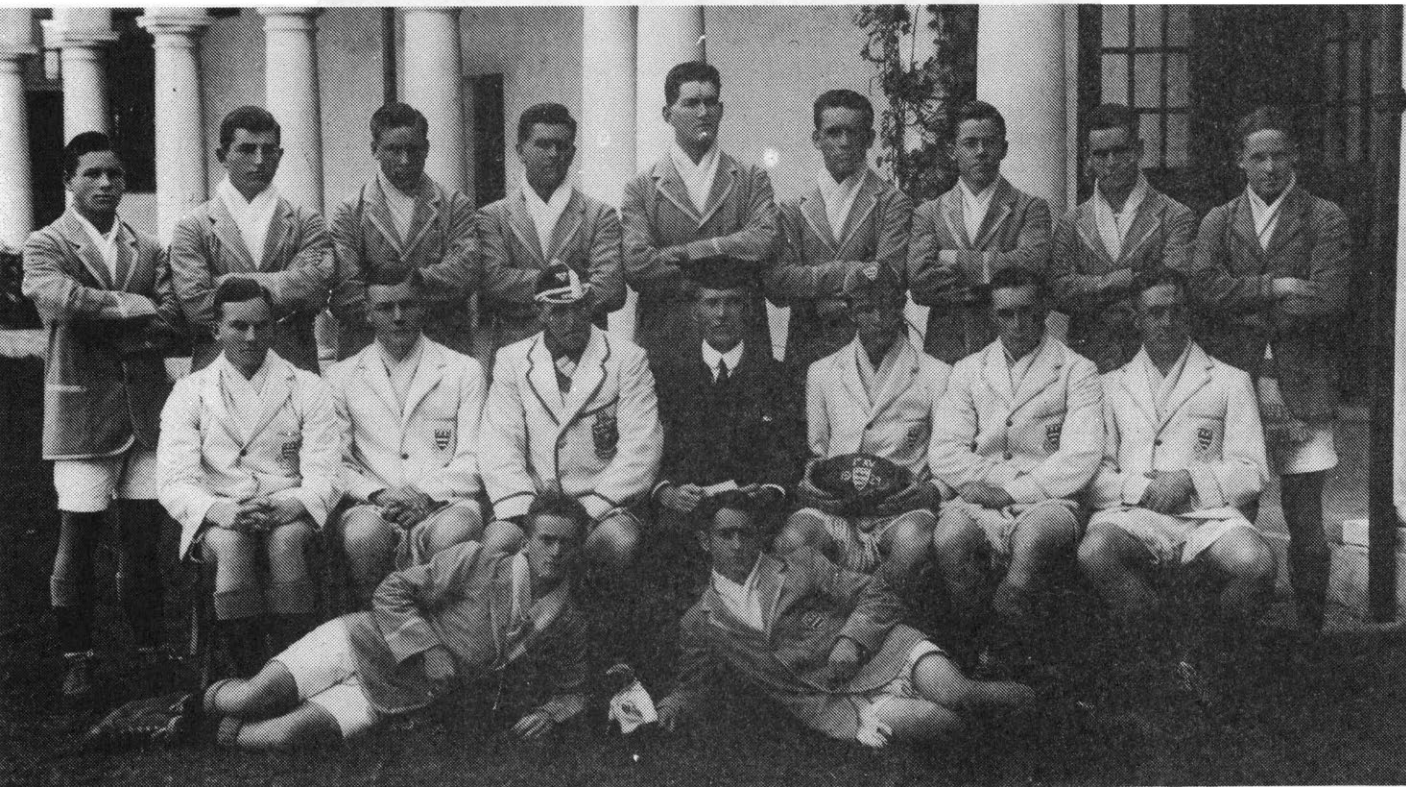
Grey Athletic Team.

Winners E.P. Schools and Colleges Championships, 1924.



R. TORR. C. HALLIER. H. KOCH. L. HARRIS. J. G. HALL.
B. PARKES. W. B. LEGG. THE RECTOR. MR. H. P. STROEBEL. R. KINGWILL.

The Grey XV. 1924.



R. Torr, H. Vichings, R. Mugglestone, L. Pfaff, R. Miller, W. Schulte, K. Whyte, W. Legg, S. Porter.
J. Wardlaw, H. Wardrop, Mr. Gamble, The Rector, J. Wright (Capt.), R. Kingwill, I. Murray.
E. Halsø

"Not for money - for he would have none of it! It was a true kind heart encased in a soul overflowing with kindness and humanity. This refusal to take a fellow being's money was typical of him.

"He lived a life of heroism, for he was ever regardless of his own life in his dangerously speedy rushes to save others. Let us go on remembering the extreme illness in our own family. Not his medicine or skill, so much, did save the valued lives, but the faith and inspiration. It was a true kind heart who loved the restoration of their lives far more than all the gold on earth. As Chairman of the Midland Trust Company, it was this same faith in his Humaneness and Honesty that saved us from the crisis in the recent depression⁹. How sad that, just at the dawn of his great victory, he should be taken. Yet, what a glorious memory." Honoured and loved by the whole community, this great man was buried in Graaff-Reinet in 1934. Sixty years on, he is still remembered with affection by younger patients and friends.

Back on the farm, strict frugality was still essential. The Government had come to the farmers' aid and not only declared a *Moratorium* (on Banks calling up bonds) but helped by giving a subsidy on interest on mortgage bonds. This undoubtedly saved us (and many others) from bankruptcy. We had to sell our fat old ewes for 4/6 (Four Shillings and Sixpence - 90 cents¹⁰), and the best wool sold at about 4 1/2 pence a pound (10c/Kg in today's terms) and young oxen at 12/6 (R1,25). So it is not surprising that I scanned end-of-year accounts with anxiety and feared rising costs with increase of family!

After 1933 wool prices began to improve and there seemed to be hope that we could make a decent living again. But it remained droughty and by 1937, drought was killing livestock. The value of sheep was too low to buy extra feed to keep them alive. Each day the mule wagon brought the weak sheep from the dry veldt to the small lucerne lands. Two or three times a week, the wagon had to take the dead ones to a growing pile on a little ridge, a mile from the homestead (to prevent the stench from pervading our living quarters). This place of piled skeletons was a sad reminder for many years afterwards - and I gave it a wide berth when riding to inspect the veldt!

⁹ Dr Massey, as Chairman of the **Midland Trust**, which held bonds over many of the major farms, decreed that no mortgages were to be *called in*, despite the seriousness of the situation. This saved many farmers, long before the State stepped in to help

¹⁰ In 1996 equivalent sheep would sell at R250 to R300, wool R12 to R25 Kg, & oxen at R1200 to R1600!

SEARCHING - BEYOND THE PRACTICAL

In spite of farm and financial problems, life had settled into a pleasant and reasonably happy pattern. Steady work on the farm during the week, helping with the growing family, and tennis or some party most weekends. In many ways idyllic. But it was not always a smooth road - there were many sharp bumps from time to time. There were times we argued; argued with great heat sometimes! And there were disagreements. True, there was reconciliation after an hour, or a day. The hurt was there, early ideals began to blur. We both had a sense that something in our lives was missing.

In the quiet country, even though communication was slow and difficult, we did look beyond our farm boundaries too. We had a growing family. I began to wonder what sort of world they would inherit. I felt there was a serious problem - building. Clearly, the division between English and Afrikaans speaking was increasing; the rift between Black and White was widening; soil erosion was threatening the countryside. Across the seas, Mussolini (in Italy) and Hitler (in Germany) had come to office and their power was growing daily; Stalin was established in Moscow and the theories of Marx were gaining many followers.

Busy and happy days on the farm still left a void. Clearly they could not bring an answer to the National and World problems which worried me - and even beyond that, I did not feel that this was an adequate purpose. Youthful ideals began to blur, and direction and clarity were lacking. Unknowingly, we began searching for a meaning to life.

We began reading various books, including some with Marxist leanings. I remembered that I had joined the Church as a senior at school, but since my University days had had only occasional touches with the Church. On occasions a Minister came to our area and held a service on one of the farms. We decided to invite him to lunch. I took him for a walk and plied him with questions. His answers to (probably badly phrased) questions gave me neither enlightenment nor hope.

One day, Moira went to Graaff-Reinet with the children for a few days. On her return she said, "*I have met someone that I never want to lose!*" At a tea-party she had met and befriended Betty Philips and invited her to the farm.

Within a fortnight she came - it was the Easter Weekend; Betty and her husband, Peter, the Pitmans, and Rubidges of *Zoetvlei*¹¹ all came over for the day. We talked of many things and found much in common. Peter and Betty Philips told us of their experiences and those of their friends - and we were fascinated.

¹¹ Charles and Stella Rubidge (relations of the *Welwood* clan) farmed at *Zoetvlei*, in the Richmond district, (about 45 km from *Westaway*) the families were destined to become close friends through the next 60 years

I saw in them a freedom and purpose which I coveted. I had always been shy, felt inferior and unable to express myself. But above all, they had a peace and a sense of purpose which I knew I needed.

They, too, had been divided and now found a unity, they said, and a new caring for each other. They told us how they had found a new life when they had met and become a part of the "*Oxford Group*"¹². One could see it as they talked. They went on to tell of many others who had found a new direction - not only in this country, but in many nations. They spoke of friends in all parts of the world, who had caught a vision of a new world, built on a basis of caring for people. This appealed to us for we had long been convinced that, the way world conditions were developing, only tragedy lay ahead.

"If you want to build a new world, the best place to start is with yourself", they said. And they went on to speak of the fact that God could guide man. *"If man listens, God speaks; if men change, nations change."* It was so simple, practical, and logical that we were deeply interested. They lent us a book, *"I was a Pagan"* and from an address we got, we wrote for some more books. *"Drums of Peace"*, a magazine which came into our hands, we read with great interest.

Winter was upon us, so we did much reading around the fireside in the evening. While Moira knitted, I often had read to her: Shakespeare, novels, poetry, magazines. Now I read to her from *"Life Began Yesterday"* by Stephen Foot. *"What is the Oxford Group?"* We were intrigued. I said, *"If half of what they say is true, this thing is really worth getting into."*

One night when Moira went to bed early, I sat thinking and planning for the days ahead. In my cynicism I had said the people of the Church talk piously - but they bring no answers. But now, as I sat there alone, I thought: if it is true that God can speak to a man, then that is the most important fact. It would surely explain why the religion I had observed to date had been so ineffective. To my doubting mind it still seemed unbelievable and quite strange.

As I looked into the dying embers of the fire I decided to make an experiment. It did seem a little foolish, but an experiment on my own would do no harm! So I bent my head, shut my eyes, and said, *"God, if You can speak, speak to me now!"* The result startled me, and removed every doubt from my mind. A very clear thought came to me, which I knew was not from myself: *"You must get into this - I have work for you."* Slightly bemused I went to the bedroom and told Moira what had happened. She did not laugh, she merely said. *"I had a similar thought. Let us go at once and write to Peter and Betty and ask them to come back. If we wait until morning, we will have reasons not to write."*

¹² So named by a railway porter in South Africa when a group of young people from Oxford, England, were travelling the country telling of their own experiences. He wrote on the rail carriage *"The Oxford Group"*

We sat down to write, what would turn out to be a momentous letter, at once. It was some weeks before they did come. By that time we had thought about our convictions, and began to have some doubts.

We welcomed the Philips' and walked around the farm, talking about many things. I was seeking an assurance and an easy way. They made it abundantly clear that there was no easy way and one had to step out in faith. Argue as we would, we always came back to the necessity of making a decision. I hesitated between fear of the unknown and the longing for freedom of heart, purpose, and clear living.

Peter said, "*Why don't we just listen to God.*" We each took a notebook and pencil and sat quietly with expectancy and doubt. But four clear points came to my mind:

- (1) *To make a decision to become part of the Oxford Group*
- (2) *To go and see my mother*
- (3) *To be honest about the fantasies in my mind*
- (4) *Apologise for deep resentment against a neighbour after certain business transactions with him.*

There were other points, but all clear and practical.

Clear - but not easy! For several hours I evaded the final decision, but on the 27th July 1937 I knelt with Peter down in the Poplar Bush and said, "*God, from now on I want You to run my life.*" As I walked up to the house, I felt as if my knees were lifting high. I had a strange new feeling in the depth of my being. Fantasies left my mind and clear thinking began to be easy. Life took on a sense of purpose. I felt I could have a part in building a new world.

Though a burden seemed to have slipped from my shoulders, it was soon obvious that this was not the way to easy and soft living. New disciplines needed to be accepted. Instead of lying in bed for the extra half-hour in the morning, it was necessary to get out of bed earlier. I would spend an hour or so in prayer and quiet, with time to write down the thoughts which came, to find God's program for home and farm. Often there were conviction of failures to be confessed to friends, or to Moira (now my teammate, as well as my wife). I knew I was different. Not good; not without mistakes or doubts; but with direction and ability to face issues which arose each day.

I realised later that obedience to the great challenge had anchored me to a new road. "*Go and see your mother*" had been one of the first clear thoughts - I had neglected her. She had been sent to a psychiatric hospital¹³ many miles away and I had not had the courage to visit her in her dire need. Now, with new power and conviction, I obeyed this thought. I found deep compassion and care and God led me to the place where I brought her new hope.

¹³ Some of the details of the reasons for this appear in a later chapter

After years of broken communication, she began to write letters, to knit and to think of her grandchildren. It was a new link in our whole family.

Implicit obedience to the guidance of God in this one specific instance proved to me that acting in faith was no silly theory. It was a practical and wholesome way to live. The deep truths I learned from this demonstration of God in action, never left me even in times of difficulty and despondency which lay ahead. In the years which followed that first decision and early faltering steps, many adventures in faith had to be accepted. Often small steps and simple thoughts put into action led to unexpected results; sometimes to unhoped-for rewards.

As the months passed and I put into practice the truths I had begun to learn, I realised I was on the one road which could bring the lasting answer to our national and international problems. But those answers, I was soon to realise, were not to be found in some great flash of inspired illumination, but in simple, practical ways.

It became clear through the next years that such questions as dealing with the problems of Soil Erosion, Human and Labour Relationships, International Issues etc all have a fundamental root issue: that of dealing with *Individuals*.

"REDUCE YOUR STOCK"

As I rode on my horse across the veldt, I often worried about the obvious scars caused by soil erosion. Dongas (caused by water) and sheet erosion (often caused by wind action) were evident and increasing, not only on our own farm, but were clear for all to see as they traveled the roads through the Karroo. Soil Erosion. I could see, was a growing threat to the stability of the country. If left unchecked, South Africa may well become a desert. I was concerned and, in my simplicity, I thought God might give me some 'great plan' by which we could tackle this national problem and bring a cure. He did - but in an unexpected way!

Early one morning, I wrote in my notebook: "*The place to begin is with yourself and your own farm. Reduce your stock by one third; introduce a system of rotation grazing.*" Today these ideas are commonplace; most scientists and extension officers recommend stock reduction and a variety of veldt management systems - each involving some form of rotation grazing. But in 1938, little was known and nothing proved in regard to this vital question¹.

It is one thing to write a sentence in a note-book; it is quite another to decide to apply a drastic change in your practice. Especially at that time, when after the Depression and drought, we were still struggling to make ends meet. But the thought persisted, no matter how I ignored it. Later I wrote again, "*Anti-Erosion work is not enough. Just 'not overstocking' is not enough either. If I am to do an effective job, I must adopt a policy of understocking. What the result is to be, I cannot tell now, but I believe that, what has generally been considered a fair carrying capacity for our farms, has been overestimated.*"

I felt God wanted me to take an enormous step in faith. I still hesitated but continued to reason: "*Now with droughts and past handling of veldt it is obvious it has deteriorated badly, and the fundamental of any sound policy of the future must have veld improvement as it aim. When veld is good, livestock do well. This is sound reasoning, it just needs a step in faith to cut down the stocking rate here with this end in view.*"

I did it. I sold one-third of my sheep. The years that followed were not easy. We had to economise in every possible way and live without luxuries. Improvement in the veldt cover did not come at once, but gradually grass began to grow where there had been no grass before. Then the rewards began to appear. The sheep started to produce more wool per head and the lambing percentage improved. The deterioration of our veldt had not only been halted - but it had begun to recover.

¹ The research station, Grootfontein near Middelburg, had no information on this - suggesting that RBK was going in a foolhardy, unnecessary direction. However, they started experiments in this direction about 1940 which were completed in 1950's

C.J.J. van Rensburg², who in 1946 visited this area as part of his national program to awaken the country to the dangers of erosion, came to the farm. When he saw what was happening said, "*Carry on with this work. You must never leave the farm!*"

In 1944 a nationally distributed magazine, "*Social Security*", published an article entitled "*Soil Security or no Social Security*", in which I wrote: "*We realised we would have to calculate profits in a new way - in the health of our stock, yield of the land, density of the veldt cover. Grasses are growing where only shrubs grew before³. Cattle fatten where there was no food, 10 years ago. Our investments are not in the banks, but in the soil. We cannot buy a new radio or build a new house with this kind of investment; we cannot even be considered "successful" in the usual sense - but in our hearts is a joy and pride that this piece of land is improving and flowering under the kind of love we have learned to give it.*"

"*It is late, but not too late,*" I continued. "*If we start now, our soil can still be saved. Not by farmers only, but all of us depend on the land, for without fertile soil, there can be no Industrial future, no social security, no Civilization.*"

In 1946, I had to (very reluctantly) leave the *Westaway* I had learned to love and on which my recovery work had begun to show such promise. My father, on the family farm of *Gordonville*, was keen to retire and wanted me to take over the reins. While I suggested my brother Keith, Dad was determined that I, as the oldest son, should do so. Keith then took over *Westaway*, which he ran along the same lines as I had started and - many years later - won the Regional competition as the Best Conserved Farm. On receiving the award, he graciously acknowledged that the groundwork for this had been laid in the hard sacrifice, years before.

I carried on the practices at *Gordonville* that I had begun to learn at *Westaway*. The results there have been just as - if not more - promising. With a higher rainfall in the mountain farm, good veldt practices give results sooner. Years later, in 1956, correspondent for the *Farmers' Weekly*, B.J. Botha, after visiting the farm wrote: "*The recovery plan and policy of understocking has already paid handsome dividends. Hundreds of morgen - which 10 years ago contained no grass - now provide excellent grazing. Everywhere the old veldt grasses are returning and the inedible brush is disappearing.*"

In the meantime I had learned how to put my thoughts and ideas across at Farmers' Organisations. Because of my belief in the essential importance of soil conservation I was elected to local *Soil Conservation Committee* and later represented the region at Regional Council level, where I was able to help fight for these ideas in a much wider area.

² One of the first *Activists* for Conservation in SA

³ This was even more true years later. Some of the areas that had been merely great patches of bare soil were so covered by grass in 1997 that they could not even be found to photograph.

But, to me, the wonder of the results which followed acting on direction from God, simply strengthened our faith. Today the necessity for reduced rates of stocking has been proven at various Agricultural Research Institutes⁴ and it is Government policy that financial aid to a farmer can only be considered when such grazing practices have been implemented.

But this battle is by no means over! The necessity for winning the whole country to accept soil care is urgent. Four Hundred Million tons of soil are estimated to be lost down the rivers of South Africa each year!

⁴ The Research started in the 1940's, based on RBK's ideas proved that both stock & veldt improved on this basis

LABOUR RELATIONS

Taking decisions regarding the stocking of the veldt was one thing. Taking decisions regarding people is a very different matter! We had watched the widening gap between the races in our country - and, besides disagreeing with some of the laws, we did not know what to do about it. We felt it was not within our sphere of responsibility. But we were wrong! In *Quiet* one morning, the thought came to me: "*Apologise to your staff for ill temper and the rows you have had with them. Tell them you want to begin on a new basis altogether.*" This, I thought, was just going too far!

Instant obedience was what I had always expected from them, and to follow detailed instructions to the letter! They were also expected to be at the *kraal*⁵ gate, ready for work, as soon as the sun rose. To apologise as a "*white*" boss to *black* workers was unheard of! I felt it would not only be a humiliation for me, but it could be the end of discipline. After all, we had all been told for years that "*blacks only respect a strong man*" and apologising was, surely, a sign of weakness! I hesitated. I argued with myself. I delayed. But the thought kept coming back, almost as if no other thoughts would be forthcoming until this step had been taken! Eventually I decided to obey what I knew to be God's direction to me at that point.

I met the men at the *kraal* wall as usual - but instead of just giving orders for the day's work, I began by apologising for my loss of temper in the past (not only generally but including a specific incident which had occurred a few days previously), and told them that I wanted to work in a new way. I asked for their help in this. Instead of the sniggers I had expected, I received instant co-operation and understanding.

This simple (and very difficult!) step changed my whole view on labour relations and brought a entirely new concept to our work with those serving us on the farm. Gradually we moved from the "*Boss - Servant*" attitude to that of a team taking on the farm together. In the kitchen, Moira had taken similar action and a whole new atmosphere on the farm and in the home was born. We did not conceal from them the fact that our new attitudes and beliefs had grown from our new-found faith in God and His love for us and for them. Strain and fear which had been present in our labour relations was gone and we were able to work much more creatively in every way.

Other practical steps followed. We began to take real interest in the families and in the homes of our staff. We had provided fairly substantial 2-roomed houses - but they only had slits in the walls to let in air, as was the accepted practice at that time

⁵ **Kraal** - Afrikaans word for "*pen*" (American "*corral*") often wire-fenced, but most of ours are walls of stacked ironstone, with either no mortar or held together with mud

(bearing in mind that many of these workers had only had windowless huts in earlier years). Now we felt it right to put in proper glass windows and build extra rooms where we felt it most necessary (for instance, we wanted to be sure that the bigger children could have a room for themselves, and not have to sleep with the parents) Our neighbours laughed and said, "*They will just break all the windows and put in bags!*" But this did not happen. They began to take a pride in their homes. Later we began to notice that some of those same neighbours were also putting in windows.

Another big step was when one of our maids, Siena, came and asked if she could collect the children on the farm and teach them to read and write. Though this sounds simple today, at the time (1940's) we realised it was a big step. There were no schools for Workers' children on any farms in the area. We felt it was a valuable step forward and cleared an outside room, giving her what support we could. This inspired and compassionate young woman had only been as far as Standard 2 herself - but she soon had the farm children learning away steadily. We bought the slates needed and a few books. As we watched this progression, we became convinced that this was an important development.

We then built a special school room⁶ and a house for a teacher, with more experience than Siena. We paid his wages and bought what equipment we could afford. Neighbours derided the concept and we found there was considerable opposition. But, as we began to see the benefit of the school for the children and how much their parents valued this opportunity, the more convinced we became. Some of the other farmers began to see the value of the idea and began to start similar schools on their farms.

Later, all schools had to be registered with the authorities and our school was duly registered. We took the idea to the Agricultural Associations, where it was accepted at first with some reserve, but later fully backed in a resolution from *Sneeuberg Farmers' Association*⁷ which called for State Aid to farm schools.

In May 1954 the *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser* headlined on its front page "*Education for Farm Labour*" and went on to report my plea at the Congress of the *Midlands Agricultural Union*⁸ for this to be accepted as farm policy. A Committee, on which I served, was set up to study this matter. The following year this committee was able to recommend that it become National Policy. It was sent forward to higher authorities, including *S.A.A.U.* (The National Union) where it was fully supported. Some politicians took up the cause and Parliament began to consider the matter seriously on both sides of the House.

⁶ By now, RBK had moved to *Gordonville* & put up this schoolroom there

⁷ *Sneeuberg Farmers' Association* in Nieu Bethesda, local Association of which RBK was a member

⁸ *Midlands Agricultural Union* - the Regional Union, of which Sneeuberg was an affiliate

Others had begun to see the need for schools on farms - for the sake of farm children as well as a step toward ensuring stable and skilled labourers. Today farm schools are National Policy and both teachers and the school buildings are paid for out of State Funds.

Another important step in our staff relationships was when the idea of giving a *Sense of Security* to the workers. The normal practice was my right of instant dismissal for any worker, should he do something wrong - or even if I wanted to dismiss him for any other reason at all - including the right to dismiss when finances were poor or work needs less, and then hire again as the work load increased. I realised this was, surely, a source of great insecurity for them. It also meant a large "turnover" in the labour force. Workers did not stay much longer than a year or two anywhere at that time.

Again I called them together and said, "*From now on, consider these homes as yours as long as you are willing to work and to take responsibility with us. If hard times come, you will not be dismissed.*" This change in me meant much more than I had realised it would. They began to apply for permission to make gardens in front of their homes and protect them from wandering animals by constructing fences. Sunflowers and vegetables began to bloom around their houses and litter disappeared⁹.

Not all was perfect. There were many difficulties and the need for much discussion and planning. A significant problem was with men who enjoyed too much alcohol! One young married man, in particular, who regularly drank too much over the weekend, often fought with his young wife (sometimes beating her severely) and generally caused a disturbance. In earlier years, he would simply have been dismissed without any further thought or hesitation.

However, due to my newly-found care for them all as people (and not merely as hands to do work) I felt the need to try to help him rather than fire him. I called him to my office on various occasions during the week to share my beliefs and philosophies. Many years later, he was to write in an article published in the magazine *The White Ribbon*: "*The first year of our marriage was very happy. Then drink began to have a hold on me. Things began to badly in our lives and my wife and I began to quarrel. My employer and his wife took a personal interest in praying with and for us. They shared the reason why they did not drink, themselves, and their longing for everyone to be free of this curse. I began to read the Bible. When I read 1 Corinthians 6 - 19, 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, I got on my knees with my employer and decided to drink no more. I found the wonderful power to be free of this slavery. Since that day, we found unity and a happiness in our home.'*"

⁹ Note: In 1985, all but one of the 9 workers employed on the farm, as well as 4 of their wives had been born on *Gordonville* & had passed through the school

Not only did Douglas find peace in his own life, but went on to become a dynamic leader in a new way. He began to serve his Church faithfully, becoming a lay preacher. His victory began to spread to others in the work force. Drinking on Saturdays was no longer the rule. The football team, of which he became the captain, began to win their matches regularly! In fact, between 1964 and 1986 was unbeaten! This was partly due to the fact that the men were both sober and fit, and partly due to the young Swiss lad, Martin Flutch, who spent a few months on the farm and taught the men some tactical skills! We later heard from other farmers that, when a match against the *Gordonville Eagles* was due to be played, their men remained sober for the weekend prior to the match in the hopes of being the ones to break our winning streak...

Another unexpected spin-off from my decision to obey the very difficult thought to "apologise", was to find a completely new attitude to questions of so-called colour in people, which in this country had been such a dividing line. I began to see how my own pride had blocked me from friendship with people of a different colour and race¹⁰. We were able to make real friends across the colour line.

This included the local leadership in the schools and churches. One of the Black ministers who came to the farm, Rev. Sobukwe, was later to become Bishop of the Transkei. He was the brother of Robert Sobukwe, founder of the *Pan-African Congress, (PAC)*, the radical movement which had broken away from the "moderate" *ANC* earlier. Through friendship with Rev. Sobukwe, I was able to send books and articles of faith to Robert, where he was in his Robben Island prison. Many years later, on his release as a very sick man, he was to say to his brother to tell me that these had meant much to him in his solitude. When Robert Sobukwe died, I was one of a very few whites who went to his funeral in Graaff-Reinet. I then wrote up a short valedictory which was printed in the *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*.

There were many other leaders in the nation's life with whom we were to come into contact. Early leaders in the *ANC*, such as Philip (*PQ*) Vundla, Dr William Nkomo, and Selope Thema¹¹ and many others were to come to our home and enrich our lives. We have been able to make friends and learn from many in all parts of the country - and, indeed, the world. I have become convinced that the real wealth of our South African heritage cannot be plumbed without the help of our friends from other cultures.

¹⁰ There will be more details on this aspect in a later chapter

¹¹ **Philip Vundla** organised the famous & successful *Bus Boycott* in Johannesburg in 1948, which marked him as *the most dangerous man* in SA Police files; **Dr William Nkomo**, 1st black Medical Graduate of *Witwatersrand University*, was founder & first president of the *African National Congress Youth League*, founded because he believed *ANC* was not radical enough. He later was to become a Christian leader, elected as President of the *S African Institute of Race Relations* in 1972 (the 1st African to hold the post); president-elect of the Methodist Church, but dying before he could take office **Selope Thema**: Editor, *The World* newspaper

STARTS IN THE HOME

Ever since Moira and I walked those gravel paths at *Roodebloem* so long ago, we have been in love with each other. But this was not enough to prevent us having sharp disagreements at times, which inevitably left little scars. We did not realise that, for two people with such different natures, Love was not quite enough.

Moira was - is! - extrovert, outgoing, quick, plain speaking, with an Irish nature and temper which can flash like lightning and just as quickly, disappear. I was introvert, shy, slow, a stickler for plans and when anger was aroused, it burned slow and long. The coming of the babies - much loved and wanted - added an extra link but did not change our basic natures.

So change in the home was needed. It came when we decided to seek God's guidance in all things. And to become absolutely honest with each other. For Moira, being open and honest was no problem; for me, it needed discipline and inspiration. We found our love renewed and different. Instead of two people just trying to please each other and be pleased, we became a team, caring for others, thinking for the country, aiming at greater goals.

Instead of indulgent late lying in bed of a morning, there was a new discipline getting up early for *Quiet Time* with notebooks and Bible (before the tasks of the day were there). Later, we usually found a time to share thoughts and convictions for the day. It was at these times that the thoughts concerning stock reduction, labour relations etc had occurred. As I look back now, I can say simply and gratefully, that God supplied the Golden Thread which linked us in a new just at the right time. We made the decision at the same time: to seek God's plan for our home and our lives. For us, Frank Buchman's¹² inspired phrase "*when man listens, God speaks; when man obeys, God acts*" summarised our experiences.

The great change which had come about in our home, on the farm, in the neighbourhood, could not be denied. It had all grown from simple application of that first decision I had made. We found this way of living to be practical and effective. But we were to find that what was simple is not necessary easy or comfortable. There was some painful and humiliating restitution to be made. I had kept back a Locust spray pump which belonged to the Dept. of Agriculture which I had to send back. I had to inform the Petrol Company that many of their drums were in my possession. These were items which I could return.

I also had to apologise to that neighbour for the deep resentment I harboured against him in connection with a business deal we had had, in which I felt he had

¹² **Frank Buchman**, an American had been the founder of the group of people first named "*The Oxford Group*", later officially named "*Moral Re-Armament*", when Buchman had called for "*moral re-armament*" on viewing military armaments building up prior to outbreak of hostilities of World War II; Hitler outlawed the movement in Germany - this is ironical, as Russia & certain Christian churches also tried to prevent his ideas from spreading

been dishonest. There were a number of other things I needed to put right - some of which I could no longer do anything about. I simply had to accept God's forgiveness in those matters. Being honest about myself with a friend was the most painful and difficult thing I had done in my life. I had proudly called myself "reserved"; when I was honest about it, I realised it was merely than self-protection. I had to learn the art of opening my heart, of shearing my joys and sorrows, my victories and my defeats. It also brought me a great new freedom.

Moira was a true mother. She longed that the children have the very best care possible in all things. We had both come from homes in which integrity and loyalty were lived and expected. But neither of us had any religious faith which we could have passed on to our children. We worried a little about it. I realised that it would not be an adequate preparation for the children to go into life with a philosophy which I summarised as "*play the game straight*".

Now we had found the key. We could tell them what we ourselves had discovered. We could pray together and, at times, "*listen*" together. To our astonishment we found that God spoke to the children even more clearly and simply than He did to us. We knew now that they could find a sound foundation for their own lives.

Each child had a very different personality and developed in their own way. This was not always easy to understand or to cope with, but we found now that we had a more open way and could find a closeness that we did not have before. We could each seek "*What is Right*", rather than attempt to impose our own ideas on each other.

Janet, as the eldest, had already come in for a considerable amount of demand from us and was beginning to withdraw, to be shy and distant from me. Now she became freer and was able to express her needs more clearly and openly. She had been born in the old Massey home, and, after a couple of weeks in town, came out - a precious and loved baby - to *Westaway*. She was quiet and able to amuse herself at home. She grew steadily and was soon at the stage where school had to be considered.

These were the days of the *Great Depression* and every penny had to be husbanded. Moira embarked on teaching first Janet, and then, eventually, each of the other children in turn. As her earlier training was in Nursing, it meant real discipline for her and hard work - studying the syllabus, caring for the home and smaller children, and teaching in the little room (set up for school in the *Westaway* kitchen yard). Janet (as did the others) thrived on their lessons. But Moira could only hope to handle the early school years - they would all have to move on to the "*proper*" school in town.

Janet had to begin her "*boarding career*" in the of the year, 1942, because we were expecting a new baby at that time. David having been born a "*Caesar*", Dr Patty

Massey¹³ (Moira's sister) advised that Moira should come to Cape Town some time ahead of the birth, to be on the "safe side". David and Clare went to school at "Zoetvlei" with the Rubidges. But Janet went to the Union High School as a boarder. It meant not seeing her for weeks on end - there were no good roads and fast cars to be able fetch her for weekends in those days!

After passing Standard 5, she went to Collegiate in Port Elizabeth. She did well both Academically and with her sport - playing for the school first hockey and tennis teams. Having matriculated in the "1st Class", she went on to the *Training College* in Grahamstown.

Here, under Sister Truda Brock (the sister, coincidentally, to the headmistress at Collegiate), she had two happy, sportfilled and successful years. She attained her Teacher's Diploma, and came home for Christmas holidays. Just at this time, the *MRA* play "*The Forgotten Factor*"¹⁴ was to travel to Kenya. Janet was invited to join them to help "back stage". She accepted and left for Kenya with the group.

On their return from Kenya, Janet and some others joined in a speaking and singing tour in the Eastern Province. It was at this time that she took the challenging decision to give all her time, without salary (on a basis of faith) to the work of Moral Re-Armanent. She worked first in Johannesburg and then, in 1954, went to Caux¹⁵ for the *Summer Conference*. While there, the conviction came to her that she must go back to teaching, which she had studied but not yet practiced. In Johannesburg she first taught in a school for less privileged children, and later at one at the other end of the scale - with privileged, and often undisciplined, children of the wealthier classes.

But her call to *full-time* work grew on her, so when she was invited to join the team in Rhodesia (now called *Zimbabwe*), she resigned her post and worked there for almost 2 years. Later she went further North. In 1958, Marie Embleton wrote from Lagos, Nigeria: "*Janet has brought a breath of fresh Karroo air. Her honesty and determination to serve God, and her contribution as a South African, is valuable.*"

Later Janet was to write some of her own deep convictions from Nigeria: "*I am absolutely sure that, unless we can get MRA into our peoples' hearts and change them, there will be much war and fighting, and we will not be able to live in South Africa. To obey God - and let Him use me to remake the world - that is why I am here.*" At this time she was caring for the three young and very lively children of Nigerians, John and Joy Amata¹⁶.

¹³ Dr Patricia Massey, Specialist Gyneacologist & lecturer at Cape Town University

¹⁴ A play with a Christian message of how to bring change into a situation of conflict

¹⁵ World Headquarters of *MRA* in Switzerland; a large restored former luxury hotel which the Swiss rescued from demolishers after the War (when it housed refugees from Germany), to create a place where nations of the world could come together to build a lasting peace

¹⁶ This enabled Amatas, John & Joy, leading young Nigerians, to spend time with *MRA*

After a while, it seemed right for her to go even farther north - to Caux and on to Germany, where she helped run a home in Castrop-Rauxel, the heart of the German Industrial "*Ruhrgebiet*". At times she found it very difficult to keep working with the teams and not come home again. In July 1962 she wrote to us, "*To live with heart, soul, body, energy, imagination and enjoyment into every single thing I do. That is my aim.*"

It was a valuable conviction as things turned out later on in her life. But now, she was giving her heart in Germany. She was later invited to work in London, and then spent some time with Moira's family in Ireland. By the end of 1963 we were able to welcome her home again - having been away for 15 years and living through some very deep experiences.

Our second child, Clare, had been born in the cold of Winter in the Crawford Nursing Home (in Graaff-Reinet). I got the message on the farm and rushed in early in the morning. She had started in tough conditions, and grew with purpose and a most independent mind! It was not too long before she was crawling all over the place, and soon, even, running. Always energetic and spirited, she made a great contribution to the family liveliness! Soon she was able to join Janet in the little schoolroom at the back door of the kitchen.

She followed in the same path as Janet: to Union High School as a boarder, and finishing at Collegiate. She, too, played in the hockey and tennis teams, but missed her First Class by a few points. By this time, I was very busy on the farm (by now *Gordonville*) and thought a trained secretary would be a great help! Clare took a year at Rhodes University, learning typing, accounting - and athletics where she hurdled for the University team - and then came back to the farm. Here she was a great help and took on a great deal of the office work.

She was not only a help in the office, but was soon taking on a lot of farm responsibilities - including the driving of the big Dodge truck to fetch supplies or transport stock. However, this did not last long. We needed to have a key conservation work done at the bottom end of our vlei. Trevor Sheard, whose father I knew well from Farmers' Unions, contracted to do the work and brought his tractors and scrapers to do the job. This took a while to do - and was well done.

It has to this day been an anchor to the recovering vlei and secures it against further erosion. But his friendship with Clare ripened and they decided to marry in June of 1954. As we acquired a new dam and a new son-in-law, I lost a good secretary!

The next child, David, was born in the Midland Hospital Graaff-Reinet, on a day when there was no Monarch on the British throne¹⁷. There had been developments

¹⁷ King Edward 8th had abdicated the day before; King George 6th was proclaimed King on the following day!

which had indicated that the birth would not be normal. He was born by a *Caesarian Section*, following some anxious days. After a while, it was clear that all was well and Moira and the new baby could join us on the farm at *Westaway*.

He grew into a lively young fellow and after school with his mother and older sister for a time, it was also his turn to go to Boarding School in Graaff-Reinet. Later he went to my old school, Grey High, in Port Elizabeth. A fair scholar, he took part in all the sporting activities offered, running the half-mile for the school team. Although tennis was his favourite sport, he did not make the school first team!

He obtained a First Class pass for Matric and went on to the local Agricultural College at Grootfontein, where he achieved his 2-year Diploma in the First Class, with distinctions in a number of subjects. He came home where he helped me farm for a while - until he was invited to join an International MRA team, which was presenting plays in Nigeria.

Here he had many very interesting experiences and traveled the country as part of the *Backstage Crew* with the plays "*The Next Phase*" and "*The Forgotten Factor*". (One of the other members of the crew, with whom he traveled to Nigeria and with whom he worked very closely, was Andrew Peppetta, a young Xhosa man who had been expelled from the University of Fort Hare for "*revolutionary activities*"). David also began to see things from a different perspective and wrote: "*Unless we South Africans wake up and begin to take more stock of what is happening in the world today, we are a doomed and lost race..*"

After some 4 months in Nigeria, he was invited to Caux, where he began to work with plays being developed and produced there. One was the play "*Hoffnung*", (*Hope*) written by a German coalminer, who had been an officer in the German "*Waffen SS*". The actors were mostly his fellow coal miners, some were ex-Communists and some were ex-Nazis! David went with the play through Germany and to West Berlin, where many East Berliners¹⁸ risked the trip across the Border to see the play. He went with the crew when "*Hoffnung*" was invited by Harold MacMillan to play in Britain, then on to other countries where it was invited: France, Italy, Cyprus, India, Japan and the United States of America.

In March 1960 he wrote: "*Safely arrived - Japanese style bath - sleep on the floor, wash-basins low down. I have already found a tremendous love for the Japanese people. I was at Kishi's*¹⁹ *reception for us when he said, 'MRA is the moral backbone of the world'*" It was also from Japan that he wrote to congratulate his young brother, Robert, on winning the *Victor Ludorum* for his school. By May, he could write from Los Angeles, USA. Sometimes he wrote with great conviction and assurance; and then at times with doubt about the work he was doing.

¹⁸ The infamous "*Berlin Wall of Shame*" torn down in 1993, was built soon after this visit,] precisely to prevent this sort of information getting to the Eastern Sector.

¹⁹ **Kishi** - Prime Minister of Japan at that time - had invited the play to his country

When the German miners returned to Europe, he remained in the USA, helping at the American MRA Centre, Macinac Island, where a Television Studio was being built. From there he operated in various parts of the USA, meeting folk, showing films about the message of change and talking to various groups.

Once he wrote: "*I am proud of the way Dad stood for years for what is right. At one point I deeply resented it, because it seemed to divide us from the rest of the district. Today I am glad.*" In the same letter: "*Today I partnered Bunny Austin²⁰ in a game of tennis...!* So he kept up his tennis....

By June of 1961, he was back in Europe. He had been asked to help in putting on a play again - this time written and acted by 100 young Chinese from Taiwan²¹, it was called *The Dragon* and was a massive production, involving many scene changes. It was while preparing for the production of this play that Frank Buchman died. He wrote of Buchman's death: "*Frank's going marks a turning point in world history. Are we going to continue the battle or drop it. Many who refused the Cross that Frank chose will drop away.*"

We lived through his battles and joys through his letters and were grateful for the contribution he had been making. After some more months in Europe - mostly Germany, Switzerland and Scandinavia, David returned to South Africa. At first he was to take the play "*The Ladder*²²" through South Africa and Rhodesia, and then returned to the farm to take up the job from which he had been absent for three and a half years, living on a basis of faith and self-giving.

²⁰ "Bunny" Austin, British Davis Cup player, the best player never to have won Wimbledon

²¹ *The Dragon*, written & acted by Taiwanese students under General Ho Ying Chin one of the generals of Chiang Kai Shek (Jiang Jie-shi), President of Taiwan until his death 1975

²² With Philip Vundla as "*the Man with the Bag*", representing Christ, the play challenged apathy of "*Christians*" - especially brave those years with a black lead player in a white play!

"... NOT THE HANDICAP OF BITTER PARENTS"

Our *fourth child* was Jonathan - baby son of our great friends and teammates, Betty and Peter Philips. We had barely heard the happy news of his birth, when we got the devastating news that Betty's weak heart had not withstood the shock of birth. Moira had gone to spend some days in Grahamstown to help them prepare for the baby's coming. She knew all their plans and hopes - and so felt the loss more deeply than most. Betty was buried in Grahamstown, sadly mourned by many friends.

Jonathan, a tiny baby, came to our home at *Westaway* to be cared for in trust. He grew well, despite many disturbed nights and the difficulties in getting the right mixture for his feeds - there being few (if any!) commercial "*formulae*" on the market for babies (even if we could afford them!). He was a sensitive and loving child and our hearts were filled with love for him. He was soon fully part of the family and took his place with the other children.

When he was two years old, Peter married again and it was right for Jonathan for go to his father. The parting was planned and executed over time with much thought and preparation so that, for the little boy, it would not be too painful an experience. For all of us, but especially for Moira, it was a very painful parting. This small boy had grown from the "*Meuling and puking*" age to a lively lad. It felt as if we were parting from one of our own children²³!

As mentioned earlier, David having been a *Caesarian*, Moira was advised by her sister, the Gynaecologist Dr Patty Massey, to be at a major centre for the birth of her next baby. So in 1942, with the Depression still at its height, the War still raging in Europe and petrol rationed, Moira caught the train from Merriman Station²⁴ to Cape Town. She was joined by her younger sister "*Lallah*" (Sheila). She stayed with good friends, Prof. and Mrs Jack Brock. We did the best we could at home - and eventually, at the end of October, a telegram arrived to tell the good news - Robert had been born safely.

Then, after a few more long weeks, we fetched Moira and her new baby at Merriman again. Her mother, with much love and care, had gone to Cape Town to accompany her on the return journey. Once more the family were delighted to be together again. He thrived in the happy atmosphere and under the care of a now very well-experienced mother. Little did we know that tragedy would strike and challenge our faith, bring much sadness - and later, glorious victory.

²³ Jonathan left with his family to settle in Australia but has kept contact through the years

²⁴ A railway station on the other side of Richmond, about 100 km away from *Westaway*

In 1943, with the War still raging up North, many doctors were away. Our caring and efficient Dr Carl van Heerden (married to Moira's sister *Lallah*) was in prison camp, along with the rest of the *DMR*²⁵ who had been captured at Tobruk.

News came of an outbreak of Smallpox in Richmond, 60 miles from *Westaway*. That seemed too far away for us to be worried. Later a suspected case alighted at the bus-stop only seven miles away. The State mounted an emergency compulsory inoculation campaign - all who had not been recently vaccinated had to be done again. Moira's father, Dr David Massey, had always advised that no children under 13 months of age should be vaccinated. But there was no option - at 9 1/2 months it had to be done. Serum was hastily being prepared and, it transpired later, one of the women inoculated actually died from it.

We took him to Graaff-Reinet where the State doctors were doing the work. A few days later, back at home again, he began to run a temperature. This not only persisted, but rose to 105° Fahrenheit. He could only keep alive by drinking his mother's milk, as he rejected all other food. At 2 a.m. one morning, we woke up with him in great trouble - the soles of his feet and palms of his hands had purple patches and he seemed almost on the point of death. Urgent pleading with the nearest Doctor (in Middelburg) brought little help and no comfort. We could but pray he would not die that night.

After some days of much anxiety, with very little medical help, the temperature at last began to abate. He began to eat again and gather strength. We thanked God for his recovery. On the farm and in the home, life at last returned to normal. Robert seemed happy. But we were just a little worried. At 9 months of age, he was able to say quite a few baby words. Now at 15 months, he had still exactly the same vocabulary! Could he be deaf?

We did some little tests like rattling paper or dropping some article when he was not looking. His reactions to these tests proved, as far as were concerned, that he was normal²⁶. We asked many questions, we wrote to friends. Then Moira's straight-talking sister, Dr Patricia Massey, who had arranged for Robert's birth at the time, wrote a typically honest letter: "*Face the fact that the vaccination caused Encephalitis and the nerves of his ears have been killed.*" Devastation and deep sadness settled on our hearts. By now it was 1944 and the *Allies* were beginning to regain the territory won by the German Armies. Some of our troops held in prison camps were being repatriated via Sweden. Carl van Heerden was amongst them, and had now returned to Graaff-Reinet. He recommended a specialist in Port Elizabeth.

²⁵ *DMR - Die Middellandse Regiment* drawn from volunteers from Midlands area of the Cape Province, under command Col. Bill Kingwill (later by Walter Kingwill) was surrounded & captured by Field Marshall Rommel at Tobruk in North Africa.

²⁶ His high intelligence, keen sense of touch & ability to feel & respond to the slightest movement had fooled our amateur tests

Moira went by train again (petrol still being rationed and the children had to be cared for on the farm). Fortunately she was able to stay in Port Elizabeth with friends Jack and Nell Clogg who would support her in her anxiety. The next day she phoned to say, "*The Specialist confirms what Patty had suspected. He says we must not go around seeking some other Doctors or other diagnoses. He must go to a school for the deaf.*" She sobbed as she told me the bitter news over iron cold telephone wires. My heart was heavy, my spirit dropped. I felt bitter that this fine young boy should have to suffer this dreadful affliction because of what seemed a needless accident of medicine.

But early the next morning, as I sat in quiet at my desk, the thought came, "*Do not let Robert have the handicap of resentful and bitter parents added to the burden he already must carry.*" I phoned this God-given thought to Moira at the coast and she accepted it with inspired grace. In the years ahead, when the going was tough, it was often a help to recall this thought. Now he had to adjust to the new situation and get educated as well. He responded to the challenge with great courage and determination.

Up to that stage we had actually called him "*Massey*", one of his Christian names, in memory of Dr Massey. However, we found that the lip-reading of that name was too difficult and reverted to his first name, Robert - which is easier to lip-read. At the age of 3 years we had to take him to Boarding School in Cape Town - 500 miles away. Leaving him there, so small and alone, was a heart-rending experience. The Sisters in charge of the *Grimley Dominican School for the Deaf* were caring and helpful - but no strangers could take the place of his mother at that age!

He came back to the farm for holidays and revelled in the farm life. Then, at the end of the holiday, with sad heart quiet and courageous, he would travel with friends by train to the Cape. Meanwhile, Moira began to have the conviction that she should learn to teach him herself. She began to make enquiries. One day she read in a magazine an article about a correspondence course, put out by the *John Tracey Clinic* in Los Angeles, USA. This clinic had come into being because the actor, John Tracey, had a deaf son. They kindly agreed to let us subscribe to the course - adding that Moira was the only person in Africa to get the course, which had been designed for the USA. They gave us marvelous and generous help.

Moira had battled to teach each of the previous 3 children on the farm until ready for boarding school - so it seemed tragic that here, with the youngest, precious child, the boy had to be sent to Cape Town at less than 4 years of age! These were such vital years for a youngster! We decided to sit down quietly to seek God's guidance on this point. We had argued that if he sticks to the expert schooling that he can get at a school for the deaf, his education would be first class; if we brought him home, his education might suffer - but he would grow up in the environment in which he was to live. The thought came clear: **Keep him at home.** Moira got help and advice from the Sisters of Grinley School, subscribed to the USA course, and set to work to teach Robert at home.

Everyone had to help - and they did. He had mastered the early lessons in lip-reading under the Sisters; now his vocabulary was rapidly increased at home. When older children were home, they helped and he was able to enjoy his home. Friends came to stay - some young friends came for months - to have lessons with him. The farm staff were brought into the team of helpers. So, for seven years Moira tirelessly, stoically, and patiently worked at this specialised teaching.

The reward was a young lad who could cope with his environment and take full part in the life of the farm. But, inevitably, the time came for another major decision: Should Robert now go to a "*School for the Deaf*" for the senior classes, or take his chances in an ordinary school. We spoke to the headmaster of Union High, Mr Arnott. When he said that he would happily take Robert into his boarding house, we felt assured that this was the right move. Here he would grow among the boys and girls of his age in the district where he was to live and work later.

To this day we feel a great sense of gratitude to Herby Arnott. He had said, "*I have been watching that boy and I will be glad to have him.*" Yet he well knew that he could (as he indeed did) have difficulty with the Education Department. He had to fight them to keep Robert, whom he encouraged all the years he was at Union High. Mr Arnott made one stipulation: Robert would not be able to get any special attention from the teachers. They would treat him the same as any hearing child.

So, at the age of 10 years, Robert started as a boarder at the big school in Graaff-Reinet. By then, David had left UHS and was already at Grey High, but Robert was able to make friends easily, and had many good friends who helped him find his way. He proved himself able to hold his own in school and sport (but unlike his siblings, when he came home for holidays, it was not just a matter of fun and games! He and his mother spent many hours per day of hard work, catching up on all the points he had missed out on in the classes!). In all his years at Union High, he did not fail a class.

He proved to be a good athlete, winning the coveted cup²⁷ for the *Victor Ludorum* in Std 9 and again in Std 10, and playing first team rugby for 2 years (gaining "*colours*", playing on the wing). Later he was to play wing for both the Graaff-Reinet senior rugby side as well as the *Karoo*²⁸ team, selected from neighbouring towns. With great determination and courage he proved himself able to cope with a "*hearing world*". Indeed, in later years, this has been even more amply demonstrated.

²⁷ Trophy given to the Athlete winning the most points during the Athletics Championship

²⁸ Note: I remember hearing folk in the street discussing the Rugby match to be played that afternoon. One said "*No, Roberty is not playing, I won't bother to watch*": DMK

WIDENING HORIZONS

The idea of a world built anew had captured our imagination. To have a part in that seemed to be worth much and sacrifice. While I have found that God's way of doing things to be very practical and down to earth in simple, unexpected ways, there always is a challenge in it.

Social drinking in our circle was taken for granted. Everybody took drink, some more, and some a little too much. I realised that there were no rules about drink in this new way of living - but questions began to form in my mind. You can advise your children, give them the very best advice, but, unless you live what you talk about, advice is less than effective. I enjoyed my beers after tennis and other drinks at times. Drink was no problem. But I had a friend who could not stop once he had so much as drunk a single drink. I also knew many of my staff had a problem. It began to become clear to me that, if I were to help my friend, my staff, or my children, I needed to deeply examine the whole question. *One morning the thought came, "for you it is right to cut clear on alcohol."*

Much of the fellowship and social life of our country, and even abroad, is built around the bar or social drinking. Much more so in the rural community. I knew that, if I stuck to this decision, we would be teased and later left out. But I had set my feet on the path of obedience and faith. So I cut with the alcohol. There was some teasing. I was no longer invited to certain parties. But there some great rewards, not expected or planned for. I was able to be honest with my staff and a new sense of responsibility began to grow in them. Drinking parties on the farm diminished, and later some of the men accepted the challenge of keeping free from alcohol abuse²⁹. With this, the teamwork grew and they now began to take more interest in the Church and in spiritual things.

In the early days of change, we were fully occupied in dealing with so many of our own personal and family problems, and also getting the farm running on a new basis. Slowly it began to bear in on me that we needed to look far beyond the boundaries of our own farm if we were to affect the direction of this and other nations.

On occasion I had dropped in at *Farmers' Association* meetings when it suited me. I always sought a back seat and made little or no contribution to the proceedings. But in my heart - and on occasions, with other men - I criticised those who attempted to take responsibility. Now it became clear to me that I should begin to take a part in farmers organisation so as to use our new found hope in a wider way. I had kept reading the agricultural magazines, but otherwise I spent most available reading time on light fiction.

²⁹ See earlier Chapter, *Labour Relations*

I found I had to begin a whole new discipline of study and re-training of my concentration. I had day-dreamed of becoming an orator some day - but, in fact, was too self-concerned to speak at all in public, for fear of making a fool of myself!

Now with the clear thought to join the Middelburg Farmers' Association and "*take on the discipline of attending meetings regularly*", I needed to carry a part of the responsibility. This I began to do. Within a few months I found myself elected as Secretary, later Chairman of the Association and delegate to Congresses. Though never an orator, I learned enough to be able to speak on matters of importance with a certain freedom. I found my early morning quiet times often gave me very constructive ideas to take to the Associations, which later could be brought to the attention of the whole farming community.

The transformation from a shy, reserved and self-conscious young man into one who could begin to think and talk unequivocally, if not eloquently, for the country's needs is simply an example of God's power to change one who is willing to listen and obey.

It was not all "*victory and glorious advance*". Many days there were backslidings; many days disobedience to the thing I knew should be done; many days there were discouragements and return to doubts. But change had started and nobody could deny that. I knew that, had I continued to drift, rudderless, I would have landed in a bog and dragged the family with me. Those first few steps initially to care for my mother had not only affected our relationship, but meant I could bring new warmth and care to my father. In my careless youth I had not understood the great difficulties and deep suffering he, himself, had had to face.

Even today the tragic accident which almost killed my Mother is etched in stark terms in my memory. It was sunset. She, with my eldest sister, Enid, had gone to the bathroom to light the petrol-burning geyser to heat the bath water. It was a lovely evening and Dad and I were standing on the stoop, when suddenly there were shrieks and Mother came running with clothes aflame, hair burning. I ran to her room, grabbed a jug of water and threw it on her. It made no difference. Dad grabbed a blanket and smothered the flames. My grandmother was, fortunately, with us, and we got her onto the bed.

Dad and I got into the old car and drove as fast as possible to Graaff-Reinet. Those 50 miles seemed endless, especially since I had to open several gates on the way!³⁰ It was very late by the time we got to Dr Massey. He, realising the seriousness of the situation, got into his car and drove out to the farm. When he saw the extent of the burns, he put her into his car and took her to hospital. Later he told someone that she had been so badly burned that she was not expected to live. She did - but carried very bad scars on her face and hands.

³⁰ Those of us who grew up with telephones at our disposal can hardly appreciate this !

After some time she came home and tried to live a normal farm life again. She never quite settled. An opportunity arose for her to travel with Uncle Arthur (Dad's elder brother) to London, to see if plastic surgery could deal with the terrible scars. In those early years, the experts could not help. Then, on her way to Edinburgh, the *Express* was derailed. The lady next to her on the seat was killed and she sustained a broken leg and had to go into a nursing home for some weeks. She eventually came home and took responsibility in trying to furnish the big new farm-house³¹, in its final stages of completion. But she was never herself and had to go to a private hospital.

With my new way of looking at and dealing with things, I was able to bring a new understanding of these above events to my brothers and sisters who, as the eldest brother, I had failed. This was very important for soon the "*dogs of war*" were to be unleashed and the family involved in the terrible battle to keep Freedom and Democracy. For years we had watched Hitler's power growing. We had cherished the fond hope that Moral ReArmament would catch on quickly and massively enough to stop war from engulfing the world.

Thousands had flocked to "*house-parties*" and meetings and many hearts had been touched. Hitler was calling for *guns before butter* but Buchman saw clearly the needs of the age and called for Moral Re-Armament when European countries were massively arming for war. There were those eager to misuse Buchman's call for a new way of doing things. He had to face a lot of slander³².

Many like us all over the world had begun to walk on a new road. But not enough. War came. It is all in the History Books now. I knew no war could bring any of the answers we needed. Though shaken and disappointed we did not turn from the road we had taken. The deep and real experiences we had had fully proved to me that seeking God's way in simplicity was the only way for me to live.

The war was to affect us all deeply. My two brothers Keith and Neville (*Con* to all) were among the first volunteers for the army. Because of deep political division at the time in the country, only volunteers could be sent to the war fronts from South Africa. Some leading politicians were, in fact, pro-*Nazi*. General Smuts³³ had taken over as Prime Minister and felt with the Allies that *Nazism* was a threat to the freedom of the whole world and must be stopped. Many young South African men and women, like my two brothers, signified their willingness to serve their country.

31 The old *settler house* had been demolished & a large, double-story home built as *reward* to mother for years of struggle

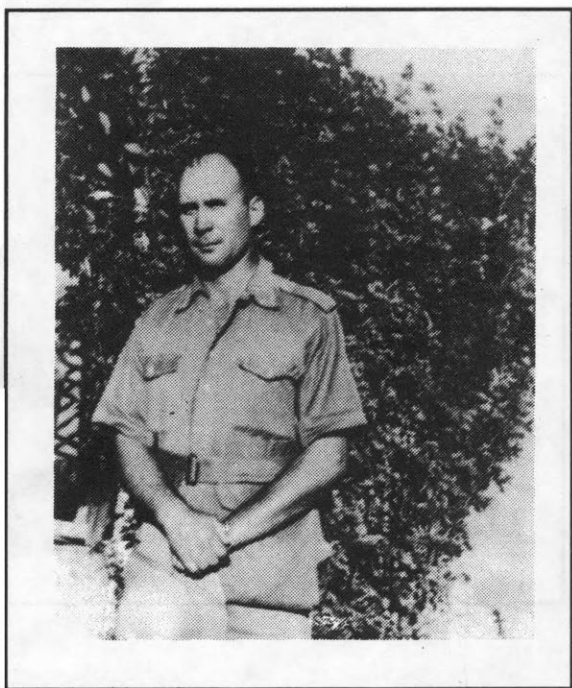
32 His words were twisted by writers like Tom Driberg (cleric & Executive member of the British Communist Party) to read as if Buchman supported Hitler's *Nazism*

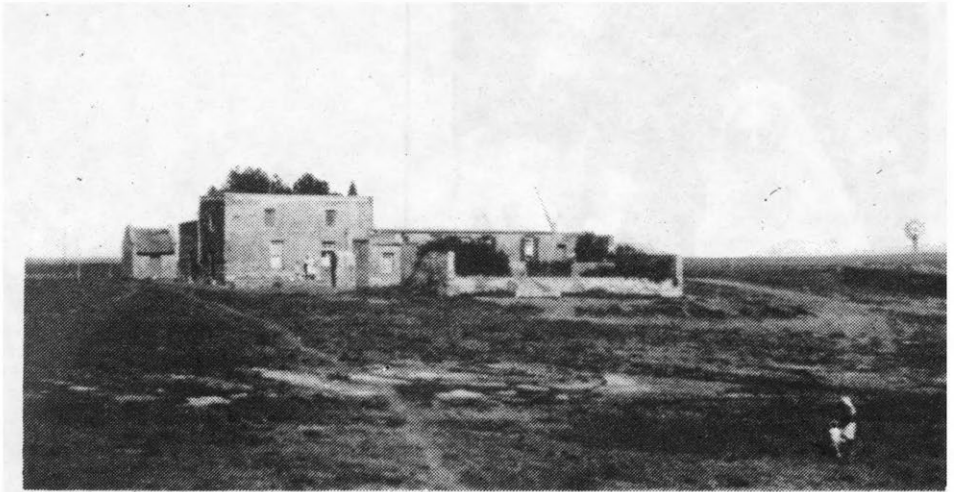
33 Leader of the *United Party*, he had been a *Boer* General against the British during the 1900 1903 Anglo-Boer War & was thus seen as a traitor by some of the Boer descendants for supporting the British against Hitler



21 December 1929

*1940
RBK While in
training for RSM*





Westaway in 1930's



*Stacking wheat
sheaves on
Westaway*

I weighed up the needs, discussed it with them and others, but it seemed right to stay and care for the farms (both *Westaway* and *Gordonville* now) and be close to our father. It was no easy decision. Difficult years lay ahead. There were many shortages, petrol was rationed. For those of us far from town this was a hardship. Some of us went back to horses and "*Can't Af-Fords*"³⁴ For short distances they proved excellent!

Later wheat meal was rationed and we learned to mix *mielie*³⁵ meal with the bread meal to make a brittle but nourishing loaf. There were other inconveniences, too many to mention - but these were a small price to pay for the liberty and the privileges we enjoyed. Farming went on much as usual. The wool grew and had to be sheared and pressed and marketed. We produced mutton, some grain from the small lands, hay for winter feed for the stock. Moira continued to teach those children not yet at Boarding School.

I joined the *National Volunteer Reserve*, being given lapel badges to show that we were *loyal citizens and ready to respond to our country's need...!* We had to spend an afternoon a week drilling and training. Later I was chosen to go on a course to Robert's Heights (renamed *Voortrekkerhoogte* after the Nationalist Party took over power) for 6 weeks' training. After much drilling, shooting the old .303 rifles, mapreading lessons etc, I obtained a "D" pass (80%) and travelled back home with the rank of *CSM* (Company Sergeant Major). It had been a tough time for Moira on the farm, caring for the children and keeping the work going.

An Army barracks is a rough place. We had about 24 beds in our bungalow, in two rows. There was always much talk, chaffing and joking. Some came to bed very late, as I suppose they do in any army barracks. I faced the need to make firm decisions if I was to live out the things in which I believed. The fact that I did not smoke or drink called for some remarks and I could take them in good part. But what I knew was going to be an even more difficult challenge, was to kneel down by my bed at night and say my prayers openly; and, in the morning, take my notebook, Bible, and pencil and have some "*time of quiet*".

This did not go without remark and some banter. I was the only one doing this and, though there were some comments, I was left on my own without molestation. It all seemed worthwhile when, one afternoon toward the end of our time, one of the senior men in the barracks came to me and said, "*Many of these people talk a lot - but if there was a crisis, they would turn to you for leadership*"³⁶. I knew this was no more than an unexpected recognition of God's work because I had stuck to my deepest convictions.

³⁴ Sections of old motor cars (such as Fords) fitted with a pole & balanced for horse traction.

³⁵ **Mielie:** Afrikaans for **Maize**

³⁶ Prophetic words in another sense: Years later, the very farmers who ostracized him, turned to his leadership

The war dragged on. Tobruk fell. First there was silence, then news filtered through. Keith was in an officers' prison camp in Germany; Neville in Italian hands, in a prison hospital. As it later transpired, he had been wounded while blowing up his cannon as the Germans under Rommel advanced. He was later able to escape into the mountains of Italy, reported as missing for many months³⁷.

General Smuts had given a statesmanlike lead during and after the War. A great many South African soldiers and airmen had acquitted themselves with magnificent courage in many fields of battle. Some who will be forever honoured, never came back. They were true South Africans.

Back on the farm, work continued as usual. Wool prices were low as transport by sea (to the countries buying the wool) was hazardous. Wool was a strategic commodity. The Government decided to buy all the wool at a fixed price and stockpile it. This kept us from bankruptcy and enabled us to stay on the farms.

³⁷ The story of *Con's* suffering at the hands of Italian Doctors, his escape from Prison Camp, & his experiences during months of deprivation in the Alps as he avoided the German & Italian troops etc, is another one altogether; some of this I got to know as I worked with him when sorting wool during the 1950's! DMK

WE MOVE TO THE MOUNTAINS

The bitter war dragged to an end. Millions of men - as well as women and children - had been killed or maimed. Hopes for a permanent peace was widespread. Our Prime Minister, General Smuts, took a leading part in laying foundations of what was hoped would be a guarantee for peace and understanding - the founding of the *United Nations Organisation*.

My father had saved Keith's Wartime salary and used it to buy Uncle Gray's share of *Westaway*. Neville got back from the warfront first, having been able, during his escape, to get behind Allied lines and thus was repatriated earlier. Keith also got back safely, in due time, once the Allies had reached the area where they were imprisoned. Naturally the boys wanted to come farming.

At this stage my Dad insisted that he wanted to retire and that I must come and take over *Gordonville*. He had bought a "*klein plasie*" (a small irrigation plot) at Kendrew and wanted to move there. We did not want to move. Our roots were now deeply in our beloved *Westaway*, where we had faced hardship and many difficulties - but also joy and victory. Some of my early grazing experiments were now also beginning to show valuable results. Dad said that it had been his and Mother's wish that I should take on the farm. He felt it was a good arrangement for Keith to take over *Westaway*.

Early in 1946 I took over the management of *Gordonville*. I came across on January 3rd, but the family could not come at once. Arrangements had to be made for children to go off to school - Robert, aged just over 3 years, had to go to Cape Town to the Deaf School. Before the end of the month I was able to take the big *Gordonville* lorry and in two trips moved most of our possessions to our new home. We left some furniture for Keith, and a part of our hearts on the *Seacow* flats of *Westaway*! I had been away from *Gordonville* for 16 years. I needed to learn to know the farm which had many facets, many lines of operation - not the straightforward proposition that *Westaway* had been.

Now I had to take charge of a well-established stud of Merino Sheep, as well as a well-known Pedigree (Stud) Shorthorn¹ cattle herd. Farming in the Sneeuberg can be both complicated and demanding. I had the advice of my Dad for many weeks, as he did not move at once. But I found the adjustment a considerable strain. I felt pains I had never had before. Doctor advised me to drink less coffee - but I knew it was anxiety at taking on a proposition which was bigger than me.

¹ **Merino Sheep** are the premier wool-producing sheep breed. The foundation stock had been imported from top Australian stud; **Shorthorn Cattle** imported directly from Britain; They were the most popular cattle breed World-wide, & were the first to benefit from Bakewell's Stock Improvement in the *Agricultural Revolution* in Britain; Dual-purpose at the time - later they were selected in 2 streams, Beef & Dairy

I invited Neville (known by most friends as *Con*) to join me on the farm. He proved a loyal and hardworking partner, with many good ideas and skills. Later that year, *Bergplaas*² came up for sale in the estate of Mr Peterson. I bought it and had it transferred into Neville's name.

Meanwhile, we farmed both farms as a single enterprise. Later, Neville married Shirley van Niekerk and went to live down at *Zuurfontein*, where Piet Pretorius³ had reigned in earlier days. Some years later, Con and Shirley were to decide to move to *Bergplaas* and farm on their own account. They built up the place magnificently and introduced many new ideas.

My first year at *Gordonville* was a difficult and challenging time. We had to adjust to a completely new situation as well as really move into a new district. Because of the War and difficult communications, touch with the International force of MRA had been almost impossible. Early experiences of seeking God's plan had been real and we did not deviate from the faith as we understood it - but we missed the fellowship. We knew that in teamwork it was much easier to see the next step.

The job of making inventories of farming machinery, stores, supplies, and livestock and valuing them was a complicated task. To take over from a man who, for forty-four years had courageously built a farm, was a painful process. To watch - and help - the loading of his furniture at *Gordonville* to be transported to his new home at Kendrew by Mr Mitton in his big truck, was heart rending.

We realised it was not easy for my Dad to leave his beloved farm. One day, he took his favourite riding horse and went down to the vlei where the cherished Shorthorns were running. He came back and said, "*I have said goodbye to each of the cows.*" A day or two later he invited David, a lively youngster at that stage, to go with him in his two-seater car, to open the gates (of which there were many along the main roads in those days before cattle-grids!), and he went to say goodbye to some of his neighbours and his brothers, Frank and Cyril, who farmed beyond New Bethesda. He slept with Frank at his farm *Ripplemead* and got back home the next afternoon.

On the 8th February, 1946, brother Neville drove Dad down to the little Kendrew farm, later to be known as *Koningsrus*⁴. With full hearts and brimming eyes we waved goodbye to the man who had developed this mountain farm. Now I was in charge - and I knew I was inadequate. Dad's advice would always be willingly given - but the decisions had to be made by me.

² *Bergplaas*, farm just to the south of *Gordonville*; Mr Petersen's brother had been the Master Builder who had built the big homestead in 1922 - 24.

³ Piet Pretorius, Pannel's foreman many years, & developed the lands at lower end of the farm

⁴ King George VI & his family toured South Africa in 1947 to thank the country for its sacrifice in the War Effort & stopped there with them for tea!

In May we took over *Bergplaas* - which I had bought for seven thousand pounds on mortgage. In early June I had news that my mother was seriously ill. We hurriedly drove to Queenstown where she was in hospital and found her very weak. She took a turn for the better and we drove back home. But we had barely got back to the farm when a telegram came to say she had died. On June 5th we buried her in Queenstown. Many years later we made the decision to move her remains to *Gordonville*, where she had given her youth and built so bravely.

In the aftermath of the war there were still shortages with which we had to cope. Bread meal was on quota and taking over in a new situation we had to apply for a quota. We could not get enough and had to supplement with Maize meal. Besides this, it was very dry and the veldt was in poor condition.

Anxiety about the boys in prison camp during the last years of the war, with the disadvantage of a lame leg, Dad had not been able to get around the farm enough, and it became clear that there was much need on the farm. 1946 was indeed a challenging year; had I not found the simple secret of seeking God's direction, I must surely have cracked.

Now I realised that the lessons I had learned in regard to veldt management would have to be applied on *Gordonville*. I decided to begin by running 1 sheep to 4 morgen, instead of 1 to 2 morgen, and apply a system of rotational grazing. This would demand a lot of expensive fencing and arrangements for extra watering points. I became absorbed in developing the farm and began to get a grip on the management of the place. It was not long before I began to see some results from the new system of management. The first seeds of "*rooigras*" (*Themeda Triandra*) were hailed with enthusiasm. The continuous grazing, that had been the general practice before, had kept the sweet grasses from ever setting seed.

After good rains had come, grass began to grow in places we had never seen it before. But, though the general principles worked out at *Westaway* were sound, there were new things to be learned in this mountain grass-veldt. Aunt Gladys (as we called our step-mother) had lived all her life in these areas, said, "*You are a fool to come here. The Sneeuberg is finished.*" My first dry year in the Sneeuberg almost persuaded me she was right. In the difficult years which lay ahead, I was often to remember her words!

Dad was now established on his little farm near Kendrew, which was now renamed *Koningsrus* (*King's Rest*), because a special side rail had been built at that spot for the *White Train* with King George 6th to spend the night and rest before going on to Graaff-Reinet. The next morning, Dad met the King and Queen, and strolled, chatting with the King up and down beside the train for some time. We had been invited down (by Dad) for the event and were all greeted by the Queen, while the two Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret stood nearby, relaxed and graceful. For us, it was a great honour and an excitement.

Pedigreed cattle must be grown out properly or they are almost valueless (or no more valuable than their meat!). To keep the Shorthorn herd going properly was one of my concerns. The herd had been established on imported stock in 1913 and had taken many prizes in shows throughout the area and even in Johannesburg and Bloemfontein. In the drought and through the Winter, to find enough food for these cattle was a great anxiety. I had news from Dad that any amount of wheat-straw was available at Kendrew.

We loaded the hay-press onto the old truck, took some men from the farm, and pressed hundreds of bales of straw. This had to be loaded on rail trucks to Blaauwater Siding (now *Blouwater*) and then transported over the mountains to the farm. This was a great help, though it had cost much effort and time. But I decided that we must reduce the cattle numbers and advertised the herd. I felt like a traitor, planning to sell what had been built over the years with so much effort and at such a high cost. I remembered vividly the pain and sadness when, years before, a large number of the imported animals had been shot by the stock inspectors, having been tested positive for *Bovine T.B.* And now I was prepared to sell them!

Luckily, as it turned out, no buyer appeared for the cattle. I was led to a breakthrough which saved the herd and put a new face on the long sour grass, so often seen as a problem in the mountains. I had been reading of experiments in spraying Urea and Molasses on old straw. This made it not only palatable, but gave it some nutritional value as well. An early morning thought came: "*spray Zuurpol⁵ with molasses and urea and take the cattle to it*". I found the cattle not only ate it greedily but then went on to graze other long dry grass. There were thousands of morgen of this *Zuurpol* on the farm - an insurance for the cattle at that time.

This was a turning point in my thinking for cattle and we were able to increase the herd from 19 cows to 30, later 40, which had been the original herd size. Feed companies later began to experiment with urea and molasses and produced a solid lick for cattle on sourgrass.

Light stocking and strict rotation of the veldt began to show good results. I was able to speak with conviction of the way I had been led to this way of conservation and improvement. Now we run 3 times as many cattle as I had struggled with in those early days, and we can face the dry times without much anxiety. The sweet grasses have spread, the vleis have improved beyond expectation.

Though cattle played a notable part and caused us headaches, these farms depend on the Merino sheep. This wonderful animal, timid and tough, produces wool and rears lambs under adverse conditions. Our education and the education of the family, improvements to buildings, the convenience of our lives have been made possible by this often abused animal.

⁵ **Zuurpol** (Sour clump) *Danthonia* - or *Merxmulleria* - is a major grass of the area; a tough, sour grass, it is able to withstand the droughts & frosts of these high mountains

I had grown up with sheep, trained and passed exams as a wool classer. I had watched experts judging and sorting sheep and rams. But this had not fitted me to the task of a Studmaster of a well established flock of Merino sheep. I could seek advice from others - but, again, the final decision now was up to me. I knew in my heart that I needed more wisdom than was in me. Various friends working full-time with Moral Re-Armament from overseas came to spend some time with us. They gave us the spiritual fellowship we needed so badly at the time. I began to get a sense of direction for the farm.

I set an aim for the sheep flock - an animal growing a medium long, fairly dense fleece without too much body pleating (the fashion at the time was for excessive pleats). I bought new sires and the flock began to improve. In spite of occasional setbacks, some of our ideals began to take shape in the flock. Our aim for a good lambing percentage was obtained as we culled the poor producers rigorously.

The Merino, I discovered, was a very interesting but difficult animal to breed, It has so many points to look at in both wool and body shape - often negatively correlated! The wool quality, density of fibres, amount of oil (*suint*), length of wool and staple size - all on a well-built sheep - is an ideal difficult to attain. Nevertheless, the flock improved in uniformity and steadily adjusted to the new boss. Here I must pause to say a word of gratitude to the experts of *Grootfontein College*. They became friends and often spent time with us, and gave advice on the sheep and wool, both in judging and breeding⁶. *Bommy* Rose, Mr Schuurman, Dr Lucien Roux and others helped a great deal.

⁶ Note: What RBK does not mention is that his own ideas on the classing of wool were also taken back to the College by the experts & became standard practice in later years

STRETCHING BEYOND FARM BOUNDARIES

I had joined the Sneeberg Farmers' Association in New Bethesda (now spelled *Nieu*) as soon as I took over *Gordonville*, and was soon a fairly active member. I became deeply concerned about the missing sheep in our mountain camps, convinced it was Lynx (*Caracal*) which were killing them. On 11th May 1946 I moved a resolution at the Association that steps be taken to form a *Vermin Destruction Co-operative*. The idea received immediate support and a committee was appointed to investigate ways and means of doing this.

By 29th May we reported back and the decision was taken to form a *Vermin Club*. Mr *Peetsie* van Heerden was appointed the first Chairman and the Club was off to a good start. There was a struggle for enough funds, but over the years very good work has been done. I was elected to the Chair when *Peetsie* died suddenly (a great loss to the community). For 30 years I served as either Chairman or Vice-Chairman of this club, a forerunner of this sort of thing in the area⁷.

New Bethesda is a lovely village set in the Sneeberg Mountains, overlooked by the majestic Compassberg Peak. It is composed of many small-holdings, dependent on a wonderful spring of permanent water. Going to meetings, or for tennis matches, I often looked at the fertile lands and the lovely lucerne (*alfalfa*) with much interest - even envy. Better prices for wool and a constant shortage of food for the Stud stock persuaded me to invest in a plot of irrigated ground in the Village. Talking over the proposition with my cousin, Walter (son of Uncle Gray), he saw the merit in the move and we decided to buy the land in partnership. It proved to be a good investment.

Being now members of the Rate-Paying Community of the village, we also found new challenges. Both of us were approached by various citizens to stand for election to the Municipal Council. We agreed and found ourselves elected by large majorities. This entailed regular meetings with the council - and soon we were embroiled in the argument as to whether to fence and let the main part of the Commonage, or keep the whole thing for Ratepayers only - the majority of whom had no stock and therefore paid rates but had no benefit from the Commonage. Long and hot arguments took place in the Chamber. Eventually the question was settled in favour of the majority of the ratepayers and a large income for the Council was assured.

After a couple of years on the Council I found, with great surprise, myself elected as Mayor! This meant presiding at meetings and making many important decisions. There followed 2 interesting years. It was an honour and I look back with some pride on the years I was able to serve on that Council.

⁷ *Vermin Clubs* spread through this & neighbouring provinces - later supported by Divisional Councils who levelled a tax on property & included a small percent for Vermin Clubs

During these days we were also in touch with many other things. The development of the farm was interesting and absorbing, but, though there were always demands on the farm, we knew it would not be right to be *bogged down* on the land. We had never lost the vision we saw in our early days of change - *a world rebuilt through changed men*. We kept our interest in the world beyond the farm. Political divisions were growing within the country and International rivalries were threatening the peace again. Our close touch with the teams of Moral Re-Armament kept us informed and on our toes. At times we felt it right to move with the teams in different parts of the country, especially the Eastern Province.

In the '50's this became possible. My younger brother Neville was married and taking much of the responsibility. He loyally backed most of the ideas I put forward in regard to stocking and management. Plans for the Stud Shorthorns and sheep flocks had been stabilised. The staff were pretty well settled and loyal. The main lines of conservation had been laid and the veldt starting to show improvement.

To go off with the *MRA Teams* was no easy or light decision. We knew we would be criticised and judged irresponsible about our farm. And for me criticism by my neighbours cuts to the heart. But we were deeply convinced that it was right for us to be fully associated with the work of Moral Re-Armament and to be willing to take a part in the work when it seemed right. Neither the neighbours nor all the brothers and sisters approved!

We invited some of the *Overseas Team* to come to the Eastern Province and went with them to many of the towns and villages. With song and speech we spread the good news - *that God has a plan and men and women can find their part*. There was much warm-hearted response.

In 1954 it seemed right to accept an invitation to join the South African delegation to Caux in Switzerland. This called for much preparation and nervous anticipation. With the help of family and friends we found ourselves safely aboard a *SABENA* flight on our way to Europe. To be plunged from the open spaces of the Karroo into the exciting atmosphere of a great International Conference in the breathtakingly beautiful Swiss mountains, was like a dream! But there was no doubt about the reality of the Conference or the vitality of the people who faced their own needs and the needs of their nations. We saw a practical demonstration of a world united, as people from all races, colours, languages worked together, shared together in absolute harmony.

We were convinced that here in Caux was the growing centre for the world - like the single root from which a great plant can spread around the earth. Mary McLoed Bethune, the African American lady (born as a slave) who rose from the deprived South to be an advisor to the U.S President, said, "*May we stand united until this idea reaches mankind everywhere.*" She spoke for all.

Ma-Me, (pronounced *Mah-Mee*) Burmese lady teacher and leader, with eloquent hand gestures, said: "*Change is normal living. You wash your hands every day. Wash your hearts and minds daily too. The dirt can be used as fertilizer.*"

Dynamic rugby International and writer, Peter Howard⁸ added: "*We need to change gear. Do not be conformers. Be transformers. We have accepted the stretching task of living daily for our nations.*"

Frank Buchman, founder of MRA was there. "*It will take the best of our lives and the flower of our nations to save humanity. If we go all out for God we will win*" Then he added: "*You need to make the decision that you and your country are going to be ruled by the living God.*"

There were excursions to Gruyere - where we not only tasted some of the famous cheese, but lovely strawberries and cream. We also visited Vevey and Paul Kruger's home⁹ in that village just below the mountain on which Caux stands, 3000 feet above. Among our South African companions were ANC leader, Selope Thema, first editor of *The World*, and his wife, Grace. They were deeply moved by what they had found at Caux. We both fell in love with Switzerland with its beauty, order and discipline. But loyalty for our own country was enhanced and our commitment to find the way to the answer for division and hatred was deepened.

From Caux we flew to Paris for one wonderful day and night. We stayed in the home of the Baroness de Watteville, in the famed *Bois de Bologne*. Lovely beyond words!

I was invited to a luncheon party with Dr Buchman and some of his friends and distinguished visitors from Algeria, including Monji Slim, heading a delegation who were negotiating with France for Algerian independence. They later obtained their independence without violence. I sat next to Chief Mangwende of Rhodesia (now *Zimbabwe*) who sat on the left of Buchman. Mangwende had lost a hand when a rival had tried to kill him. I was travelling with him and helping him to cope. Monji Slim had much to say and spoke very positively about what MRA was doing. Frank Buchman was quiet, but with a radiance one could feel.

From there we flew to London for two days. This interesting journey had been unplanned originally, but we had made friends with the Chief and his wife, and so were asked to travel to London, caring for them. I was regarded as his *equerry* and so had special treatment at several places - including the London Zoo!

⁸ Captained England at Rugby & member of British Olympic Bobsled team. Became prolific writer of Life-Changing books & plays

⁹ After the *Anglo-Boer War*, President Kruger chose banishment in Vevey rather than live under British Rule. He is still a great hero & symbol to the Afrikaner Nation

Before coming home we spent a few days on Peter Howard's lovely *Hill Farm*. Then back home. We came back enriched in spirit and experience, happy to be back with family and friends. Soon we were back in routine and picked up threads of farmwork and social responsibilities. We loved the farm and all it meant of family unity and practical challenges of work and planning. But we had three more trips to Caux at widely spread intervals.

ANOTHER JOURNEY

In 1958 we set out again for Europe - Neville willingly taking charge of the farms and responsibilities on the land. At Caux we again met men and women from around the world and saw the spiritual answer at work in practical ways. After some weeks at the conference we were invited to travel in Switzerland and Germany with the film *Freedom*¹⁰, written and played by Africans, to many towns and villages. We attended the commercial showings of the film and, as Africans, could introduce and give some background to the film, as well as some of our own background and convictions.

It was a time of great experiences and many new friends. We stayed in the homes of Swiss and German friends of Moral Re-Armament, who gave us the most wonderful reception. In Berne, Mr Max Zelder entertained us to lunch in his historic home - furnished with articles hundreds of years old. In Germany we began our tour in Wasserberg, outside Munich. A black couple from Rhodesia joined us for some of the journey. We went on to Tübingen, Gensbach, and Heidelberg, spending a weekend on the edge of the Black Forest, where we could walk in it and get to know some of the ways of the Germans.

Later we took a train to Holland, for a conference there where we met old friends who had been with us in the Karroo - Charles and Anneke Redeles. They insisted we stay with them at Crabbehof, their lovely home on the outskirts of Dordrecht. While with them, we were able to attend a typical Dutch wedding. Jaap Windig, who had also been with the team in the Karroo, married Renske de Boer. This is a double affair, with a long meal thrown in. First there was the Civil ceremony, then the Church Ceremony, then the meal took place.

Generously the Redeles drove us through beautiful, low lying forested Holland to Brokstedt in Germany. Here we met the Stampa family who had fled from the East ahead of the Russian advance. They lived in a tiny house, but despite light snow on the ground, their welcome was warm. We were urged to visit them by their son, Dr Friedrich Stampa, (who worked in SA¹¹ and both visited us as well as doing some of his research on *Gordonville*). We travelled on with the Redeles to Dillenburg, far to the south. On our way we stopped at Gottlingen and were taken to the Friedland refugee camp where they knew the pastor.

Later we drove a few miles East along a lovely country road. Suddenly we came up to a high barbed-wire fence which just cut across the tarred road. The fence reached out North and South as far as the eye could see. Within a few hundred yards of where we had stopped, was a high watch-tower - and all along the fence at intervals we could see more such watch-towers. To the North-east, a few miles

¹⁰ *Freedom* written & acted by Black Africans, tells of a country which learns that Freedom is not merely *shaking off Colonial Rule* - but that hate, fear & greed can destroy freedom too

¹¹ He was researching the *Karroo Paralysis tick* which is endemic in Sneeuwberg mountain veldt

distant, was a quiet village; a few miles south, another village. As we turned to walk back to the car, we could see a third village. The three villages had been of the same community, many intermarried. Now they were separated by barbed-wire and watch-towers, while spiritual and ideological barriers were steadily being built higher.

We spent some very happy days with the Herbig's (Hiedi Stampa's parents) in Dillenburg. They were owners of a hardware factory. Mr Herbig and I often walked through the streets of the town in earnest conversation and in good fellowship - he spoke only German, I only English! But we could both use our hands for making signs!

They took us to the Frankfurt Aerodrome where we caught a plane to Nigeria. Janet had already been there for a year and it had been many years since we had seen her. We were struck by the open free bearing of the Nigerians and their friendliness. We spent some days in Lagos, including Christmas. Steamy heat - but so interesting and beautiful! We went on to Onitsha, on the south bank of the mighty Niger River. Here a big MRA conference was being held, ending in a packed meeting in the Auchoko Hall. Moira, Janet and I could tell that big audience how we had found unity in the family when we accepted the standards and the principles of God-led living which Moral-Re-Armament had helped us to discover.

By January 1959, we were back in Johannesburg in time to be in at the end of the New Year Conference. We were able to speak of our conviction that white South Africans who had found a new way of living had a great part to play in Africa. This conviction has not dimmed with the passing of time, nor with the independence and mixed fortunes of so many African states.

It was soon after our return that David accepted an invitation to go to Nigeria to work with a team there; later I was to accept an invitation to go to Central Africa on the same mission.

In 1962 four German miners from the Rhur (who had found an effective faith at Caux) and Mrs Lottie von Beuningen, a distinguished 80-year old lady from Holland (who had suffered under the Nazis), with others arrived in South Africa. They were a very able and powerful force of speakers who stopped over on the farm for a few days on their way to the Cape by car. It was then that the miners ceremoniously presented Moira with a miniature Miner's lamp. They invited us to join them at Cape Town and it seemed right for me to go.

We spoke at several meetings including the City Hall and a big meeting at Langa Township. There, the speakers (of which I was one) sat on a temporary platform in a large square. P.Q. Vundla and Dr William Nkomo were with us. They introduced the miners and other speakers. After the meeting, little groups gathered around each of us and we spoke for an hour or more with interested people.

It was only long afterwards that we heard there had been a plan to stone us, but the effectiveness of the speakers, especially Vundla and Nkomo, and the interest aroused by the miners, melted the bitterness in the hearts of the people and turned them into friends.

From Cape Town we travelled to Umtata, the capital of the Transkei. Reg Place and I went ahead to prepared and were able to plan for a number of effective meetings. It was here that Ken Gladwin said to me: "*It will mean everything to these Germans if South Africans will be prepared to leave their jobs and travel with them to Central Africa.*" It seemed to me that God was directing me to be part of the team.

I returned home to plan for several months away. It was no light decision. I had to count the cost. Neville was now farming on his own at *Bergplaas*. David was away in Nigeria. Robert was just out of school, so he and Moira would have to take on the whole burden of the farm. With conviction and courage Moira took it on. We knew that friends and neighbours would not understand but we felt that, at this critical time for Africa, it was right to play what part we could in proclaiming the answer to hate, fear and greed.

TAKING THE MESSAGE DEEPER INTO AFRICA

[Some of the details of events here will be illustrated by excerpts from letters which RBK wrote to Moira during the time, which she saved. They will appear in this form]

First stop was Salisbury (now called *Harare*) where we presented the play *The Ladder* and showed some of the films. Foundations had been laid previously and this strengthened ties with Rhodesians of all races - a fact which has been of great help in bringing reconciliation to many in that country after years of war.

29th May 1962 from Salisbury: Had an excellent and safe flight of only 2 hours. Got through Customs safely and Peter Hosken and Wilson were there to meet us. Came to this home and welcomed by Brem, Guenevere and others. William (Nkomo) and I share a room tonight which is a good move. I think he is a great fellow meant to do higher things for Africa and I need to live so he can be the highest.

After coffee, William and I were taken by Brem to meet the Federal Secretary of Home Affairs and then called on the Federal Minister, Mr Sanavu. ..They are keen to see our play. Of course, the miracle of getting the cast and the fact of having put it on in Stellenbosch and Pretoria knocks the feet out of any negatives. The secretary said, "*We have found no answer in political solutions. They are too shallow. We need something more. This cast is really marvellous*"

With Peter Hosken, a miner in Zambia, I went ahead to prepare for the coming of the main force. We planned for the miners in the Copper Belt to meet the German miners. Later many successful meetings were held. The German miners, in their dark navy serge uniforms¹² with shiny brass buttons and leather aprons made a great impression. The heat must have affected them very much yet they never complained and gave their hearts all the time - as did the 80 year old Mrs von Beuningen.

In Ndolo, Dr William Nkomo (with whom I usually shared a room) and I were given hospitality by an Indian businessman. Here I learned the ways of our gracious host and hostess. The bath was unique. You sat on a low cement pillar in a little room, used a mug to dip water from a bucket, and washed yourself in that way. Shaving had to take place on the back stoop. Several of the little Indian children would gather around to watch with interest.....

3rd June 1962, Luansha: I'm sitting in an *Eskimo-Hut* which is the tea-room in the Roan Antelope Mine Club. Peter and I left at 4.30 a.m.; Today we have been steadily battling to lay the groundwork for the coming of the force. Met the Mayor, the head of the local Trade Union and many others. There is going to be a tremendous battle - as everywhere. People are constantly trying to put us into a box - a Religious box or a Political one. I am determined to live in the realm of world ideology brought to birth by God in this age. They have just ended a strike here, but from we can find out, the Communists are working at both ends, aiming to increase bitterness and cut down on profits. I realise we are dealing with the very basic hope for the future

¹² German Mining Guilds have dramatic-looking uniforms, including high hat (different badge for each Guild, & a leather apron (originally for sliding down the chute)

From Ndola we motored to what was then Elizabethville, capital of Katanga Province (now *Lubumbashi*). Their President, Moise Tshombe was away but his deputy met us in State House and spoke earnestly with William. From there we flew to Usumbura and were invited to live at the Catholic University. We each had a small room and were very well cared for.

23rd June: I'm back in my little *cell* after our morning team meeting which brought quite a bit of news for a meeting and a film this evening for the nuns of the convent and hospital where Ags, Lottie and Kirsten stay. The poor ladies have suffered one of the worst setbacks which could befall a woman in Central Africa: their suitcases were swiped right there (must have been while having supper). Lottie had a little money but they found nothing they could buy in town.

The tragedy here is people are pulling out. Businessmen and others are out or going - they expect the Franc to fall in value and there will be difficulties - even reprisals. On the other hand, the Government want to work with the Whites on a basis of equality. They realise they need the technicians. We cannot get *Activist* and are dependent on the government and others taking the initiative. The army fetched us in a jeep and bus last night. Over 2000 in a kind of open shed. We stayed a long time and got to bed after 12.30. The young soldiers are eager to hear more.

We were invited guests to the Independence Celebration of Burundi and given *VIP* seats in the grandstand. The King of Burundi, his consort, the Belgian governor, and other officials sat just behind us - surrounded by security men. Drummers, dancers and orators all had a part in a very colourful ceremony, in which the Belgian flag was lowered and replaced by the flag of Burundi.

1 July 1962 **A Nation is Born!** It was a great privilege to be given seats in the stadium when Burundi was given independence. The King was greeted with shouts and cheers. 25 tall men with blue tunics over white flowing robes beat drums of hollowed logs in magnificent manner at a speed to be seen to be believed! The Belgian governor spoke with generosity and the King and prime Minister of Burundi replied and emphasized the aims of the new nation: responsibility, peace, co-operation with everyone.

A 21-gun salute was fired and the troops formed into columns and marched around the stadium. As they marched I thought: "*All Africa is marching forward on eager feet. It that march is to be with discipline and charity and co-operation depends much on whether we in South Africa live with discipline, in charity and co-operation*".

Usumbura, 10th July: As I write, Burundi broadcast is on and the MRA half-hour is on the go! At the same time, Freedom is running at an open air showing. The Colwells sang, the miners were introduced and two of them spoke. Then William introduced me. I spoke and then introduced the film. We move ahead with miracles and are touching the country. This is a real crossroads in Africa. They have close ties with Congo, Uganda and Tanganyika. Yesterday a bishop from Ruanda was here, He saw *Men of Brazil* and *The Crowning Experience*¹³. He decided that MRA was the answer: "A renewal in Christ." the Brazilians left for Leopoldville today and will prepare the way there.

¹³ *Men of Brazil* - the story of how change in the Docks of Brazil brought Renewal; *Crowning Experience* - the Musical on the life of Mary McLeod Bethune who rose from a Negro Slave to advisor of Presidents in the USA

We stayed on some weeks. Each evening we had film shows or some function to meet the people of the country. The Germans, who had been in the middle of Ideological battles in their country and had found the way to an answer, made a tremendous contribution. Lottie von Beuningen, Agnes Hofmeyr (whose father had been murdered by the *Mau Mau* of Kenya) and other ladies also made a great contribution.

The Catholic Church gave us full backing and one night the Archbishop spoke after the film: *"I thank God for bringing this grace to earth. I will do my best to reassure Rome¹⁴ that there is nothing against the Catholic Church in MRA and anyone who wishes to have a part need find no hindrance."* He said he wished we could visit all the Catholic schools, and added, *"You go where priests can no longer go. You take a message to the Asians and the African Nationalists who are hostile to the Church, and you teach them to think of the problems of a nation from a spiritual angle."*

I did not find it easy in those days. French was the language of the people and so communication was through interpreters.

The time came to leave. The airport was filled with people waiting to get out of the country. Many were nervous about the new rulers. We sat for hours awaiting our turn - which eventually came in a 'plane which was very heavily loaded! All the passengers except some in our small party were black. But the Belgian pilot knew his job and flew us safely, first landing at Albertville and then at the great city of Leopoldville (*Kinshasa* now). I saw this great sprawling city from the air with much excitement. It proved a beautiful city with many fine buildings in the main part, some bad slums on the outskirts. The people were cheerful and clean and lived in small homes.

The great river Congo - 2 or 3 miles across - flows along the northern boundary of the city. To the west are the great rapids which make the river unsuitable for navigation from the sea. Here, looking over the rapids, stands a great statue of Stanley who made the first journey across Africa.

There was much to do, meeting people, planning for film shows, and speaking at meetings. Each day there was a team meeting to work through the plans for the day. The three African leaders who were with us made a great contribution. All three had been part of the writing and acting of the *Freedom* film too - Manessah Moerane and Dr William Nkomo from South Africa, and John Amata from Nigeria.

26 July, Leopoldville: Personally I long to be back, but while God tells me to be here, I must obey. It is not for ourselves, but we may hold the future of the whole continent in our hands here. We are to be received by the President. This is a wonderful opportunity. The Prime Minister, when he saw William, said, *"I was the one who moved the resolution against South Africa but I have been shown through MRA that there is another way"*

¹⁴ There had been many attempts by certain factions to turn the Catholic Church against MRA

30th July, Leopoldville: Last night 6 of us had supper with Mr Gardiner, the Ghanaian at the head of UNO. We learned many things about the pressures he is under. The one thing that is clear is that not all the trouble comes from Moscow. Some capitalists in Belgium and other European countries and the USA are just as ruthless and count people just as little in the struggle for wealth and power. We need to pray and keep on the fight for moral stability which must come before political and economic stability. There is no doubt about extensive corruption and immorality in high circles - and also pretty good living by UNO people who get big salaries and bring no answers with them!

In Kinshasa we met people from Angola, refugees from their country. They styled themselves *President and vice-president of the Government in Exile*. The *President* said he had been a refugee in the Congo since the age of 10. He had fled when he had to go into forced labour in a road gang when his mother had gone to have a baby. He had to work in her place. "*The only way for us is to use force*", he said, "*as we cannot be in touch with the Portuguese. We dare not express our ideas.*"

This morning, William, Manasseh (Moerane) and I all spoke (through a translator) all morning with the President and V-President of DPA, one of the 3 big political parties in Angola. One is Vice Prime Minister of the Provincial Government-in-exile. They say they would like to apply the standards for their country - but they dare not go there or they will be *liquidated*.

I found these days difficult from a personal point of view. I tend to draw into my shell on such occasions, and did this there. So I felt my own contribution to this great opportunity was minimal.

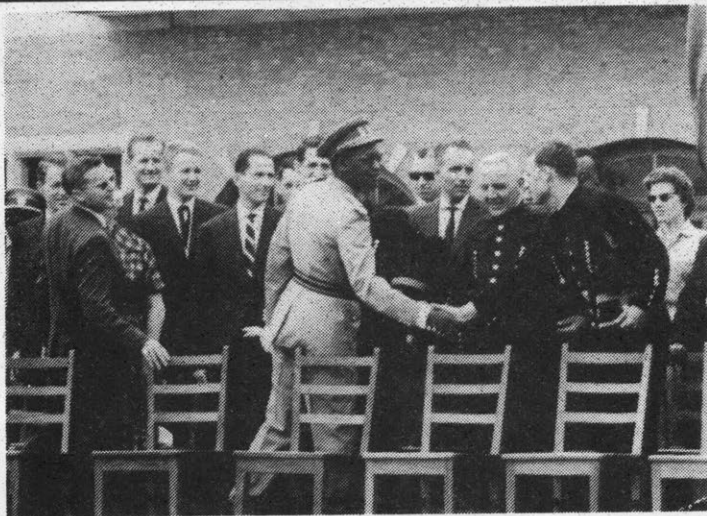
But this part of the work drew to a natural end. The miners had to leave for Germany and I caught a plane for Johannesburg. Moira and Robert had been battling on the farm and I felt it time to get back and work with them again. Nico Ferreira¹⁵ met me at the airport and drove me straight home the next day. A deed of kindness I shall never forget.

I was invited to speak on several occasions giving some of my impressions and convictions about my time in Central Africa. Though my words, at that time, seemed to fall on stony ground, they have proved by circumstances to be prophetic. "*We need to recognize that Communism is a World Ideology,*" I said, "*with a strategy and plan for world conquest. It has trained men well established in Central Africa. There is a surge in Africa towards self-expression, freedom, independence - call it what you will. But it is a wave which nothing can stem. It is destined to lap every shore in Africa. Yet it need not spell the doom of the best things in our civilization which we hold dear. Indeed, this is the challenge of Africa today - and my experience with the people of Central Africa has only made me more convinced that our country has a great destiny if we would but grasp it.*"

¹⁵ Nico Ferreira, former leader of the Afrikaner Youth movement, had found an answer to his own fear & hatred. His apology to Philip Vundla, Revolutionary ANC, had brought change & faith to Vundla, who could fight with new passion for his country



*At the King's cocktail party. Usumbura
Palace Burundi. Independence day 1/7/62
RBK with John Amata (Nigeria) & Greek
Orthodox Bishop*



*Lumumba greets the miners
Dr. Nkomo had taken the salute with him*



RBK, with Dr. William Nkomo, Manasseh Moerane and the German miners, meeting President Kasavubu

"We must think for the Continent. Who has better knowledge of the diseases of men and of livestock, the needs of Agriculture, the difficulties of the African climate than those of us who have lived all our lives on this Continent?"

"If we here accepted the idea of serving and building up these countries, we would rise to true greatness and not only secure our own future but open up and increase our markets and guarantee our prosperity. These are our natural markets to which our produce should flow. But to play our part we must understand the age in which we live - the Ideological Age." Always I went on to show that Moral Re-Armament is an inclusive world force and nothing short of a great, all-embracing faith was adequate.

In more than 30 years since I said those words, much has happened, including the breakdown of Communism. But our destiny has not changed, it has only been made more difficult because we have failed so far to rise to our true calling. The warm hearts of the African people and their longing for the right things has strengthened my conviction.

Driving through towns and villages in Central Africa, I had seen beautiful homes abandoned by Whites who had fled at the coming of independence. The equatorial growth was beginning to push into the doors and windows of those sad, empty houses. I had written home from Burundi, *"It is a great task God has called us to in Africa. We in South Africa must open our hearts - or we condemn ourselves to a terrible retribution. We will need all our moral character to withstand the softness of the West and the hardness of the East."*

The hands of history move fast in Africa in the 20th Century. There were many nervous glances in Burundi on Independence Day. We knew of the terrible tribal rivalries. Later massacres took place.

It was clear that money was coming from Moscow via Brussels. *"One thing is clear,"* I wrote in my notebook at the time, *"the Portuguese have to deal with very intelligent, determined and well-backed men - who say they cannot get in touch with the Portuguese government to talk on a (to them) reasonable basis."* It took 15 years, but in the end the Portuguese had to give up and get out. The eventual rule of this rich vast country and its millions of potential people is not yet finally settled. Hundreds of thousands have been killed and maimed but peace and unity still eludes the people.

BACK TO ROOTS

In 1973 we flew to Caux again. After a frightening trip through a storm over Central Africa, we arrived at Brussels, soon caught another flight to Geneva and from there by car along the shores of lovely Lake Geneva, up by Lausanne, Vevey and Montreux to Caux. The Conference was in full swing and we joined the *vegetable team*¹. This meant daily peeling mountains of potatoes, Kholrabi etc - but at the same time talking with people from all over the world.

Later we spoke from the platform with Mr and Mrs Curnick Ndamse from the Transkei². He had served on the Cabinet but had lost his seat later. We said that, as White South Africans, we needed to face at the Cross the wrongs we had done, accept forgiveness and live on a new basis

After the Conference we flew from Geneva to Dublin. Because of a delay at Geneva, we missed the connection to London and arrived in Dublin at 11 p.m instead of 8. Our luggage had also missed the connection! There was no transport from the Airport at that time and we needed to get to Port Loaise. Eventually the airline found a mini-bus which took us all the way to Mount Mellick, where cousin Joyce Meredith³ met us, made us feel welcome and very much at home. Indeed, we felt it was home, to be able to walk in the fields, look at the cattle, and admire the beautiful green of the grass.

After a few days we took a train for the West of Ireland - the longing of Moira's loyal heart was to see the West, from where her father had come at the beginning of the century. We were met at the station and driven to *Carn*, the Massey home now farmed by Jum (James) and Jean Massey⁴. It was a tremendous joy to see Moira's wonder and happiness. We were taken to all parts of the farm and surrounding area. We found that, for the West, farming had become less of a hazard with the discovery of making grass silage under plastic covers. No more did they need to struggle to make hay⁵ in that wet climate, Cattle were selling well and the farmers seemed to be in good heart.

Jum took us on many trips to the market towns around the farm. In some, the livestock stand on the pavements until sold by auction (or private transaction). In bigger centres, kraals have been constructed and sales take place much as the do with us. Most cars are fitted with a tow-bar and drag little trailers - sometimes with

¹ As there are no paid servants, all the work has to be done by Conference members so various voluntary teams are formed such as vegetable preparation, cooking, wash-up, room-cleaning, serving at tables etc. Each one takes a turn to be served or to serve

² *Transkei* was the first of the so-called Independent States in SA, part of *Grand Apartheid* plan of Dr Verwoerd

³ Joyce, eldest daughter of James Massey, farms with husband Roy at Rosenallis

⁴ Their son David has taken over now (1996)

⁵ As cattle have to be fed in sheds through winter months, summer hay was vital; now silage (which could be stored in wet conditions) did the job

a few pigs, a heifer, or a little bunch of sheep on their way to the market. The roads are narrow, twisty and dangerous. Though not reckless, the Irish seemed to drive at a high speed under all conditions!

On our first Sunday in Mayo, we went to the little Mulafarry Presbyterian Church which had been the centre of worship for the Massey family for many generations. We sat in the very pew that David Massey and his brothers and sisters had sat as a boy and a young man. We also visited the boarding school in Sligo and found *D.M.* carved in the pew of the Church there! Andy Carrol and his brothers lived in a cottage near the Mulafarry Church. He remembered Robert Massey, Moira's Grandfather, driving in fine style a team of horses, Sunday by Sunday in his cart to attend Church. The horses were stabled during Church services in the Carrols' stable.

Inevitably the time came to leave again. It was with heavy -yet very grateful hearts - that we left this Irish home. We flew to London and linked up again with the MRA team there, then traveled on to an inspiring time at Tirley Garth, the English country training centre for MRA. Sam Pono⁶ was there to welcome us. From there we entrained for Edinburgh to visit Moira's cousins, Allie and Jessie Massey, and had a chance to see a little of that lovely and famous city. From there we traveled by train to Norfolk to visit Robert (Massey) and his family. Here, too, we were wonderfully cared for and able to see this romantic part of Britain. Then back to London with friends for two days. After a visit to Westminster Theatre⁷, we returned to Johannesburg and home once more. Deeply grateful to be back, but grateful, too, for the marvelous experiences and love poured out on us.

I was thankful to be back home - to begin to catch up with farm, family, and other responsibilities. Days seemed always to be busy. Getting cattle and sheep to sales, meetings to attend in Graaff-Reinet and New Bethesda, Congresses⁸ in Port Elizabeth. As Chairman of the Soil Conservation Committee there was much to do, as we were involved with the Vermin Club and Farmers' Associations, as well as various charitable organisations. Moira and I were both members of the African Child Welfare Society, feeling it was a way to work for better Race relations in our country. I also felt it right to take some responsibility in Political affairs. I became District as well as Divisional Chairman of the United Party⁹. When that faded out, we became members of the Progressive Party and for a time I was local Chairman there as well.

⁶ Sam Pono was a young Xhosa student in the Transkei who had seen something of the change that RBK had spoken of. Through correspondence with RBK he found a new direction for his life. From a bloody revolutionary, he committed his life to bringing SA under God control

⁷ MRA in London saved the famous theatre from demolition, used it to spread their message

⁸ RBK served on the Executive of *Midlands Agric. Union* many years where his contributions were appreciated; in fact he was now in almost every executive committee that was formed in the district those years, having been totally rejected in the earlier years!

⁹ The Official Opposition, started by General Smuts, UP opposed the Nationalist party in its *Grand Apartheid*

The routine work went on - planning for shearing the sheep, getting the bales of wool off to the sales, dipping and dosing sheep, planning, building or repairing fences, planting or reaping crops, or vegetables, and even cutting the lawns - all this had to be thought about and action taken.

Besides work, there was family growth in which to rejoice. Clare had been married in 1954 with many heart-warming friends at the reception on a cold winter's day, in the garden with snow white on the ground! Crowds had come to celebrate with us (and some surprised when their table or chair suddenly sank into the lawn with the melting of the frosted snow!). David had married Jeannette du Preez in Pretoria in 1965 - a memorable and happy occasion.

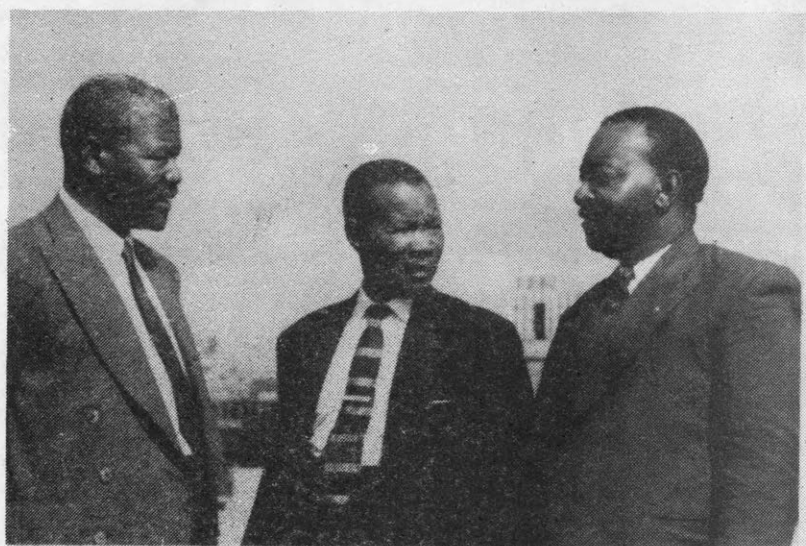
In 1966, Janet, back from her work abroad, married Ken Gladwin¹⁰. He had also, for many years, given his full time to work with Moral Re-Armament. Ken went back to the profession for which he had trained and found a good job as a Quantity Surveyor in Cape Town. For the wedding we had transformed the shearing shed into a Chapel.

Then Robert married Phillida Plumstead in Johannesburg, and came back to take on his job of farming. They had met earlier while both were with the *Springbok Stampede* (a youth group of MRA) but the relationship was cemented when her family stayed for a holiday on the neighbouring farm, *The Rest*, which we had just bought from Alwyn Burger.

Of course, life moves on - and not everything is always bright and happy. Moira's mother (*Ouma*, as we called her) was living alone in her home in Muller Street. Dr Carl and *Lallah* had moved¹¹ to a big home in Cypress Grove. It seemed right for *Ouma* to move nearer to them and she bought a pleasant house, 38 Cypress Grove, in 1966. We all helped her to move, and of course she always welcomed us for the day or longer. She had a genius for homemaking and it was soon a lovely home which the family used quite often. In the early 70's her health began to fail. It often meant Moira staying there and helping her. Toward the end she spent many days in town. In 1973 we buried this much loved and self-disciplined lady besides others of her family in the graveyard in Graaff-Reinet.

¹⁰ Janet caught Jeannette's bridal bouquet - & Ken, who had for some time thought about marrying her decided that this was the sign, & moved quickly!

¹¹ They had sold the old Massey home & surgery to the *Checkers group* at a big price (for those years) R24 000



Left to right: Rev. Samuel Tema, Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church; Mr. P.Q. Vundla, Chairman of the Western Native Township Advisory Board, Johannesburg; and Dr. William Nkomo, co-founder and former President of the African National Congress Youth League.



RBK with Transkei Chiefs, Victor Poto & Tutor Ndamase and the rams RBK had given to them



25 years later, Jeannette K. with the 21 children of that year (1972)
many of which are children of the register below

Girls & Boys

The Total Names of Children in school and ages

Name	SURNAME	12 = YEARS
1, Alima	Fillis	12 = YEARS
2 Maria	Deshe	11 = "
3 Mitha	Deshe	7 = "
4 Regina	MakaPela	11 = "
5 ANNIE	MakaPela	9 = "
6 Martha	Damens	6 = "
7 Regina	Damens	12 = "
8 Marie	Malatu	9 = "
9 MaBel	Gamaha	6 = "
10 GEORGE	MakaPela	7 = "
11 FREIK	Damens	10 = "
12 Samuel	Damens	8 = "
13 HotNott	Nkeuse	7 = "
14 Issac	Damens	5 = "
16 John	Malatu	7 = "
16 Sonamzi	Damens	6 = "

Page out of the first school at Gordonville's Register. Most of the children were "Bantu" but a good percentage of "Coloureds" are to found.

SOME LEARNING EXPERIENCES

There were quite a number of events and experiences that happened along the way which do not quite fit into the particular theme of some of the episodes or chapters described in these memories. However, the story would be incomplete without some mention of them. Immediately comes to mind our time with Moira's Aunt Carrie, sister of her mother.

Caroline had been a beautiful girl. Her father had sold his business in Graaff-Reinet in 1985 and taken the family to Europe. The girls went to school - *Finishing School* - in Germany and Switzerland, while the boys went to Cambridge and Edinburgh Universities to take Law¹² and Medicine. The family returned to South Africa in 1901 - without Carrie. In 1900 she had met and married the handsome German Officer, Count Wilhelm von Jecklin, one of the Guards of Kaiser Wilhelm. Of course, as an officer, he was involved in the First World War, losing an eye. A marked man in the new Nazi regime, he died in 1938, just before Hitler brought more chaos to Europe, leaving Carrie alone in their home in Berlin.

When the Second World War hostilities broke out, she fled Berlin and hid with some friends in the Black Forest. Only after the war could she escape from Germany via Switzerland¹³ and eventually came to us at *Gordonville*. Now aged and alone, she was still both beautiful and gentle. She soon became fully part of the household, adopting the children as her own, and they learned to love her.

One of our most grateful memories is that she found a faith and began to seek God's plan for herself. But she also had to face more tragedy and pain. Walking in the garden one day, she fell and broke a hip. She had to go by ambulance to Port Elizabeth. Besides a pin in her hip, she had to undergo surgery for another ailment - found to be incurable Cancer. Moira went with her to care for her and brought her back home. We were able to get a permanent nurse for her on the farm. Toward the end she had the miracle of becoming free of the constantly nagging pain and died in peace, loved and missed by all. Many years later we were to lose our son-in-law, Ken Gladwin to the same killer. One of the lessons it taught us, was to care for those around us while they are there to care for.

It was around that time that we learnt a few other important lessons. Growing up as we did, we had a typical English Outlook. *Self-satisfied and Superior*. We had seen at Caux how races and religions could get along if one allowed God to be in control. We began to get our own convictions about our attitude to other races and languages, as well as that of others like us, which was a great cause of division and bitterness in the land. Clearly we needed to change in these attitudes.

¹² One brother, George Wille became a renowned Lawyer, writing the book on *Principles of South African Law* that is still seen by many legal men as the Lawyer's Bible today

¹³ This story is more described from her diary.

One day we followed out Moira's thought to visit our northern neighbours and apologise for our prejudices about Afrikaans and Afrikaners, which had separated us from them. Such a rich friendship grew from that! It lasted many years and meant a lot to both families.

Later, at a conference for MRA, I met Piet Naude, a strong Transvaal Afrikaans farmer. I went to him and told of my earlier prejudice and apologised. We became firm friends and helped each other to learn the other's language by regular letters. Piet became a great power in his area where he helped to bring much change amongst his neighbours as well as his own farm workers.

My meeting with Piet and improving my Afrikaans helped me not only to make friends with other folk, but, because of this, I could now take a full part in all the business of Farmers' Association meetings and other gatherings. My awareness of the hurt caused by my sort of superiority also gave new sympathy and understanding of those around me. I found myself elected to the Chair in many meetings. Not only the *Sneeuberg Farmers' Association* (which won the cup for the best in the Midlands the first time when I was in the Chair), but for political and charitable organisations with which we became associated. It is humbling to know that it is not in my own person that I am capable of such things, but from the gift of change which we accepted so long ago.

Meeting and having fellowship with Blacks in our society at that time was one thing. Having them in our home was another! We had met a number of black men and women who had found change and a new purpose (as we had) at Conferences and team meetings. They had become friends from whom we learned a lot. Then in 1957 we had a phone call from Johannesburg. A car load of friends was travelling from Johannesburg down to Cape Town and "*could they spend a night with us on the farm?*" One of the group was Philip Vundla, the revolutionary ANC leader from Soweto. It was a challenge and we needed to make a decision.

Doubts arose. What would the neighbours say and think? Already we were labeled as the *strange ones* in the district. What would the farm workers' reaction be? This was something simply not done in those days of strict *Apartheid*.

As I look back now, I am pleased we did not hesitate long. We warmly welcomed Philip to our home where he spent an interesting two days. We do not know what the neighbours thought or said, but we do know we never regretted welcoming him. Philip Vundla went on to make a really positive contribution to our country - even to the point where, some years later, he was attacked, stabbed and spent weeks in hospital. There were those who did not agree with the standards he was trying to set for his beloved country or his vision for a future free of Hate and Fear.

Of course, the farm staff took it in their stride! It had been our own prejudice, assuming that the staff would find this a problem. Since that first challenge, others of our black friends came to the farm. They have enriched our lives and widened our vision.

We have been immensely grateful, too, that the farm has been able to be a haven where folk¹⁴ from all walks of life could find peace and new vision and hope for the future.

The goal of increasing the grass cover to attempt to get the veldt back as close as possible to its original state is always there. Many grazing schemes and changes in direction were taken as new ideas came to our notice. Sometimes we have been fairly successful and sometimes not. Sometimes we have been lucky.

Luck would not have been the word springing to mind between Christmas and New Year of 1952! We were enjoying a weekend at the Tennis court, under the elms, with friends. Some of the Overseas Team were enjoying a break from their activities and Charles Rubidge and his *Zoetvlei* family were with us for the day.

David (a young teenager then) came running up in great distress. He had seen smoke in the mountains. We all ran to get a glimpse. A large column of dense smoke was towering over the *Oshoek* mountains to the North West. Indeed, it looked like the whole area was ablaze. *Oshoek*, a mountainous camp of about 1000 morgen, had been recently divided into 4 sections, with a large flock of ewes driven to the furthest camp.

We phoned our neighbours, called the staff together, and, with little knowledge as to what should be done, set off to do what we could. Charles and *Con* took wire cutters and raced off to different points to cut as many fences as possible to allow the sheep to escape, but the fire, driven by a strong West wind, was too fast. It raced down the slopes of the valley, trapping many of the sheep. It then began to spread north and south, feeding off the grass cover that had begun to increase through the years. The battle was on to save the farm. For 3 days and 2 nights we battled the blaze. If you have never battled the heat of a brush fire, you can barely imagine it. It is exhausting in the extreme. Usually we had to climb a slope to get to the blaze and so were already out of breath before the beating could even start! Neighbours and friends (even some we had hardly even met) came from as far as Kendrew, south of Graaff-Reinet to help. At night the reddened sky could be seen 50 miles away, and the column of smoke from much further away during the day.

The fire moved at a great speed. It roared down the *Oshoek* valley, spreading on either side. At one point, the Dodge truck, was hard-pressed to keep ahead of the onrushing flames. It had been parked on the road on the way to *Oshoek* while gangs of workers went to meet the flames to try to prevent the spread. Suddenly the wind changed direction and the flames started towards the truck. Though travelling as fast as possible, the flames remained at its tail until it reached *Bigland*, which was too short to burn at the time (having been a ploughed land a few years earlier) and the truck was able to be parked safely.

¹⁴ From King & Queen of Romania & various Lords & Ladies to many as ordinary folk

Con (Neville) and some men were beating higher up one of the valleys, when they realised that they had been encircled by a ring of flames - with their backs to a cliff. He said later that he had thought they were *goners*, when suddenly the wind changed direction for a few seconds, allowing them to break through to the already burnt veldt on the other side of the flames. They heard a loud *Pouff!*, and the area in which they had been standing a few seconds earlier was a sea of flame!

At another point the blaze threatened the homestead at *Zuurfontein*. Con had got the tractor out and tried to plough a buffer strip between the mountainside with its onrushing flames and the house. This was very difficult as the soil is very stony in that part, on the side of the hill. His wife, Shirley, took the valuable and beloved Arab stallion, *Zahir*, and the mare *Barakah*, out of the stables and onto the road. (It is significant to me that their thoughts were not for their own possessions but the beloved animals) Again, there was a sudden shift of wind, the fire changed course, and the threat disappeared.

Fighting fire consisted of either beating the flames with wet bags (which dried out fast and then ran the danger of catching alight themselves!) or using spades to throw sand on the burning grass. In the mountains, especially at night, this was a lot more difficult than it sounds!

Our experience with fighting fire was more or less non-existent at that time. My cousin, Walter used his experience commanding troops in the War to great affect! He took responsibility in the marshaling of weary firefighters and directing their efforts to best advantage. I am grateful to him and other loyal friends and others who poured out more than sweat in those high mountains for so many hours. Others manned stations to get water and food to the parched gangs of men.

It was three days before we could get back into the veldt and try to assess the loss. Over 200 ewes had been either burned to death or so badly maimed that we had to put them out of their misery right there. It was painful to me in the extreme. On the other hand, there was a miracle in the hundreds more that survived unscathed! When looking at those blackened camps, we saw no area that had not been burnt, so it must, again, have been the lucky vagaries of the wind and Nature's instinct that allowed them to survive.

Seven cattle and 2 mules had also perished. The whole landscape was black and bare. We were devastated. Besides the financial setback, (both the loss of stock and the destruction of many miles of fencing), we thought irreparable damage had been done to the veldt. In earlier days, prior to about 1860, fire had been used as a means of obtaining green winter grazing. After a fire, root reserves allow for a quick green shoot to develop. This is highly palatable and nutritious and the stock eagerly fatten on it. However, it is very detrimental to the health of the grass and great areas of sward throughout these mountain ranges were destroyed that way. When rains came, the soil, now denuded, simply washed down to the sea. As a result, fire had for some time now been viewed as the farmer's enemy.

As it happened, soft rains began to fall soon after the New Year, and the green shoots appeared. Then there was a carpet of flowers covering the mountainsides. We called in the help of Veldt scientists and grazing experts from Grootfontein to help advise us. Dr. Tidmarsh, John Acocks, and Dr Piet Roux, all came to look at the development and give advice. At the time we believed it right to spare the veldt for a full 18 months before grazing it. Over 2500 morgen had been destroyed. This meant that 40% of the farm was out of use for this time!

Instead of damage, we began to find that the fire had actually been of benefit to the veldt! The hard, resinous bush (*Renosterbos*) which was an invader during the 1800's and which had been the reason for the massive flames, had been burnt away, and the grasses no more needed to compete with them for moisture or sunlight. Also, the long, *moribund* sourgrasses were now rejuvenated and proper care in their grazing actually improved the grass cover and palatability.

Lessons learned there are now put into practice in these mountains where fire is used, on a controlled basis, to improve the veldt¹⁵. In latter years these camps, once very poor in cover, have become extremely well grassed with high quality grasses increasing beyond imaginings.

Only a year later were we able to discover how the fire had started. A small labourer's son had been sent to collect wood. His guardians thought he had been trying to burn a snake out of a hole when the dry grass caught alight and became uncontrollable. The lad had run to protect himself in some rocks but had been scorched to death. His remains had been found only months later.

Another natural disaster took place around that time. We were breeding and preparing the Stud Shorthorn bulls for the shows and sales. While looking at the latest group of young bulls as they paraded up and down the yard, each with a youngster hanging onto his halter, I mentioned to a young David, home for school holidays, that *this was possibly the best parcel of bulls I, personally, had ever prepared for the Sales*. A very proud Antonie¹⁶, who was in charge of the bulls and stables agreed that these were a great string of animals.

Not more than a week later, there was a massive electrical storm which started soon after dark. Lightning bolts crashed down all around the Dolorite mountains. It can be a very frightening experience.

¹⁵ Later experience has shown that 18 months rest is too long; *Zuurpol* gets too old in that time. Now the practice is to graze (the first time) soon after shoots have passed 20 cm in length, with the emphasis on short periods of grazing & long rests, allowing grass to strengthen roots as well as form & ripen seeds.

¹⁶ Antonie Fillis who ruled the youngsters around the stables with an iron hand had come to the farm in the 1930's & his family played a great part in the history of the farm. He died, in his home on the farm, a white-bearded old man, after many years of retirement.

There was one very close and blinding flash of light, the lights all went out, blue flames darted between the trophies on the mantelpiece, and the house seemed to rock with the sound of the thunder which followed instantaneously. We realised it had struck very close - in fact, we thought it had hit the house.

Next morning we went outside to see how much rain had fallen. Near the furrow on the way to the shed, we saw that the concrete join on the water pipe had been totally disintegrated. Pieces of cement and concrete lay scattered for 50 yards around the area and water streamed from the broken pipe. We decided that this must have been the point of the lightning strike.

However, as we walked further, we found a devastated Antonie at the gate of the low shed where the bulls had been overnight. Inside, three of the best of them lay, nose to tail, with the shed support a splintered mess. Scorched hair down their necks showed the path of the lightning. Some of the current from the strike must have travelled up the water pipe, which is connected to the house, blowing the joint in that fashion and fusing the lights.

Tradition in these parts holds that *it is unsafe to eat the meat of animals killed by lightning - or you will be the next to be killed!* Of course there is some merit in this as such meat would not have drained and thus very liable to bacterial invasion. It was the height of summer. Little could be done with the meat, so we cut some choice cuts for ourselves and friends and dragged the carcasses out to the camps so that the vultures¹⁷, at least, could enjoy the feast.

Drought is a constant reality for us - but so is flood, snow and locust plague (as these things are for all farmers). Rainfall records show that the period between 1913 and 1919 were possibly the worst years. However, I do not have any great memories of my Dad having to cope with any great distressing drought at that time. Between 1940 and 1950, we had an amazing run of high rainfall years, averaging well over 20 inches (500 mm), although our average annual rainfall is 16 inches (400 mm) over 95 years.

In the mid-60's, however, we had to cope with a really bad drought that caused great hardship for both man and beast. David was married and living at *Zuurfontein*, and Robert married during that time also. The lack of adequate falls of rain over a sustained period resulted in the cover being severely denuded. Despite our low numbers already, we sold all our wethers (R3,00 each was the best price we could manage) and had to buy yellow maize, molasses and straw to keep the remaining female flocks alive. It was painful to watch the eagerness of the thin sheep as they rushed to the trailer or truck in the hopes of some food.

¹⁷ In those days, a large flock of vultures (Griffin, Cape, & Lappet-faced) patrolled the area, breeding many miles away. However, unenlightened farmers poisoned the odd sheep carcass in order to try to kill vermin. They, of course, killed the wrong things entirely

By August of 1971, we decided to shear the sheep to lessen the burden of the extra weight of wool - in an attempt to save their energy, and perhaps their lives. As it was, wool would show a break along its staple due to the state of health of the sheep. By shearing now, perhaps the break would be at the shearing cut.

In those years we had invested in the *new-fangled* Shearing machines, and the 4 shearers arrived on Monday to shear. By mid morning, the shearing was underway. Each man could shear 90 - 120 sheep a day, so that by Tuesday noon, 400 ewes had been shorn. Great gray clouds began to appear over the western mountains so the shearing was halted and the shorn sheep driven to the *Springbok Camp* (the warmest camp we could).

At about 2 p.m. it began to sleet and rain with a hard, driving wind. This kept up for nearly 3 days. By Friday, when we ventured out into the camp to see what had happened, only 60 ewes were still alive. All over the camp little mounds of white bodies lay where they had huddled together for shelter. Though the pathetic carcasses were of little use to anyone, we gave them to any who wanted them.

Of course, we were grateful for the moisture, all 52 mm (2 inches) of it - but at what cost! David took the shearers back to town, resolving to shear again when the sheep had strengthened up from the new growth resulting from the moisture. So towards the end of November, the shearing gang was back to finish the job. On the 6th of December 1971, another cold front swept through the country and snow fell for some hours. The next day, over 160 pregnant and lambing ewes had died.

What lessons could to be learned from all this is hard to say. One, I know was that we decided we would never again be in the position where stock would be hungry! That was a while ago. Stock numbers have been kept even more conservative since then, and we have never again bought in fodder for drought feeding, despite the area being declared Drought Stricken a number of times in the intervening years. Machine shearing clips the wool much closer than conventional shears, where about 5 - 8 mm of wool always is left on the body. I know that machines will replace men in many spheres in the field of labour - but this was one change which we regretted. We have since reverted to the old-fashioned hand-shearing. Of course this has an added spin-off:- more men are needed to do the job!

SURPRISE AND CHALLENGE

It was the surprise of our life when, in late 1984, Bremer Hofmeyr¹ told us that he had the conviction that a Video of our work on the farm should be made. We had just been battling along as usual, dealing with each issue as it arose. We had no idea of how our simple battle could make a movie, but were ready to co-operate. Bremer was in touch with many friends and they endorsed his plan, some offering donations towards the costs. The next step was to produce a script which Bremer proceeded to do, basing it on the essay I had written detailing important turning points in our lives.

It took some time and several postal exchanges as he was working from Johannesburg and I in the middle of the Karroo (certainly before the modern Fax was available to us!). But a script was decided upon and a team consisting of an expert camera man, a sound expert (his wife), director, and a highly expensive hired camera and equipment. Arrangements had been made ahead of time and all the family needed to be available early in March 1985.

Naturally we invited them all to stay with us on the farm. So on 6th March, Bremer, Agnes and the production team arrived in a mini-bus packed with all the equipment. The next 7 days were busy, long and fully occupied shooting scenes of animals, erosion, grass and people on the farm. All went smoothly. It was a new and wonderful experience of Christian teamwork. Gray Hofmeyr², an experienced film producer, did the final cutting and put the story together. All the professionals - including the writer of the original music - either gave their time free or at a vastly reduced fee.

We had news that the video had come out well and naturally were eager to see it. A copy of the tape arrived and we were very grateful for all the work and deeply touched. The video had, however, been made with the view to selling it to the only broadcasting station known then as the SABC. Despite a donation of R1000 from *Anglo-American* and some smaller gifts from persons who wanted to see the story recorded, and despite the professionals giving their services, the video had still cost thousands (R500 a day for the camera alone!). The hope had been that most of the costs would be recovered by selling it to the Television Station. This was not to be. On submission to those in control, the reply came: *Not suitable material*³. This was a blow.

¹ Bremer Hofmeyr: 1 of 7 Hofmeyr brothers, (also 1 of the 3 of which were Rhodes Scholars) was Jeannette's uncle (his only sister had married JJ du Preez) & he, with George Dancel & others had headed up the work of MRA in SA for many years

² Foremost English TV director, with such hits as *The Outcast*, *The Villages* & *Bigtime* Etc

³ In the video RBK talks of being Part of an *Unjust Society which must change & will change*; He also refers to ANC leaders Nkomo, Vundla & Thema, banned in those years

The first real reaction from abroad came from Prof. Eva Ricketts, on the 28th June from England, "*I have seen the video and the story of your farm. It says more than a book ever would and can be used more widely.*" Then from Australia, Henry McNicol wrote: "*Thankyou for **Promise of the Veld**. I am speechless with joy, admiration and gratitude. So towering in its vision . . . and it has the beauty of the Karroo ... a setting that moves the heart and opens it for truth..*" In early July, Pieter Horn⁴ wrote from Paris, "*The video is magnificent. The beauty and life changing quality has touched many.*"

We began to get news from many parts of the of the world - felt humbled, grateful and challenged. It all came so unexpectedly - and we always are conscious of those early beginnings of a Faith and the decision to take time each morning early to pray, read from the Bible or other spiritual writings, and write down in a notebook the thoughts which came. And then obey what seemed to be God's direction for each day and with each person.

We were invited to Caux for the international launching of *Promise of the Veld* and flew across in time to be there early August, 1985. It was an exciting moment when, on 15th August, in a room upstairs filled with people from all over the world. There was an instant positive reaction. A week later it was shown to the Caux Africa Conference in the Main Hall. Several copies were ordered immediately. One of them by a Mr Priestly who commented, "*It is timeless! 20 years from now it will still be relevant.*"

Since then it has been dubbed into French, German and Spanish. It was shown over various Regional TV Stations in the USA and Japan (with subtitles) and National Finnish TV more than once (also with subtitles). Many warm and generous letters have come from far and wide - often from folk we had never met or heard of before. It has been used in Church groups throughout the country, as well as being '*passed by the Censors*' for use in schools. After F. W de Klerk took over the leadership of the National Party, we found it used by Training Centres for bringing a new approach to Management; *National Veld Trust* used it at their AGM, etc, but we know it is no personal achievement or triumph. The credit belongs elsewhere.

There is a little bit of irony here! We realised later that, had the *SABC* accepted and paid for the video, it would have possibly been shown on a Sunday afternoon, a few people might have seen it, and that would have been the end of the story. By turning it down, it was given a certain credibility Overseas (and even within the country). At a time of deep suspicion regarding the State's propaganda machine, it was clearly NOT a *Government ploy*, and thus was accepted by thousands who would not otherwise have given it a second thought⁵!

⁴ Son of RBK's long-time friend, Pastor Mike Horn, Pieter has now for some years been "*taken over* the operation of MRA in SA (not that anyone can actually run it!)

⁵ Further Irony: By 1995 income to MRA from sales of copies surpassed cost of making it

INTO THE U.S.A.

MRA friends in America used it widely. Unexpectedly we received a letter inviting us to USA to meet some of the people who had been using it and wanted us to meet some of the friends they had made. We could hardly believe our eyes when we read the letter - and very much doubted that we could undertake such a journey. A phonecall from John Morrison in Minnesota stilled our doubts, especially when we realised that the Americans would carry the financial side.

On 11th March 1987 we arrived in London, welcomed by Mr and Mrs Rainbow, whom we had met many years ago, and well cared for at Morpeth Mansions. On the 14th, Janet, who had also been invited by the Americans to travel with us, arrived safely and, to our joy, was able to travel with us.

On the 18th we caught our flight from Gatwick west, which meant we needed to our time! We flew all day, had lunch at 3.30 on the plane (according to our London-set watches) and after hours of flying, arrived in Boston at 3.10, USA time..! There was a delay in a connecting flight to Washington, where we met by Dick Ruffin and James Hoare-Ruthven. As it was still early evening by their time, they felt we should see the White House and Lincoln Memorial by night - lit up. A never-to-be-forgotten experience. Our two friends then drove us to Frederick, Maryland (Dot Ensor's home) where we were welcomed and cared for and in the next days included in her home, meeting many of her friends.

The next few months were interesting, exciting, and filled with people who were warmhearted and welcoming. This was, in a way surprising, as newspapers around the world were giving anything South African a very bad press. We were welcomed and stayed in homes in many States in the USA. Neither time nor space allow detailed recording of these days, suffice to say arrangements had been made so that we could fly to fulfill several invitations - and in-between to visit great historical places and landmarks like the Lincoln Memorial in Washington and on our way to Allentown, stopped at Gettysburg. In Allentown we enjoyed kind hospitality with Esther Sherry in the Frank Buchman House with many items presented to Buchman by grateful statesmen and leaders from all around the world. They are now preserved for the Nation by the Lee-High County Council in Pennsylvania. We had motored up with Esther from the lovely, warmhearted Chapin farm in Virginia.

We were welcomed by and met many friends in Minneapolis and district. The Morrisons, who had been chiefly responsible for arranging our visit, has us to stay with them on two occasions. From there we flew right across the continent to Spokane, where we were welcomed by Johnny Hopcraft, who had been on *Gordonville* with the teams in the '50s (at the time he was a Kenyan citizen). He drove and showed us around Creston and that area. They took us through the spectacular Rocky Mountains to Calgary. Later we went on to Edmonton and the farms of the Bocoeks - two brothers and their wives farming in close and sharing partnership - taking great responsibility for the Environment.

Then back to the USA, to Dillon, Montana, with a full schedule of visits and meetings. I was invited to speak in some Churches - a valued South African friend, now settled in the area, Emmie Rogan, arranged most of our programme. Later we went to Arizona, under the care of the Colwell family, where we saw some interesting semi-desert scenery to look across the border to Mexico.

Finally to a great Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, with many interesting speakers and some real challenges to care enough to build a world that works. Amongst others, we met the Mayor of Atlanta. From Atlanta's enormous Airport, we flew back to Canada, to Montreal for a few days, in care and fellowship in the MRA home there, with Audrey Porter in charge, before going back to Boston for a few days with Brian and Ann Hamlin.

From there, to the *cherry on the top!* Two wonderful weeks in Ireland to stay some days with our granddaughter Nancy (nee Sheard), her husband Trevor Bennett, and 3 beautiful children - our only great grandchildren at that time. All had Irish inflection to their speech voices and Irish complexions. It was a chance to catch up a little with farming matters - like seeing a man managing 200 milking cows almost single-handed. Here they can run one cow to an acre of pasture. Though still economical to produce, farmers, at that time had to cut down 12% on their production.

There was also a chance to visit friends we had met before, such as cousin Joyce (nee Massey) and Roy Meredith, Deverells, Welwoods. Invited to Northern Ireland for a service to induct Rev Hewitt's son into the ministry, we took a bus. It was a marvelously beautiful and interesting journey. The next day we traveled back to Dublin, caught the plane to Heathrow, where Ann Mackay met us and took us to Eva Rickett's home for a rest before catching the plane in the evening back to South Africa, where we arrived safely the next morning.

The following morning, Bremer and Agnes Hofmeyr drove us to Bloemfontein where a national Conference had just begun. David and Jeannette had come up from the farm. So, after the very challenging conference of 3 days, we could go straight home. On the 5th July, 1987, I wrote in my diary: "*It was indeed a marvelous 4 months in which we have had rich experiences . . . Thank God for it all.*"

LOOKING BACK

Looking down the years back to those early struggles and the problems facing us all today yet, I realise that it is only by the Grace of God that I can write these notes. I speak now not only of spiritual matters, but hard reality! At least 3 times, at widely separated intervals, Death brushed my shoulder.

The first time I recall was some years after the *Big Fire* of 1952. We had begun the practice of controlled burning of the overgrown mountain camps. Before a camp was burnt, a wide path was made along the boundaries of the camp so that the fire would not only be contained where it was wanted, but to protect the costly fences. Normally a narrow (say one metre) path was cleared of bush with spades and pickaxes so that only short grass or bare earth remained. This was then widened by burning a swathe of 15 - 20 metres, while carefully putting out any stray flames.

We were busy doing this in the long, dry grass of one of the mountain camps. Three men came up with me to the top corner where we started to burn carefully around where the fence made a right angle. The principle followed was to start at the top of the path and work down, as the draught is upwards and fires tend to burn towards the top. We had successfully started on a patch of about twenty metres square, when suddenly flames, many metres high, came roaring up the mountain towards us. Some of the men tried to climb the fence and run for their lives. A fire, with a driving wind behind it, runs faster than any man uphill in dry grass! I managed to call them back and we stood huddled together in the hot ash of the piece we had just burnt, with fierce flames well higher than our heads, until the inferno had gone by.

There is no question what would have happened if we had not had that small, hot patch of blackened grass and shrub.....! We found out later that some of the other men, working lower down the slope, had unwisely started burning from there. The fire had got out of hand, making its own updraft and thus moving faster and faster.

On another occasion, Moira was away for the day and I was busy loading young bulls (on their way to Shows and sales) into the train at Blaauwater Siding. This meant a 12-mile journey up and down the steep mountain roads. Only 2 bulls at a time could fit onto the old red Dodge truck, so it meant repeated journeys up and down to transfer the bulls into the railway truck. There was little time to rest as the bulls had to catch the uptrain to Bloemfontein. Most of the time the vehicle is in 2nd or Low gear! After the 3rd and last journey, I parked, came inside and asked Lizzie for a cup of tea. Suddenly I began to feel awful and just lay down in the long passage. The next I knew, I was being carried down the passage to a bedroom by Lizzie⁶ and her brother Adam (who worked in the garden). I had simply passed out completely.

⁶ Both married children of Old Antonie

Later we worked out what had happened: being a cold day, I had kept the windows of the Dodge closed. There was a leak from the exhaust into the cab and I had simply been gassed by Carbon Monoxide! If they had not lifted and cared for me...

The third incident was due to the sin of anxiety. It was while Janet was still living in Cape Town and we had motored down to visit her, and for Moira to have a small operation. Not being too sure about finding our way around the Big City, we had arranged to meet her at one of the big N2 Intersections. We got there but did not see her car. In a moment of inexcusable foolishness, I started the big highway, planning to look if she was, perhaps, waiting for us on the other side, out of sight. Suddenly there were 3 cars abreast bearing down on me. The side mirror of one caught me and flung me to the ground.

Somehow I managed to scramble up and was helped to the side of the road (the driver of the car had also stopped when he saw me crash to the ground). As it happened, an ambulance returning that way, having just delivered a patient to the Tygerberg Hospital, stopped to investigate - so I was rushed right back! There I was X-rayed and stitched up again. My cheekbone and nose had also been smashed. It was a miracle that no other car had been on that lane at the time, as would have been killed lying on such a busy highway!

Looking back, I have no doubt that I have been marvelously blessed. But what I am trying in a way to say in these reminiscences is that, for many years now, I have followed the path of trying to seek God's plan day by day. It is not always with the right amount of discipline. It has not always been with the full sense of freedom which is His gift, but as I look back, I know the road has been worth while.

I remember how often it was that following a very simple thought led to new experiences and enrichment of our life together. One such decision was for us both to become active members of our Church and attend services when it was possible. We found a welcome and ways in which we could serve. Another thing that we learned, as well, was that our Church Ministers are often in need of as much fellowship and prayer as we ordinary folk are! We were able to become close to a number of our Ministers (and those of other denominations) due to the commitment we had to serve the Lord. We have also been able to understand and appreciate the commitment to Faith of other Religions⁷.

I know for certain, as I look back from the celebration, in 1989 of our *Diamond Wedding*, that it was the Golden Thread of God's guidance which linked us in a unity which could stand the many strains of marriage, battles, difficulties and rewards, of which some have been sketched briefly in these pages.

⁷ Frank Buchman's belief in the need to live out Christ's 4 Moral Standards of **Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness & Love**, also underpins other Great Faiths, so that Jews, Buddhists, Hindus & Muslims could (& did) find new purpose & direction with MRA

But one thing not emphasised enough that much of the credit for what we have done and been and what has transpired, must go to Moira. It was Moira who brought to our union an outgoing, quick disposition, a deep compassion, a love and understanding for the disadvantage, and a burning hatred of injustice. Above all, the courage to step out and take the action which seemed right for us to take. Her warm-hearted and open hospitality to all who have come to our home, from many lands all races and creeds, has cemented deep friendships around the world.

We look back, together, in much gratitude for our simple and real experiences - building a home and developing a farm in the Karroo has been rewarding beyond expectations. The Karroo with its unpredictable climate, harsh conditions, and rough terrain, (but with unexpected beauty and quiet tranquillity) will always be a challenge - and will always need men and women of Faith.

ADDENDA

The various articles and writings of RBK are truly too numerous and varied to ALL be included in something like this. However, Jeannette and I have tried to put into this next section a selection of much of the material that he wrote. This does not include the actual books (such as *Foundations For a New Africa*, *They Brought Me Hope*, the history of the Methodist Church in Graaff-Reinet, etc) or the many *Leaders* he wrote for the Middelburg Newspaper, *Die Middellander*, over a long period of time!

A large number of the many articles he wrote were published in various newspapers such as *The Eastern Province Herald*, the *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, *The Sunday Times* etc, and magazines through the years. These we have tried to group in categories. They are very hard to separate! Because he constantly had a spiritual content in almost all his articles, they can not be classified in terms of *Spiritual* and *Others*! Neither were his political writings in *Party Political* mode, so they are not, in fact, *Political*. Because of his commitment to Conservation, a lot had that as a theme - many with a clear farming theme or background. And then there are those that defy description.....

Giving up the struggle to *Classify Correctly*, we decided loosely on the following 3 categories:

- (a) **Conservation & Agricultural**
- (b) **Political & National**
- (c) **General**

A quick perusal of any of these articles will show that some of the themes in one of them are repeated again in another, in a slightly different context. It all depended on the aim of the article and who RBK was hoping to reach with it. Names of folk like Peter Howard and Frank Buchman (MRA leaders), Max Bladeck (German coalminer and Communist), Irene Laure (French Resistance fighter and President of the Socialist Women of France), Dr William Nkomo and Phillip Vundla (ANC revolutionaries) and others, whose change and commitment made a major difference to their countries and those about them, repeatedly appear. Here and there we have made footnotes regarding these people - just in case one had not read an earlier or later article....!

He wrote a few plays, only 2 of which will be included. They give his message simply (*naively*, the critics would say) but sometimes a clear message is better than a complicated one. He also wrote a great number of poems, rhymes and doggerels to many friends for special occasions. Some were very serious in content - but many were merely with a sense of fun. These will also be roughly classified into 3 categories:

- (a) **General and Philosophical**
- (b) **Poems of love, mostly to Moira (but not all!)**
- (c) **Rhymes and tributes to Friends**

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Generally speaking, the possibility of the improvement of the Merino sheep breed in South Africa depends upon the finding, and applying, of an improved system of veldt management. To improve stock on deteriorating veldt is likely to lead to complete disaster for stock, veldt, and owner.

Today everyone is aware of the evil of erosion, but it is doubtful if it is generally realised how critical is the state of some of our grazing areas. The fact that erosion is not yet bad on some farms and in some areas does not minimise the danger to the whole industry, because one part of the country cannot be ruined without ultimately affecting other parts. How bad some parts are can be judged from a report on certain districts in the Southern Free State: *"It is apparent that veldt and pasture research is urgently needed in an endeavour to reclaim and stabilise the area which is fast becoming depleted. Erosion has advanced to such an extent that it has frequently torn its way beyond the farmer's control and many farms are past redemption by any method short of a concerted National attack on the problem, and, as these farms are often situated on watersheds, the only recommendation that can be made is that they should be closed to farming operations and given over for reclamation."*

In this area, since 1933 lambing percentages have decreased alarmingly and often do not exceed 39 per cent, while in some districts 50 % seems to be the average, with a high mortality among the young stock during the following winter. Losses among grown sheep are very serious.

In an article on conditions in the Eastern Mixed Karroo, a departmental official writes: *"The soils of this region are today in a constant state of drift, erosion is rife, both sheet and gully, and we are literally endeavouring to maintain our farms on a landslide."*

The cause may still be debated but the reality of erosion is clear, and, for those who are aware of the menace, the danger signals are up almost everywhere. Its effect on the economy of the country cannot be estimated (but must be colossal) and its cure has hardly been seriously tackled yet.

Some idea of economic consequences to the sheep industry may be gauged from the fact that farms in the Rouxville district which grazed big flocks in 1931, today graze no sheep. One farmer who used to run 6000 sheep now only runs 2000. Where there is continual poor lambing (39%) and other stock losses, there is disheartenment and farmers turn to other lines. This is happening, to some extent all over the country and, though erosion is not the only cause, it is the chief one.

¹ Published in the *The South African Merino Breeders's Journal*, January 1942

An inevitable result will be decrease in the demand for rams and for young stock from the better breeding areas. In the long run it will mean a small wool clip, less meat, a declining industry.

In the past it has been pretty generally accepted that the chief cause of erosion in the grazing areas is overstocking, but now it is becoming more widely realised that mismanagement of the veldt has played, at least, an equally important part. The deterioration in quality of veldt is almost as important and disastrous a phase of erosion as the actual loss of soil. It follows that, in future, veldt management will become one of the chief concerns of the grazier. Stockowners will have to give more attention to this branch of their operations because South African farming has not yet found a stable basis and must find one.

A stable basis is not possible without a full understanding and use of the natural veldt under our conditions, so that neither stock nor pasture deteriorate. The advance of the Merino (or for that matter, any stock farming) is dependent on the satisfactory solution to this problem. The question of veldt management is one which is likely to be hotly debated, as most farmers have strong views on the subject, but it will be agreed by all that there is need for much more knowledge and there is much room for improvement.

Recently a department for veldt research was opened at Grootfontein but it is too soon for them to give any definite advice. An experiment which has been running for some years at Grootfontein has had some results² which seem to back up the protagonists of Continuous Grazing. But it would be dangerous to accept these findings as final or to adopt the system on the strength of this experiment.

There seem to be three schools of thought with regard to the management of veldt:

- 1) Continuous grazing with light stocking
- 2) Heavy grazing for short periods, followed by short complete rests (2 months)
- 3) Heavy grazing for long periods, followed by long rests (8 months)

In the grassveld, ruined farms have been reclaimed by systematic veldt management and the value of some such plan is not in doubt. Unfortunately it is not just a matter of deciding on some system and going ahead. There are many factors which have to be considered: the natural cover today; the original cover, slope, type of veldt to be encouraged on particular soils, and, in mixed veldt, the fact that grass is more palatable than bush at certain times, that rapidly growing bush is less palatable than that which is not growing.

It is not within the scope of this article to discuss the merits or demerits of different systems of veldt management, but merely to fix attention on this most vital problem

² Director Lucien Roux started an experiment based on what RBK had started in 1938; after a few years, results indicated better performance by the old style of farming. 1957 when DMK studied there, the opposite was proven: RBK's basis was shown financially & ecologically best

to the sheep industry. Most people will agree that, if some drastic and revolutionary changes do not take place, the deterioration of the veldt, already so far advanced, will gather momentum and bring widespread ruin to our country.

Changes must be revolutionary because the anti-erosion schemes of the past helped many individuals but did not cut to the root of the problem. It was estimated by the Department of Agriculture that only a 1% improvement in soil erosion had been achieved - hardly enough to cure the disease!

The relation between sheep breeding policy and a system of grazing aimed at the improvement of the quality and density of veldt is of utmost importance. A heavy producing sheep needs good food - a light producing sheep can do with less. The breeder has to decide what type of sheep to run on his farm, as it is obviously just as poor economy to run light sheep on heavy yielding grazing as to run heavy producers on veldt which cannot support them. In a more general way, the ram breeder has to decide what kind of market to cater for. If the grazing in this country is allowed to deteriorate and lose fertility, is it any use breeding or buying rams which will improve the sheep beyond the carrying capacity of the veldt?

In short, is the Merino industry to be allowed to go back after all the brains and capital that have been invested in its improvement to the high standard it has now reached?

We cannot accept veldt deterioration as inevitable and doom future farmers to farming poor ground. Proper veldt management is the only thing that can turn the tide; but it is not something that can be left for each to work out in his own way. It is a National problem of the greatest importance and stockmen must urge that the matter be thoroughly investigated, ventilated, and understood. Immediate action might be taken along the following lines:

- 1) Honest rethinking of the whole problem by each farmer, both from an individual and national point of view
- 2) The collection of the considered views of farmers of experience who have found certain methods deteriorate or improve the veldt
- 3) Through farmers' organisations, back the officers doing research on this matter and see that they are provided with every facility to advance the work.

The natural herbage is the greatest asset of the grazier. It can be augmented and improved - but it cannot be replaced or done without. We dare not allow it to continue to deteriorate but must reverse this process and regain and improve it. This cannot be done easily or cheaply but only by individuals taking the long view and being willing to make sacrifices at present for the sake of the country and for the future generations of South Africans who will inherit the soil.

South Africans are awakening to the fact that the foundations of our civilization have been *white-anted* to a dangerous degree; our soil is slipping away from under our feet. Dr Ross estimates that already 25 % of the essential, vital surface soil has been lost. So eminent a world authority as Mr Whyte has stated that, if the present rate of soil wastage continues, this country will be unable to support a Western civilization after the end of this century. Only 56 years remain!

Thanks to the steady work of scientist in the Agricultural Department, to vigorous articles in the press, to the work of the *Veld Trust* and the graphic films shown by Mr van Rensburg⁴, people are awakening to the danger of the situation. There is talk of big schemes afoot; there are estimates of tremendous sums to be spent in an effort to save the soil - but not enough is being done. In fact, the task ahead has been barely visualised. It is not just a question of building dams and banks and fences; we have to build into men a sense of responsibility and caring for the soil. To regain its stability and build up a reserve, we must in future take less than the depleted soils can be pushed to yield.

Plans are not enough; even plans with funds to back them are not enough. They are necessary, but behind them must be, in town and in the country, practical love for the land in our hearts.

I'll tell you what I mean. For years we farmed our sheep, put up fences, made dams, improved the farm, ran as many stock as seemed safe, suffered in droughts. Unhappily we watched the bare places getting bigger and more numerous, eating into and destroying the good grazing veldt.

Came a day when we realised that, if our farm were to be saved, we should do something about it ourselves. We thought about it, talked it over, prayed about it. Gradually the plan we had to follow took shape. Give each paddock a long rest in turn so that the plants could get time to seed and the seedlings take firm root. That sounds simple, but it is not easy. At least, it was not for us, because we realised that to make this plan effective we would have to reduce the numbers of our stock sharply.

We sold about a quarter of our stock and took the chance that the reduced income would still cover the costs of interest, labour, running expenses and frugal living. We realised we would have to calculate profits in a new way - in the health of our stock, yield of the land, and the density of our veldt cover.

That was over 6 years ago. No longer do bare patches increase in size, many have disappeared, others are going. No longer does the water rush unhindered down

³ Published July 1944 in the Magazine *Social Security*

⁴ J J van Rensburg, early Conservation *activist* who toured country trying to awaken awareness

the *sloots*⁵; it is dispersed over thirsty Karroo ground. Grasses are growing where only shrubs grew before; cattle are fattening where there was no food for them ten years ago.

Our investments are not in the Banks but in the soil. We cannot buy a new radio or build a new house with that investment; we cannot even be considered "successful" in the usual sense, but in our hearts is a joy, a pride, that this piece of land is improving and flowering under the kind of love we have learned to give it.

We shall go on. But for the final success, we depend on others. In the rains, flood waters from the mountain farms rose to unprecedented heights and much damage was done to ploughed lands; dams were broken; the work of years was, in a few hours, seriously set back.

It is a national task to save South Africa's soil and it calls for a soil consciousness and caring in everyone. We farmers bear the first responsibility - but not the only one! We can only return the fertilizer to the soil, rotate the grazing, keep stock numbers low, provided we get a living wage for the products we bring to market. We need the town dweller's understanding and backing; for in the final analysis he has as much interest in the health of the soil we have.

80 % of the natural deaths in South Africa can be laid at the door of malnutrition and underfeeding. Malnutrition means starving to by degrees. .. Dr D B

A quote by the Magazine within the column of the article

Look at it this way: When you eat a piece of mutton, a slice of bread, or some *mealie-pap*⁶, you are eating of the fertility of the country. The soil has given that food birth and nourished it; and, like any mother, it must in turn be fed or it dies. The farmer, like the father of the family, can only feed his soil if he has money to buy what is needed. If you have less than the real value for the food you eat (and it is often done even now), you are an accessory to robbing from the soil; from the heritage of your children and my children. Love for the soil is as practical and as stark as that. No citizen can avoid responsibility in the matter.

It is late, but not too late. If we start now our soil can still be saved. Not only the farmers, but all of us depend upon the land, for without fertile soil there can be no Industrial Future, no Social Security, no Civilization.

⁵ *Sloot*: Donga or Gully, caused by erosion

⁶ *Mielie-Pap*: Maize meal porridge

Like all other responsible citizens, the farmer is concerned about the problems facing our country - he does not just sit sleepily drinking his coffee on the stoep, untroubled and uninformed! Maybe he sees the problem more starkly than many others for, inevitably, the farmer is constantly in touch with real problems in his day to day adjustment to changing circumstances and weather conditions.

However much he would like to blame others, or pass on the difficulty, he knows that anything that has to be done on the farm is ultimately his responsibility. Thus no problem can long remain hazy but must become simplified and clear.

In the whirl of current and crosscurrent, of propoganda and politics, here are two straightforward, down to earth facts: (1) Labour is scarce and becoming difficult; (2) Our soil is difficult and becoming scarce!

Here are two problems in urgent need of solution. Lacking a solution, there is no future for farming in this country. Food, already scarce at times, will diminish at an ever-increasing rate. The Industrial development now taking place on such a large scale in South Africa will find its investments on slipping foundations. The outlook will be gloomy indeed.

Soil erosion and rural labour have been the subjects of several commissions and received the most earnest study by many thoughtful and capable men. The Minister of Agriculture stressed the seriousness of the soil-erosion problem recently when he said, "*Even if we spent 150 Million Pounds³ in the next 5 years, it would not give us stability for our soil.*" This is a high price to pay and still have no success!

The truth is that the willingness to spend a lot of money to solve a problem is not enough! We have a model Conservation Act and eager technicians. The law is there, but erosion continues at an ever-increasing rate. Laws are not enough! Even laws backed by money are not enough. Only a new attitude to the land and the real function of farming will bring a lasting solution.

It was because we dimly realised some of these things that we welcomed MRA when we met it. Here, for the first time, we found something which went to the root of the problem with the clear and simple challenge: "*if you want to build a new world, the place to start is with yourself*", and, by implication, if you really are concerned about the problems facing your industry and your country, the place to begin is right at home.

¹ *Platteland* = Rural Area

² Published *Evening Post*, December 15th 1951

³ 1 Pound Sterling (as currency was in 1951) became R2 in 1961 & is bought for R7.40 in 1997!

From that time, farming for us was no longer simply a way of making a living between weekends; it became an adventure and absorbing and exciting way of life. There was a new kind of pioneering to be done; we had to take risks in radically reducing our stocking rate in trying out new and unproved methods of farm management. We had to accept a lower income and basis of living. We learned to study the needs of our labourers and not only of own.

A revolution took place in attitudes towards our neighbours and our soil. Today the grass is creeping back to once-bare places, springs are improving, our staff are content. We look back with gratitude because, what we took on faith has proved to be fact. But all over Africa (and beyond), farmers have accepted the standards of MRA and found their way to better and happier farming.

In Kenya, you could meet Jack. His farm is bounded on the East by Lake Victoria, with lucerne lands running right up to the shore of the of the lake, never needing to be irrigated for they draw their moisture from the inexhaustible subterranean supply provided by the lake. Jack says, "*the way to get the farm right is to get the farmer right,*" and goes on to tell how, before he met MRA, he farmed to get as much out of the soil and put back as little as possible. When things went wrong there was always one of 3 things to blame (sometimes all 3!): the Weather, the Neighbours, or the Government!

But those days are past - recently his farm was photographed from the air to be used as a demonstration of what contouring and correct land use could do. Jack sees his farm as having a part in the great Ideological battle for a new world in which all resources will be used for the benefit of all. In this battle adequate food supplies are a first essential.

Alben also farms in Kenya, on the border of a large *Native Reservation*⁴. He grew up with terror in his heart; the fear of spears-in-the-dark; the heritage of all whose forbears lived near the borders during the turbulent days of the opening up of Africa. Because of his hidden terror, he had a greater terror - that his fear would be recognised for what it was! So to hide it, he developed a harsh manner and used *fear and thunder* methods on his farm. Now Alben will tell you with the assurance that comes from experience: "*The Natives are on my side. In the recent threatened revolt I slept peacefully at night. You know, our only security is in the respect and gratitude of our neighbours!*"

Piet works a big Agricultural farm in the Eastern Transvaal, where a main crop is potatoes. Now it is a very boring business to peel the family's potatoes for dinner - but it is backbreaking, and often heart-breaking work, digging, grading, bagging, and lugging sacks of potatoes from the fields. At such times, tempers are liable to become frayed. "*I had one ambition*", says Piet, "*and that was to be a top farmer and to reach that end, I decided to keep my thumb on the African workers.*"

⁴ In 1951 Kenya was still ruled by the Colonial Britain

Often he was harsh, sometimes he withheld full wages due - the result was that he was often shorthanded. When MRA came to his Ermelo farm, the boss found he had much to put right between himself and his labourers. But today there is no labour shortage there. Men who left the farm to work on the Witwatersrand have come back to the farm and are happy there today.

Mike⁵ farms on an irrigation farm under the *Vaal-Hartz*⁶. There have been bad times, adverse weather, infertile seed. Sometimes bad markets. The plots are too small to justify the purchase of modern farm machinery which makes production competitive and efficient. Distrust sabotaged the efforts to form co-operative groups to buy the needed tractor, haybaler, etc - until, on the basis of MRA, Mike found a way to co-operate with his neighbours.

In the Western Province, winemaking is the traditional form of farming. When Wynand took over his farm, this was the main output. Though working the farm successfully, deep in his heart he felt dissatisfied for he felt that soil producing wine was not being used for producing the real needs of the country. He began to switch from wine to dairy and fruit production. He is producing for the real needs of his country, though it is less profitable.

In spite of solemn headshaking by his friends, who prophesied that he would soon find himself with no labour, he persisted in his idea of ending the daily tot⁷ of wine. But, though some men left, he still found himself faithfully served, and others came to take the places of those who had left. Now Wynand is happy, for his farming is in line with the feeling of his deepest loyalties to God and to his country, for God's plan and his country's needs come before his personal profits.

Charles⁸ is a man with a powerful physique, boundless energy, and wide, generous thinking. His dam which holds 6000 million⁹ gallons of water must be one of the biggest owner-built dams in all Southern Africa. After showing you this dam and the extensive lands below it which are under irrigation, Charles will tell you that, though he built the dam and had done much to increase the value of this outlying Karroo farm (which he bought after World War I, in which he valiantly served) it was not until he met MRA that he found a way to link his enterprise and its vast production potential to the needs of his country and began to feel a sense of real satisfaction from his work.

⁵ Rev Mike Horn, pioneered a Co-operative in the area, which became a model others followed

⁶ The large dam which stores waters from the *Vaal & Hartz* Rivers

⁷ Traditionally, the *Tot System* operated in the Western Cape. Instead of higher wages, men were paid in cheap wine. It got so bad that sometimes they would not work a cultivated "row" unless there were bottles waiting for them at the end. By the 1990's this system was seen for what it was (degrading & wrong) & was outlawed

⁸ Charles Rubidge of Zoetvlei, near Richmond, died in 1970's

⁹ Later increased to 9 000 million Gallons = 40 000 Mill. Litres, still later wall heightened (1962) capacity doubled 180 000 million Gallons or 817 000 Million Litres

This farm is run on Conservation lines. The veldt is getting its due periods of rest while the lands are being contoured and worked to build up fertility and reduce soil loss. Servants living quarters have been overhauled and improved. The keynote is Cooperation. The spirit overflows into the home, the children catch it - farming is no longer a business. It is what it was meant to be - a way of cooperative and creative family living.

These are just a few of the many farmers from here and there who have found for themselves a new meaning to life; a heartfilling meaning to their work and at the same time, found they are making a definite contribution to the final solution to some of the most stubborn and difficult problems of our land. Each, in his own way, different and separate, has found himself switching to Conservation farming and better labour relationships.

This is important, for it ties up with the battle which is being waged for the hearts and loyalties of men and women right across the world. The battleline is drawn sharply in Korea¹⁰ - less distinctly out here, but it passes through every home and every hut in the country.

The choice is clearly before us all - exploitation of our land and human resources for our own ends to our own profit, or devotion of ourselves and our resources for the benefit of all. That is what MRA is about. It is *The Better Idea* in the war of ideas. You cannot kill an idea with legislation, or even by bullets - you can only kill it by substituting a better idea.

But MRA is more than idea, it is a life. The men and women of MRA believe that only by restoring God to leadership in personal, national, and international relations can humanity become free of the fears and tensions and constant warring between sections and races. The thousands who came to Caux, in Switzerland during this summer where the international conference for MRA was held, testify to the fact that leaders from all walks of life, in all countries outside the *Iron Curtain* (even some from within!) are turning more and more certainly to this same conclusion.

And we, on the farms, who have tried it have no more doubts. Here is the answer. Here is the way. Thus, and only thus, can we save our soil, build internal harmony, find our true destiny.

¹⁰ **The Korean War**, bitterly being fought at that time between North Korea (& China/Russia) & South Korea (& USA forces) was between Western Freedom & Communist Domination

The efficiency and sufficiency of labour and the effective and conservative use of our Land seems to me the two main problems which we, as farmers, have to solve. Largely upon the manner of our solution, not only the Farming Industry, but the political future of Africa depends.

Much has been said and written about Anti-erosion and Soil Conservation work. Enough anyway to have got a model Soil Conservation Act passed, a division of Soil Conservation established, a trained and eager staff, and over half of South Africa's farm-lands declared Soil Conservation Districts. Much preliminary work has been done; here and there works have been completed and some results can be seen. All this is real progress and has happened not one moment too soon!

But, in spite of good rains over most of the country in 1950, the beginning of 1951 showed no real progress in the overall Anti-Erosion campaign - the balance still lies with the destructive forces. More soil and veldt are being destroyed than are being conserved! The burning question is: *Can we turn the tide on the present basis with the present set-up?*

Some would change the system and get the whole matter of Soil Conservation under a separate body, arguing that *red tape* and hitches, which seem inevitable in a Government department, could be eliminated and the work speeded. Others again wish to apply some form of dictatorship to force the man, who is not doing the right thing, to change his ways or take the consequences. There is much good in all this, for these are the convictions of sincere and experienced men who see the need for urgent action.

Yet the solution to this problem does not lie in plans - however good, however necessary - but only in the response and the effective action of the farmer himself. No overall blueprint will do. Each farm has its own problems and must be loved and nursed in its own special way to enjoy full health. Now this is happening not only in parts of South Africa, but in North Africa as well, it was my privilege to discover recently.

I realised this (and much more) at the Moral Re-Armament assembly held for some ten days - significantly - over Easter. Here, some 450 delegates from 14 different countries met to discuss the part of Moral Re-Armament in defending and inspiring Democracy in South Africa. From this continent came people, not only from all parts of the Union and Rhodesia¹¹, but from as far afield as Nigeria, the Sudan, and Kenya. It was here I met farmers taking the sort of action that will save the soil in a way which no promise of a subsidy can ever achieve.

¹¹ *Union* (of South Africa) - became *Republic* in 1961; *Rhodesia* became *Zimbabwe* in 1980

One farmer from Kenya put it this way: "*The way to get the farm right, is to get the farmer right. The destiny of farmers is to create an age of abundance where everyone has enough.*" He went on to say how, at one time, his attitude was "*how much can I get out of the soil, instead of how much can I put into it?*" When things went wrong on the farm, he blamed the neighbours, the weather, and the Government. When he accepted the principles of MRA, his attitude changed and he started on a long-term plan of soil and farm betterment - with so much success that Government recently had an aerial picture taken of the farm to demonstrate contour plowing and correct land use.

From the Karroo, a farmer told of the reduction of stock and planned rotational grazing at a time when finances were tight, but the reward was a much improved veldt cover within a few years. He also told of the very great temptation to increase stock and *make a pile* while prices are high, but the conviction that he holds the soil in trust from God for future generations, had decided him to farm with the main aim of getting and keeping the soil in good heart. Other men from many parts of the Union told similar stories.

Now what is the significance of these things? Simply that subsidies and good ideas are not enough, but that the idealism that is in the hearts of all good farmers must be fired and harnessed for the sake of the soil.

There must be very few who are really happy about their Labour position; few who would not like to find some sense of security and stability in this matter. Here again many plans have been suggested - registration, *Pass laws*, prohibition of rural entry into towns etc, etc. Many of the plans may be good - some even partially effective, but none a permanent solution. This problem breaks down into 2 separate parts: one the simple shortage of hands, the other the possibility of increasing the output by those hands now available.

My experience is that the labourer himself does not, in most cases, merely want more pay for less work as some believe. He is willing to serve faithfully when he has a sense of security and worthiness. One farmer from the Eastern Transvaal told the Assembly of how he had previously had the greatest difficulty in keeping labour enough to handle his developed agricultural farm. He had looked upon his labourers as a commodity from which as much must be got as quickly as possible and many of his dealings were harsh and unsympathetic. When he accepted a new attitude for himself, he discovered a whole new approach to the question - and he no longer has to worry about shortages of labour. On the contrary, men who had earlier left him to seek work in Johannesburg and Pretoria, had returned to settle on the farm.

Another man from the Union, who settled on the edge of a Native Reserve in Kenya, spoke of fear instilled in him by his mother - *fear of spears-in-the-dark*, the

heritage of all whose forbears had lived near the borders in the days of the *Kaffir*¹² Wars. When he found a new way of living he also found his fear had vanished and with it his labour troubles. So much so that, in a recent revolt on the border, he had been able to sleep peacefully, for he knew he had won the friendship of the local tribesmen. A third farmer told of how his *cookboy*, who had threatened to walk out when caught thieving, was now in charge of the pantry keys and is a careful steward of his master's goods.

Even if we could stabilise the labour now on the farms, and if we could raise their efficiency and sense of responsibility, we would still be woefully short of labour - especially as mining and industry expand and attract, and floating labour is still unsettled. This gap can, to some extent, be filled by mechanisation - a trend that is apparent everywhere at present. But, though many farmers can afford the outlay necessary to modernise their farming, a great proportion of our farmers operate on too small a scale to justify large capital outlay. Thus they are forced to farm below their optimum, and lose to the country wealth and much needed food. The obvious solution here - usually in close settled areas - is to form a small co-operative company and buy the needed machinery together!

This is not so simple as it sounds, explained one farmer from the Vaalhartz - they had tried just that several times, but when it came to finalising the plans, selfishness and distrust in one for or another asserted itself and the plan fell to pieces. Only when a few of them got together on a Christian understanding and a teamwork basis were they able to successfully conclude a working arrangement and buy the plant they were needing so badly.

These are random and scattered examples of farmers from widely separated areas - but all part of a pattern. They are significant too, far beyond the mere solving of particular difficulties of individual farmers. Significant because they are pioneers of a new approach, a new insight into farming! These men are no longer in doubt, they have found the road for each of them (and many more like them); farming has become much more than a way of making a living, it has become a vocation, a Crusade.

A Crusade, for they have begun to see that farming is, inevitably, part of the great ideological battle which is being fought all over Africa, and beyond Africa on every continent - the battle for Freedom against Tyranny.

It may, at first sight, seem a far cry from contour plowing, stopping a *donga*, or sparing veldt, to the battle line against Communism! But is it? Anyone who in any way reduces production of essential food or clothing now, or who sabotages future production, increases the number who are needy, underfed and underclothed. Such things create discontent and bitterness. Discontent, bitterness, and hate are the breeding ground of Communism.

¹² So-called at the time, the clashes between Settlers & the Natives

It may seem a far cry from the farm labour problem to the Communist frontier! But contented labour force produces more, does not drift to overcrowded cities and does not meet in a disgruntled mood with the agitator.

It may seem of little significance that one or two groups of farmers have found a way of working together - but it is of vital importance! Disunity in communities, division and strife, are ready-made opportunities for those who seek to undermine and destroy our Christian Civilisation!

That, as I see it, is the significance of these things.

And clearly the decisions each one of us makes each day on our farms effects our country's future much more vitally than we can realise. The South African farmer is the framer of his country's destiny. His is a great responsibility and a great opportunity. Today he is at the Crossroads. Tomorrow, he may not be able to choose.

A NEW WAY FOR LABOUR

I must make it clear that I do not speak as a representative of the Agricultural Union, but in my personal capacity - though I do serve on the Midland Agricultural Union Executive, and have done so for many years. But I can speak as a farmer of long standing and I believe that the experiences I have had are valid for the country as a whole.

I also believe that the way we deal with this whole question of Labour is of importance to the whole Continent of Africa and can affect the future of millions. Many revolutions have been sparked off by poor relations between Labour and Management. Indeed, Karl Marx built up his whole pernicious doctrine on this question - and gave impetus to the divisions which have brought us to the tragedy of this Cold War today. Who knows how far a creative advance in labour and wage relations can spark off a revolution in unity and production and answer the problems posed by the Cold War?

I did not always think in these terms. I used to look on Labour as a commodity and that the right thing to do was to get as much out of the labourer as possible. Though I would not have admitted it (even to myself), the men were, in my mind, pawns to be moved around at will. And there was a big row if anyone was late for work or did not do things just the way I thought they should have done them. When they went off work, that was that. I had no interest in their lives or families.

But with this went a sense of insecurity; an anxiety that some day I would have no one to work with me on the farm. There came a day when this attitude changed and this led to drastic change of many things on the farm.

The first concrete step I took was to call the men together and announce that I wanted to run the whole farm on a new basis - and I apologised for ill temper and hard words of the past. I did this with some trepidation as I expected laughter and insubordination (we are told *Black men only respect strong men*, and this would be, surely, a sign of weakness) - but I found, instead, a new level of loyalty and a better understanding. I re-assessed our whole position and began what has turned out to be a continuing development with labour relationships on the farm.

First I went into the question of wages and feeding levels and found there needed to be an increase all round. Suddenly I realised that I was not dealing with pawns, *hands to do the work*, but with people and with families; with mothers and with children.

¹³ On the invitation of Cyril Pearce, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce at the time

Next, we tackled housing. I did not have enough capital¹⁴ to do any great building improvements - but we did what we could. One of the first things was to provide glass windows for the houses so sun could shine in. Some neighbours laughed at the idea, "*They break the glass and, anyway, prefer bags*"¹⁵, they said. This was not my experience at all. They liked the windows! An interesting sideline: after a few years, everyone in our area was putting in glass windows!

We started a school. It was the first one in that area¹⁶. Again it was derided. "*You will spoil them; they will become useless for farm work*", they said. We found just the opposite. Our labour force became stabilised¹⁷ and the children, as they grew up, were more useful, helpful, and capable than their untutored parents. Today many farmers are encouraging schools¹⁸ and they are finding that literate workmen are more useful and productive.

Though a farm is a close-knit unit - the employer not commute in one direction and the employee in another at the end of the day. However, Communication, I found, was not all it could be. We decided on the next step which was to call a general meeting and elect a *Farm Council*. At first this new idea was taken up with some hesitation, but it has worked well. The men elected began to take responsibility and have been of great assistance in planning the work; in communicating the feelings of the farm people to me, and explaining our decisions and reasoning to the men. I consider this an important way of building character and responsibility with the men - and I believe it will grow in effectiveness.

The Council has, over the years it has been established, taken several important decisions together. Recently we decided that the time had come to write out the *rules* for the farm. There are always, on every farm, in every Industry, certain rules in regard to labour, hours etc. On the farms, these were usually unstated but all knew what was expected, with each labourer passing on to the next those rules by which the operations were run. But it seemed to us that, as a good many of the folk were now literate, written rules¹⁹ would be a help to all.

Together we talked about those rules that applied already, which were valid and which we should update, change, or scrap entirely. When it comes to writing out rules we found we needed to put them in context of the aims of the farm. This is how we framed it:

¹⁴ This was long before the State made funds available for farm labourer's housing

¹⁵ Traditional *native huts* had merely a hole here & there to let in air. Most homes were only 1 or 2 rooms; these were also increased as their needs were made known.

¹⁶ We have not been able to find out if other farm schools for Black children existed at the time

¹⁷ In 1986, all male workers (8) had been born on the farm & had passed through the school

¹⁸ RBK fails to mention that his resolution to Congress 1954, pleading for State recognition & support for Farm Schools for Labourers' children paved the way for this

¹⁹ Today this is *Required Labour Practice*. In those years it was a new idea entirely!

Introduction. All who labour and live on Gordonville need to feel themselves part of the farm, with a sense of security in their living and with a sense of responsibility for the whole farm and community
All must understand that the key to a man or woman's value is their character, not their background, education, or colour.
All homes need to be cared for so the children can want to live honest, pure and worthwhile lives.
All should treasure and care for the soil which gives us food, work, income, and beauty.

Aim: To demonstrate that effective co-operation between owner and worker is possible and rewarding to all.
To build a farm with balanced conservation, so that the people, the stock and the veldt, as well as the beneficial Wild Life are cared for and protected.
To train men and women to take responsibility; to learn work skills; to build real homes; to find a faith and live so God may rule the nation.

After that, follow a dozen or so rules about work times, smoke breaks, and other details in regard to the running of the farm.

We have not achieved all these things as yet. We still are in the stage of learning and experimenting. But it seems to me that it is necessary to formulate your aim and plan for its achievement in the whole canvas of World struggle; a World seeking a new way where men can live together and build together.

It was these experiences on our own ground which led me to begin thinking for our Farming Industry. With the tremendous advance in mining, industry and commerce in this country, farm labour is inevitably affected. Although there is no Minimum Wage laid down in Agriculture, the recent decisions to raise unskilled wages by Industrialists to a minimum R2,00 must inevitably affect us. If we do not move with the times, we will find the most ambitious, intelligent and efficient labourers will be lost to the towns and cities - where conditions seem attractive and education is available. This has already begun to happen to some extent.

A General rise in wages should be welcomed by farmers as it immediately widens the market for Primary products. If people get more money, those who have not yet eaten enough, may be able to eat better.

But a higher wage does mean we need to aim to have a trained and intelligent and stable labour force for the farms. It demands that we aim to keep the families on the farms. I think it is easier to learn industrial skills than to learn the skills needed for a good man on the land. The child born on the farm early learns to fetch calves, gather the sheep, and follow the seasons of planting and reaping. It follows that when he grows up he is more likely to be a good Stockman or farm worker. You have to have a feeling for stock - it is not something you can learn out of a book!

That is why I feel it is so important for us now to take the responsibility of ensuring that the right men are retained on the land. I do not think it will be easy or cheap - but it is the road which we must take.

In the past we have, in general, accepted a fairly low level of skill, paid a low level of wages, and managed to get by - labour was in plentiful supply! The pattern has begun to change. Not only is manpower less, but the greater use of machinery needs a greater amount of skill and reliability. With the increase in the value of livestock, a more reliable stockman is also required.

Above all, I think we are beginning to feel that, without a skilled, reliable and stable labour force, farming is a burden and our industry is at a disadvantage. In our part of the country - and in the Farm Organisations around the country - there is a considerable amount of thinking and practical planning taking place.

I was instrumental in bringing to the Midland Agricultural Union Congress in Port Elizabeth, in May this year, the following resolution:

Congress is of the opinion that Agricultural advance is being handicapped because insufficient attention has been paid to increasing the productivity of Farm Labour - and requests that: -

1. Arrangements be made for the increase of Primary Education and the provision of Training Centres for farm workers.
2. The State assist in the provision of good housing²⁰, essential for good labour, by making available loans at a low rate of interest for housing
3. The State begin a scientific inquiry into methods of attracting and stabilising farm labour - paying special attention to the benefits usually available on farms in the way of produce, milk, free housing etc.

At this Congress we also invited the Manager of the *Bantu Wage and Productivity Association* to address us. He got an excellent hearing and later his experiences were reported back by delegates in all the *Platteland* Associations. This resolution went forward to the Cape Union, and was combined with a similar one from the Boland Union which added two points - the need for Regional Unions²¹ to have permanent committees to study and co-ordinate the findings and plans for farm labour (which can have a very wide effect) and they emphasised the need for social and religious uplift and education. Good discussions took place and these resolutions received unanimous support.

Farm Labour has *enjoyed* a bad press on the whole. Some of the worst stories which involved South Africa which I saw published in Nigeria concerned farming conditions²². I would not deny that there are employers who pay very low wages and do not provide attractive conditions. But I doubt if this proportion is any greater than in any other sector of employment in the country!

²⁰ A Housing Subsidy to help farmers build &/or improve labourers houses later was introduced

²¹ Until 1981, the Cape Province consisted of 10 *Regional Unions* which met separately & sent combined resolutions to *National Congress (SAAU)*

²² One story "reported" that the bodies of farm labourers hung from trees by the side of the road where the farmers had executed them for minor infringements!

Whatever the circumstances of the past, I am convinced that progressive and responsible farmers from all around the country are tackling the questions of improvement in wages, conditions and productivity. Recently we took a sample survey of wages being paid in the districts of Graaff-Reinet and Middelburg - and found generally a positive approach. Wages have been steadily rising over the years from 10 or 12 Rands per month to now well over an average of R25 to R35. This includes meat, housing etc. This survey also revealed that the labour turnover was very small and that in some cases, families had lived on the same farm for generations - in one case, over a century.

Part of this report also stresses the difference in farms and other employment in that families on most farms live there the year round. It follows that human relationships are of the utmost importance - more, even, than the value of wages. But for me, the big question is: *Is it enough to think in terms of improving wages, improving productivity, improving living conditions - even improving profits? Is this a big enough final objective?*

In another age it might have been. At this stage of development in Africa, it is not enough. We in South Africa have a much greater destiny than running a successful business - mine or industry. Or even to carry out a successful political experiment! We are called to give true leadership to a Continent.

I was in the Congo²³ two years ago - just when the country was beginning to pull out of their first great set-back after the mutiny. We met the president and other leading personalities. They were searching for the right thing for their country - and I thought how much the skill and experience of South Africa could help there. Now they have a new revolution²⁴ on their hands, egged on by the Chinese - *who are determined to sow chaos and reap living space for their millions.*

I was in the great flag-bedecked Rwigyoso Stadium, Usumbura²⁵ when the Belgian flag was hauled down and Burundi celebrated their Independence! I remember the Prime Minister on that occasion saying how much they wanted to work with all the countries and included South Africa by name. We saw the Red Chinese who came for the celebrations and were there with a mandate to open an embassy. They did not look very impressive men - but they had a plan. Today it is this embassy which is helping to plan and finance the revolt in the Congo.

The Paguidas Hotel is the best hotel and situated in down-town Usumbura. We went there with the King and others to celebrate the Independence and a splendid meal was provided. At the main entrance was the notice that the Rotary Club met there once a week. Today the Chinese Embassy and not the Rotary are ensconced at the Paguidas Hotel.

23 Later renamed *Zaire* - reverted to *Democratic Republic of Congo*, May 1997

24 The bitter civil war which ended when General Mobutu took over as dictator

25 Renamed *Bujumbura* in 1962, capital of Burundi, also took independence at that time

In Kenya, Tanganyika and other countries, there is a similar story to be told. The Africans are beginning to say: "*The Chinese are not White; they will work beside us and teach us to work.*" I do not say this is what they will do. It is what propaganda is making some believe.

And here lies the challenge to the West and the challenge to our own wonderful country. Armies, weapons and training are important, but they are not enough. They do not deal with the root causes of suspicion and division. To win the *Battle of Ideas*, we have to produce and demonstrate a way of co-operation in work, a way to distribute the food, clothing, housing and employment which can build up character and give satisfaction, more effectively and more attractively than what Red China has done.

This is our destiny and we turn aside from it at our peril.

I believe, if we give our lives, our energies, and our hearts in this way, we will demonstrate something which China and Russia will say: "*This is the way we want; that is the way for us all!*" It is in this light that I want to develop the situation on my farm, and carry my share of responsibility in making this the aim of farmers and all who care for this country.

In a little book I am reading, Cardinal Cushing of USA, speaking of his own country, the United States of America, says of the developing nations, "*They will follow and admire a genuine moral leadership, not material progress.*"

That, in a nutshell, is what we are called to do. To give the kind of leadership which makes the wealth of the world available for all Mankind. That will make material progress of real value and secure it for the next generation.

REPORT FROM THE FARM

The visitor, in his big shiny motor car, arrived unexpectedly at the lonely farmstead, high in the Sneeuweg mountains. Although he was a stranger to the farmer, in true farm fashion, invited him into the house. Soon they were enjoying a good cup of strong coffee and biscuits served by the farmer's wife.

Soon they were discussing the drought, which seemed endless, and the economic situation which is threatening the stability of farmers. *"Unless there is some kind of new deal, many farmers will be driven off their farms. They cannot meet these punitive interest rates and still remain viable,"* said the farmer.

"You must realise," said the Visitor, *"these high interest rates are only temporary, aimed at cooling the Economy, bringing down Inflation, and getting the country onto a sound financial basis."*

Farmer: *It seems to me that, by the time the Economy is cooled, we will not even have porridge to cool at our breakfasts.*

Visitor: *Drastic measures have to be instituted at times to correct dangerous trends - we have a free-enterprise system that has to be protected. There is a total onslaught on our country, the economy is vulnerable and must be effectively defended!*

Farmer: *Are you sure our present system is best for us and what we need?*

Visitor: (Horrified) *Sir, this is the real key to freedom. The alternative is Socialism which is bad - besides, as everyone knows, it does not work!*

Farmer: *But they have an attractive slogan: "from each according to his ability; to each according to his need"*

Visitor: *Slogan yes, but it only sounds good. It does not happen. Nowhere has it worked. In Russia they liquidated millions in a bid to apply these ideas. They tried to get rid of Independent thinkers and all those who believed in Free Enterprise. In spite of the ruthless policy, the one-time convinced Communist, Milovan Djilas, wrote in his book, *The New Class*, "The Communists were unable to accomplish everything in which they fanatically believed"*

Farmer: *Well, maybe you are right. The Afghans do not seem to be welcoming them to their country. But are you sure that we are not spending the lives of our young men and billions of Rand defending a system we call **Free Enterprise** which is not really working either?*

Visitor: *Absolute heresy! Free-Enterprise is accepted by the Western Nations. Look how the United States is flourishing! Growing employment and a strong Dollar!*

Farmer: *Ja. England was the breeding ground of Democracy - but with three million out of work and a 10-month miners' strike (which seems to have political overtones) it seems to be working less than brilliantly!*

Visitor: *Temporary, my dear sir, just temporary difficulties. The Market forces must be allowed time to operate, to correct imbalances to get the*

economy on a sound basis again, where profits are reasonable and the Balance of Payments be brought into line. To reach this objective, substantial reduction in demand must be obtained.

Farmer: *What you are really saying is that more and more people must lose their jobs and, as those experts say, made redundant. Have you any idea what it is like to be workless? Do you expect me to believe that, in these circumstances, everyone in the country will want to defend what you call **Free Enterprise**?*

Visitor: *Well, (fumbling for words a little), I will not argue about that, but this has been proved over the years the best system to boost production and preserve freedom.*

Farmer: *O.K., you say Free-Enterprise works. Why does Socialism not work?*

Visitor: *They fail because they have not been able to produce what Stalin called the **New Type of Man**. A man who would serve both the State and his workmates honestly, unselfishly and responsibly. It has not happened - and you cannot make men honest and unselfish by law.*

Farmer: *Interesting! Very interesting - and true! But are we doing any better? If our values are based entirely on the material and economic - if success is measured only in Rands and Cents, if our system is just as ruthless, just as uncaring for individuals as theirs (maybe in a different way) are we not defending something we do not really want?*

Visitor: *You farmers do not understand! You squeal about prices of farm produce and demand Control Boards which interfere with the Free Market system.*

Farmer: *You say truly. We do not understand. We are too simple. All this high powered economic theory is too complicated. But we do know if we want to preserve the fertility and productivity of our soil, we have to limit our plowing to that ground which will not erode because of the plow. We also know that, to keep our veldt from coming to harm, we must limit and control the number of animals put to graze on it. In other words, we voluntarily accept an ethical, not economic, standard which limits our desire for increased profits. Because we care for the soil. Now supposing economists and businessmen also decided to apply ethical limits, defined, not by soil fertility as with us, but by the need to preserve and enhance the quality and character of people. Would we not, then, build a system which everyone would want to defend?*

Visitor: *Dreams! Dreams!. You chaps are supposed to be practical; to have your feet on the ground. (He spoke impatiently)*

Farmer: *Yet Solzhenitzyn, who faced cruelty, injustice and hunger, still says he believes that in everyone there is an inner ethic. Does that not show the way to a real hope? Then we could apply that great truth: **There is enough for everybody's need, but not for everybody's greed.***

The visitor stood up abruptly, shook hands coldly, and hurried away, his car gleaming through the cloud of dust as he raced up the dirt road on his way back to the city, and the Bank.....

Because of serious droughts over the last two years¹ in Australia, India, South Africa and elsewhere, the importance of food supplies has been forcibly brought to the foreground - and we in South Africa have to think and plan anew!! Suddenly people have begun to realise that the world's food needs have outstripped supplies! A few years ago many Governments, including our own, were burdened with problems of "surpluses" - now shortages loom large!

Consider the position of wheat, perhaps the most important of all foods. Before the War, Russia was a wheat exporting country, but due to poor harvests in 1963, 1965 and now in 1966, she has had to look to the West² to replenish her stocks, and has just concluded a contract to buy from Canada 336 million bushels at the cost of 744 million dollars.

Poland has been buying from Canada, who has also contracted to sell 250 million bushels to China. These contracts cover the next 3 years - with the result that these Communist countries have contracted for all of Canada's surplus wheat until 1970.

With 600 ships, the USA has been transporting a million tons of wheat per month for the last year to India, where over 46 million people face "scarcity and famine". If it had not been for this great action³, a major disaster would have overtaken that country,

The USA now has a carry-over of 554 million bushels, considered the minimum strategic reserve for the country. This means that the USA, at this point, has no surplus wheat. In fact in June 1966 it was reckoned that the entire world wheat stocks amounted to less than six months' consumption.

What has created so much concern among many leaders is the fact that the earth's population is growing twice as fast as what the world food supply is increasing: 2% population, 1% food supply. The FAO⁴ estimates that this year the per capita food output will decline a further 2%; and that 3,000,000 people will die of malnutrition. The Director of FAO, Dr Sen, says: "*Either we take fullest measures to raise productivity and stabilise population growth or we face disaster of unprecedented magnitude.*"

¹ Published *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, 29 September 1966, the beginning of the devastating drought that was to last until 1972

² The *Cold War* was at its height, so buying from the *West* admitted failure of their own system

³ It came to my attention many years after RBK had written this article that this was a United Nations action; Russian workers stamped each bag of wheat, as it came off the ship with a red Sanscrit (Indian writing) stamp. American workers assumed it something about the address to which it must go - they only discovered later that this read: *A Gift from the People of Russia*

⁴ FAO - Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations

Two scientists, Raymond Ewell of the United States and Rene' Dumont of France, though from different sides of the Atlantic, agree that a world-wide food shortage will become the major problem within 25 years. Ewell, an Ecologist, gloomily predicts that famine will wipe out, not millions, but hundreds of millions within 10 years⁵! Already there is wide starvation. For instance Brazil has two-thirds of its population chronically hungry. In the previous weekend newspapers there was a small news item that on the small island of Lombok, Indonesia, 50 000 had died due to the drought.

That may all sound far off to us here - but it does gravely effect us too. In the last two years our country has suffered a tremendous setback from the drought, still rampant. Its effect will be deep and lasting. Thousands of sheep and cattle have been lost; crops have suffered severely; even the cities have been effected! We have been forced to import millions of bags of maize and wheat; and thousands of tons of butter and cheese.

We have been able to do this because we have had the money with which to buy; other countries have had surpluses to sell. But these conditions may not always obtain. In the next 3 years we could not buy wheat from Canada, the USA has no surplus to sell. Populations increase at a tremendous rate all over the world - 63 million per year. Nations who have surplus today may only have enough for their own people in a few years' time if present trends continue.

So the challenge is for our farmers to feed us and our exploding population. Under present circumstances, discounting the drought, it is not at all certain that this can be done. Our population is now 17,000,000. It is estimated that in less than 35 years time it will have increased to 40 million⁶. More than double. We had to import food this year to feed our 17 million - can we hope to feed twice as many?

Circumstances today are not promising. We are presently losing 400 million tons of soil per year. This is the equivalent of 6 inches of soil off 200 farms of 1,000 morgen each. It was valued by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture in the House, 2 weeks ago at R500,000,000. The amount of Arable land decreases as the need for more food increases.

Our water supplies have also become critical. There are Commissions studying the problem, but it is late. Recently more cuts in supplies to the Witwatersrand have been announced. Industries, mines and gardens are affected. Vaalhartz irrigation farmers are not to get only 20% of their usual water allocation and have been warned to plant no Summer crops.

⁵ Although 100's of millions did not die, millions died in Ethiopia, other parts of Africa & Asia

⁶ In 1997 as these words are copied, the estimated population (after the 1996 Census is over 47 Million - 30 years later

Other irrigation schemes are equally, and sometimes even worse affected. This is only too clear here where our own dam⁷ is empty. This situation not only destroys the farmer's income but means there is less food and fodder for the nation.

All hunger is not confined to distant lands and other parts of Africa. In South Africa, as a result of drought and other factors, a great proportion of our population does not get enough to eat. Reliable figures are not available, but it is variously estimated that between 45% and 80% of the Bantu population live below the *Poverty Datum Line*. In some areas, severe food shortages exist and feeding schemes instituted by the Government and other organisations have had to come to the rescue.

Last year our Government spent R3,000,000 chiefly in the Ciskei, Transkei, and Northern Transvaal, feeding hundreds of thousands, mainly children. At the same time we sent assistance to Basutoland⁸ where the United States has also been sending in food supplies. For 5 years of drought, the USA has been sending food and aid to Bechuanaland⁹. In spite of all this, thousands of cases of Kwashiorkor are still reported monthly; and many thousands die each year from Gastro-enteritis. In 1965, 67 thousand new TB cases were reported. I need not remind you that these diseases are closely linked to malnutrition.

Even our district of Graaff-Reinet is not free of this problem. In December 1965, it was reported that 3 had died from Kwashiorkor and 21 from Gastro-enteritis. By the end of January 1966, the Summer deaths from Gastro-enteritis had risen to 90. It was stated that this was no higher than the average for the country as a whole.

I am not here seeking to throw blame on anyone. Many factors are involved - along with the non-availability of protein-rich foods, misuse of income, ignorance in regard to nutrition. Nor is my aim to burden you with the problems, but to share with you what I have come to see as very real dangers ahead. Perhaps, together, we can take the load and find the answers; answers which must be found.

I certainly do not know them all, but offer the following points for consideration as some of the steps we should take in this country:

● The importance of farming as a profession must be recognised and adequately rewarded. After all, there is nothing more important than the production of food on which the whole of Mankind depends, The farmer should no longer have to go with cap in hand for a subsidy here and a loan there. It takes many years to train a farmer. It entails taking great risks and demands a considerable ability to endure hardships and anxiety in this difficult climate. Often heavy losses are the price of experience.

⁷ *Van Ryneveld's Pass Dam* - it filled again in the floods of 1974

⁸ Basutoland - now Lesotho

⁹ Bechuanaland - now Botswana

● Farmers will have to tackle their task with a new vision and some new motives. Not only to make an adequate living, but to produce the needs of the people and at the same time, conserve the soil which is a trust from the Nation.

● New methods of production and new types of foodstuffs will have to be discovered and exploited. Crops can be bred to grow in different environments - much has already been done in this. Seaweed, Fish and other materials will have to be "farmed" to provide food for the world.

● South African experts in Agriculture and stock breeding, and experienced farmers will need to become available to help in the development of Agriculture in the Transkei, other Bantu¹⁰ areas, and in other parts of Africa. There are vast unused land resources in Africa and though we may not always be welcome from a political angle, I believe that South Africans are destined to contribute much to this Continent. As Agriculturists, I believe we would be welcomed. The key to survival is in the rapid development of the underdeveloped areas. That wonders can be performed is demonstrated by Formosa and Mexico - both previously importers of food. They applied new scientific ideas and have now become nett exporters of foodstuffs.

● A new personal sense of responsibility will have to be engendered among the citizens of the country. Housewives, especially in the cities, will need to realise they have a part in preserving the soil and water of the nation from which the food is produced. One way of destroying those sources of supply is the constant demand for "*cheap food*". The policy of trying to keep food cheap has already destroyed much soil fertility.

● New ways of distribution and cheaper methods of packaging must be found. Though very little profit is made by distributors in some essential foodstuffs, this is not so with all. Research could surely open ways in which handling, packing and transporting essential foods could be cheapened, which could parallel the marvellous new methods of building. Linked with better distribution, should be education in nutrition.

I have dealt with a vast and vital problem in a very general way. I am well aware that there is much more to be said. But I am even more concerned that right action be taken. A great International body, like *Rotary*¹¹, I am sure has an important part to play. Food and water are basic necessities for survival. Great Industrial advance unmatched by food production can only lead to disaster. The time may be nearer than we think when more water will be used for fruits and vegetables and less for flowers and swimming pools.

¹⁰ In the days of the *Verwoerd Era*, when *Bantustans* were being developed for his *Grand Apartheid*, with blacks (Bantu) supposedly confined to their own areas

¹¹ This article was based on a talk to the *Rotary Club* of Graaff-Reinet

To get this all into perspective, I would like to end by quoting something Dr Niemoller said a few weeks ago. His thought-provoking statement went something like this: *"By the end of the century, the non-whites will outnumber the whites by five to one. But the whites will have the wealth and the non-whites, on the whole, will be poor. Herein lies the danger of mortal conflict."*

"The challenge to the Christian is to organise affairs so that there is no conflict but co-operation. I suggest unselfish and inspired planning in regard to production and distribution of food could be the key to peace in the future."

Dare we stand aside and watch the farmer being stripped of his birthright? Must we watch silently as social and economic forces menace our true contribution to the nation's wealth and the strength of its spiritual resources?

For too long, many of us have been lured into the new fashion of calculating our total contribution to the nation in terms of Rands and Cents. If the credit figure is big enough, we count it as success; if it is small we feel we have failed.

Of course no farm can be run without a profit. There must be a fair wage for work, but we have too eagerly tried to fit farm values into new fashions set by some academics. Because of this, we are in danger of being diverted from our real calling - to love and treasure the land, to provide food and fibre for the people, and to add to the spiritual strength of the Nation.

Because we, and some *advisors*, are neglecting the spiritual values, we have an eroding soil, a flight from the land of some of the best young people, and the grabbing of more land by those who see it only as means to the making of profits. Ecological disruption threatens the heart of our country. To allow this to continue is the way to suicide.

There are many who scoff at spiritual values. They believe that only the hard drive of a free enterprise system (read: *Profit is King*) or the controlled economy of a Socialist state can be effective in this Materialistic age.

United States philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson, had no doubt about the farm's real part. He wrote: "*The glory of the farmer is that in the division of labours, it is his part to create. All trade rests, at last, on his primitive activity. He stands close to Nature; he obtains from the earth the bread and meat The farmer is a hoarded capital of health, as the farm is the capital of wealth; and it is to him that the health and power, (moral and intellectual) of the cities come. The city is always recruited from the country.... He is the person whom a poet of any clime would appreciate as being really a piece of old Nature, comparable to sun and moon, rainbow and flood; because he is, as all natural persons are, representative of Nature as much as these....*" Certainly Emerson lived more than a century ago, but what he wrote then holds true today.

Picture the farmer, having sown his seed after the rain, a week later walks through his field and, squinting against the sun, sees the first soft green shoots sprouting from the buried seed. He feels gratitude, joy; knows it to be a miracle. He knows, too, that the crop has to face many hazards before it comes to harvest. See another farmer, roused at midnight in midwinter to attend a cow suffering from complicated calving. Or the Angora Goat farmer, walking into the veldt at break of day after an unexpectedly sudden cold and continuous rain. He tramps through the veldt with leaden feet, knowing he will find many of his precious flock, curly kids and short-haired mothers, dead. Killed by the unpredictable weather.

Or see the farmer on the high ground, looking through his sheep after the drought winds have blown for months. The last of the dry grass has crumbled to dust; the sparse bushes are black and leafless; his animals are reduced to little more than skeletons, scabbling hopelessly in the desertlike conditions, fighting to stay alive.

Or see him in more fortunate times. The farmer riding on the harvester, cupping a hand to let the thick stream of ripened grain fill his hand and pour into the bag. Or the Citrus farmer, counting the cases of brightly coloured, health giving fruit as it comes into the packing shed from well cared-for orchards. Or the wool farmer, counting the tightly pressed bales onto the truck that will transport it on the first leg of the journey to the quality clothing markets and fashion houses of the world.

All these, and more, are the searching experiences of men and women on the land. Who would deny that such experiences, of pain and joy, of anguish and elation, of dread and of victory, have a deep spiritual impact. Each day the man on the land, and his family, are brought face to face with Nature . . . and with God.

Man, with modern science and technology, can control many of the dangers which beset farmers of an earlier age. But there remain many things which Man cannot control. We are still at the mercy of the elements - indeed, we still depend on them. To quote Emerson again: ". . . *who are the farmer's servants. Not the Irish, nor the coolies (nor the black man) but geology and chemistry, the quarry of the air, the water of the brook, the lightning of the cloud, the castings of the worm, the plough of frost. Long before he was born, the sun of ages decomposed the rocks, mellowed the land, soaked it with light and heat, covered it with vegetable film, then with forest, and accumulated spagnum whose decays made the peat of his meadow.*"

To live on the land without spiritual values and aims is to miss the real purpose of farm life. These truths lie buried in the hearts of most people. Witness the city gardens and the care many put into even the smallest plots. Note the emphasis in this country and overseas on the preservation of Nature Reserves and Parks; the development of *Wilderness* areas and trails.

Summing up some of the discussion at the Wilderness Conference in Johannesburg in 1977, Brenda Carter writes: "*More and more it is recognised that Man needs to feel part of the Natural Order of things - that without contact with nature, he loses the use of his senses . . . Man needs to regain his reverence for life and all living things, and disregards the natural laws of the Universe at his peril.*"

We honour those giant spirits of the past who pioneered the country and opened up the land to farming. Others who bred fine herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, goats, horses, They drove deep furrows into the virgin soil. They lived lonely, brave lives far away from town and the comforts of city life. Later they erected miles and miles of fencing, dug ditches, built dams, erected sheds, built simple homes. They lived frugally and faithfully.

Their spiritual capital is our inheritance. But the preservation of spiritual power on the land for our country has not ended. It has just been passed on to our generation. Just as providing bread from new harvests has been handed to us. We must do it. Thus the true farmer is needed as much as ever. His part can never be taken over by those who merely manipulate the land, livestock and lucre. His task will, forever, remain sacred - to love and respect the soil and to preserve it as a community.

In the land, in its laws of tillage and husbandry, is lodged a vast storehouse of spiritual values. Wrongly used the land is a source of division, destruction, even war. Rightly used, it is the supplier of the needs of man - both physical and spiritual. It can lead the way to peace.

Unashamed we sing with the Psalmist "*Happy are those who find joy in obeying the laws of the Lord.*" So doing, our birthright will be preserved; our success will be measured on a truly balanced scale.

THE PRODUCER AND CONSUMER ARE LINKED BY THE LAND ETHIC¹²

The key to better understanding between Producer and Consumer, between Town and Country, is universal acceptance of the Land Ethic. E.F Schumacher in his book *Small Is Beautiful*, makes the interesting remark, "*The prestige carried by the people in the modern industrial society varies in inverse proportion to their closeness to actual production.*" This is a situation which ought to be changed! I believe a new approach to this whole matter is what we need to consider.

"*The Image of Farming*" has come up for Congress discussion on many occasions. On more than one occasion I have, myself, brought resolutions to the Midlands Agricultural Union and the Cape Agricultural Union dealing with this vital matter in one form or another. We have, enthusiastically, felt the time had come to bring a better image before the Public - but little has happened.

Farming remains, if not exactly in the dog-box - little understood, greatly undervalued and generally unappreciated. I am sure you will agree with me that the time has come for us to change these wrong attitudes.

To me it seems clear that there are three things to be done:

1. We need to value ourselves. Farming is a skilled profession.
2. We need consciously to accept the Land Ethic - and make it known
3. We need to win the Consumer - not for our profit, but for the sake of the country and its future.

1. Value Ourselves:

We need to make the point, with emphasis and clarity, that the Farmer's value to his country cannot be reckoned only in Rands and Cents. I do not know about you, but few things are calculated to drive up my blood pressure more than statements by Economists and Banking *Experts* who say, "*The Farmers' contribution to Gross National Product is only 11%* (or some such figure)." The wheels of a motor car cost less than 10% of the whole. Which car travels without the back wheels? Why is there a need to compete with the city Executives or Business Tycoons for recognition of our place in the community.

I do not want to suggest that profits are not important! In a free enterprise system (proved to be the most effective way to produce from the land), if the farmer does not make a reasonable profit he will be unable to continue on the land. Without profits from his work, the farmer will be unable to produce the food the country needs. But success on the land cannot be measured in money terms alone. The measure by which the farmer's contribution is assessed must be revised.

¹² Published *Farmers Weekly*, 12 October 1977; address to WAA Provincial Congress

The skill with which we produce from the land and distribute to the markets of this country (and abroad) is of a very high order. If we consider what has been achieved in recent years, there is much to be proud about. Wheat used to be imported, now it is often in surplus; Beef was in short supply, now all the cattle cannot get onto the markets; Dairy produce used to be scarce, now it has to be curtailed at great cost to the producer; Maize is exported in large quantities, as is sugar and fruit. Production has kept ahead of Population growth and is likely to continue to do so.

There is no need for hunger in this country. The fact that there is, in some parts, is not the fault of the farmer. He has done his part. The mechanics of distribution have failed.

Yes we often do not see ourselves in true perspective. We hear much about the great contributions of the gold, diamond and coal industries to the country's exchequer. Directors, managers and executives of Industry are given high status, almost adulation. They are envied and admired by the man in the street, and often by the farmer behind the plow! Now the business manager and mining executive make a great contribution. I do not minimise that. They take risks and produce capital and goods. But, though the mining executive is a Primary Producer, he is producing from a dwindling asset.

When the diamonds have been processed and worn by lovely ladies around the world, when the gold has been sold to Europe, America, and the Middle East, when the coal has been burned or exported, all that is left where these activities have taken place - is a hole in the ground! True, they have taken risks, they have shown great initiative, they have brought profit to the country; but their vast empire is built on a vanishing asset.

Not so with the farmer. He produces from an asset which does not vanish, unless he exploits his ground (which no true farmer does). His soil has come from the past - it must go on to the future. Rather than being a diminishing asset, it is an increasing asset. With better fertilizers and knowledge, new licks and cultivars, more can be produced from the same land than was produced 10 years ago.

And when the farmer has produced the bread, milk, meat, maize, wool; mohair, and sugar for this year's needs - when it has been eaten by the Industrial Executives and the wool and mohair has been worn by the lovely ladies around the world - the soil is still there. And for the year after that.

Indeed, the farmer is not just a commercial producer, not just the guardian - he is the steward of God's precious gift for the production of the essential of Mankind. This, I submit, is a high calling. It cannot be done without a high level of skill knowledge, determination, and energy.

2. The Land Ethic: a) The Land

I believe most of us subscribe, subconsciously, to the Land Ethic - but it is as yet undefined. We do not express it clearly as our basic philosophy. Maybe we have been a little shy to subscribe publicly to an ideal in this age which tries to live by scientific and economic facts alone! I believe the time has come for us to define and publish our adherence to this idea.

Aldo Leopold, a pioneer American Conservationist, put it this way, "*When we see land as a community which we belong, we may begin to so use it with love and respect. That land is a community is a basic concept of Ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of Ethics.*"

Clearly, on the question of care for the land, a farmer's success (or his contribution to the nation) cannot be assessed in Rand and Cents. It is to be found in the fertility and stability of the soil, more specifically, the top 30 millimetres of soil, which took over 300 years to be formed. It is in this that the real wealth, the key to the culture and health of the nation, is to be found. It is not in the mines and factories, in the bright lights of the cities or *dorps* - but in the heart of the farmer who has accepted and applied the Land Ethic.

Now this is not an easy thing to accept in the light of some economic facts. In a study in the United States, Adkins found that "*Income from high conservation land will be below incomes from low conservation for the first 50 years.*" That is a hard truth.

It is not made easier for us to accept in the face of the economist and agricultural advisors who have been telling us for some years now "*Farming is no longer a way of life*". I suppose, by that they mean its not some kind of haphazard hit or miss; *do what is convenient and live in comfort while you hope for the best* kind existence of the farms. Actually, if there was ever anything approaching this on the farms, it has been gone for some years now.

Now these same people are telling us firmly, "*Farming is a Business.*" By this they surely mean that everything must be organised, tallied in columns of figures and that the measure of success for the farmer is a favourable balance in Rands and Cents.

Some have thought we have to choose between these two ideas. Farming a *Way of Life*, or farming a *profitable and hard-nosed business*. And, because we have to face economic facts, buy costly fertilizers, dips and doses, pay highly for machinery and all transport, many have tried to make it a business. But along that road is neither satisfaction nor stability.

Success or failure cannot be assessed in this way on the farm, We cannot avoid the Land Ethic which is concerned with the love and preservation of the soil - and the long-term care of the Nation's greatest asset (after its People).

2. The Land Ethic: b) The People

Conventional economists keep telling us that, for the sake of more profits, we must use more machinery and employ fewer people. In this way, they assure us, business will be more profitable. Often experts advise bigger and heavier tractors drawing bigger and better equipment so that one man, on suitable machines, can do the work of 10 men and more! Perhaps on a blackboard it can be demonstrated that in this way more Rands and Cents can be made per Hectare.

But the question I ask myself is, "*Is doing with less labour our highest service to the community?*" If machines are to do the work of men, and the men cannot earn the wages with which to buy food we are producing, then what have we gained? Is this policy one of the reasons for the vast *squatter* problem around cities and towns? Does this not fuel the inflation we fight? Does this not fuel the Inflation we fight? People must have homes and food or die. Employed on the *Flatland*¹³, they could be useful citizens; harried and starving on the outskirts of the cities, they are a danger and an expense to every Taxpayer. There are those who believe that Industrial Employment can fill the needs of the displaced rural workers. But at the cost of R3000 to provide one man with job¹⁴ - even only 2 million out work would need six Billion Rand!

E. F Schumacher in his book, *Small is Beautiful. A study in economics as if people mattered*, has much to say about the gigantic technological developments. Let me quote one paragraph: "*The whole point is to determine what constitutes progress. The home-comers believe that the direction which modern technology has taken, and is continuing to pursue - towards greater size, ever higher speeds, and ever increased violence in defiance of the laws of harmony - is the opposite of progress. Hence the call to taking stock and finding new orientation. The stock-taking indicates that we are destroying our very basis of existence, and the re-orientation is based on remembering what human life is all about.*"

This all adds up to accepting responsibility for people, as people. Not merely weighing up the profit and loss of a situation. It is not a plea for charity on the farms. No farmer can care for all who are born on the farms. Not all so born are ready to stay and sell their labour. There are those with whom it is not easy to work, but there are farmers and organisations who are finding ways of co-operating with their labourers.

Because of close contact inevitable on farms, this sector can lead the way to good Labour Relations. Again, this cannot be measured in Rands and Cents - but in those deeper values of caring for people.

¹³ *Platteland* - Rural area

¹⁴ The estimated costs of providing the infrastructure etc per worker in 1978

3. Win the Consumer

My contention is that it is on this thesis that we could base our Public Relations, and in this way I believe we can win the Townsman and Townswoman to our side. That, when they understand, they will work with us - instead of, so often., merely demanding cheap food. By declaring our loyalty to the values I have tried to define here, instead of argument and justification, we could build understanding and co-operation between Town and Country; between Consumer and Producer.

They will need to understand that, to us, profit and success are not necessarily synonymous. Decidedly success cannot be measured in Rands and Cents, but through indefinable satisfaction plus the stability of the soil. They also need to understand that, unfortunately, *satisfactions* cannot pay interest on the Bond or persuade the Manager of the Bank to extend the Overdraft!

Our search for some kind of security on the land has led to some of the clumsy arrangements of Control Boards and subsidies - sometimes to the producer, but just as often to the consumer. One unfortunate result has been the breach between producer and consumer which must be healed, as much for the sake of the soil as for the people concerned. All those reared on the veldt and those reared and living in the cities, have a stake in the health of the soil. It is everyone's heritage and insurance for their childrens' future.

The land was not created for the profit of the farmer nor for the production of cheap food for the cities. There is a common need for the preservation and stability of the soil. The best example of common interest, and how the recognition of common interest was brought to the consumer (and how well they reacted) happened in Switzerland a few years ago. The price of butter was raised and the housewives of that country (as they have done at times in this country) decided to boycott butter. Despite a lowering of the price again, the animosity remained and the stocks of butter did not move. There grew up a veritable mountain of unsold butter. The head of the Swiss Dairy Board decided to go to the people and present the facts. He met the ladies of their Council, also on the TV. and told them just how much the country was dependent on the dairy farmers and that the price of butter would have to be increased again to give the farmers a living income.

Now Switzerland is a beautiful country with high, steep mountains covered with a marvellous green grass in Summer and with deep snow in Winter. Cattle farmers who produce the butter and cheese from their Simmentaler cattle, *winter* their herds in barns in the valleys. When Spring comes, they bring cattle to the grass and follow the receding snow-line, climbing a little higher each week. The clear notes of tinkling cow-bells make a special music which carries across the valleys and tells of contented cows producing good milk. The farmers follow the cattle and move to little chalets up the mountains where they make their living by producing butter and cheese. He explained to the ladies that the grass had to be grazed by cattle. Because of the terrain, machinery could not be used.

If the grass was allowed to grow uncut, the long leaves and seed stems would bend under the weight of winter snows and this would create an excellent basis for the snow to slide. Sliding deep snow would bring avalanches which could crush the villages in the valleys. But grazed stubble (shorter and stronger) supported the snow and usually prevented it from sliding. The farmers were giving an essential service as well as providing food. If they could not make a living, there would be no cows to graze the grass.

The Housewives League responded by saying that, now that they understood the problem and the need, they would happily buy the butter. The boycotts were called off. Within months the surplus had disappeared and butter had to be imported!

The situation is not quite parallel. It is not the snow which is the danger here, but the soil itself would slip. That top, irreplaceable 30 cm is in danger of sliding down the mountainside into the rivers. In spite of great efforts and much expense over the last 30 years, we are still losing enough soil each year to cover 750 000 hectares, 30 mm thick. Four hundred million tons of soil is being lost each year. Some of this is due to ignorance, some to bad farming and much to the pressures created by the demand of cheap food.

The consumer, the housewife, is entitled to know the facts - not to win their sympathy, but because, maybe, they could join with us in saving the soil for good production now and an insurance so that their children will not starve.

If we approach our Public Relations from this angle, we can begin to demonstrate that there is no clash of interest but an urgent common interest, not only to service but also to build a stable community. The consumer can be won to feel he or she is as responsible as we are for keeping undamaged that topsoil. He or she would come to realise that, often, the price of *cheap food* is the ruin of the land and eventual disappearance of civilization... this has happened before!

In every country there are the poor who have to be cared for. They are unable to buy food at *economic market prices*. But the way to national suicide is to demand that the **soil** subsidise the poor! It is the way to ruin of the land, the economy, and the country. It seems to me the challenge for us farmers is to accept in humility our proud heritage of national responsibility; to make our viewpoint understood by proclaiming our respect for and adherence to the Land Ethic; to accept that we can not, in financial terms, compete with the mining and business Magnates; to realise that, in weighing up the success of our enterprise, there is a need for a spiritual scale.

At the same time we need the understanding and co-operation of the townsmen, even more the townswomen, so we work as a team, not in competition, in the great task to which we are called. As farmers we have been entrusted with the Nation's most valuable asset. Unless we, and others, appreciate this fact, that asset can be lost forever. The Land Ethic is for everyone. Its acceptance will preserve the soil and unite the people.

"Tackling global and national problems is possible if like Roland Kingwill, a Graaff-Reinet farmer, you begin the process in your own backyard.¹"

Forty years ago it seemed to me two great problems menaced our future: Soil Erosion which could turn our country into a desert, and Racial Divisions, which could lead to disaster. In near despair I came face to face with the thought: *"If you want an answer to the problems of your nation, the place to start is with yourself and on your own farm."*

It was a challenge so clear that either deliberate evasion or effective action had to follow. I decided to act. On my farm there was both gully and sheet erosion. Although I was trying to contain the *dongas*, the land continued to be damaged. I became convinced that the one way to bring lasting results on this Karroo farm was to reduce drastically the number of animals grazing on the land. I reduced the number of livestock on the farm by one third.

This, I knew, would demand both faith and sacrifice, because, with less sheep to shear, my income would be reduced by at least one third - while interest repayments on the big farm bond and other costs would remain the same. This was before the days of the Conservation Act and manifold scientific grazing experiments. But we followed through our conviction, sold the stock, and started a rotational grazing system, something which had not been possible before. We had to adapt to a smaller income and forego all luxuries.

After 5 years, some improvements could be seen in the veldt and later, because there was more food, each sheep began to produce more wool and lambing also started to improve. But, more important, we had the satisfaction of a turn in the tide of erosion and grass began to grow where it had not grown before. We had proved that Soil Erosion is not inevitable and irreversible. We had begun to apply the Land Ethic, aptly described by pioneer the American writer and conservationist Aldo Leopold, when he wrote, *"The land is a community. . . to be loved and respected. It is made up of soil particles, micro-organisms, humus, earthworms - if the balance is lost, erosion follows, the ecology is threatened."*

The same conviction that made me begin *"in my own backyard"* as far as soil erosion is concerned, brought about a transformation in my relationships with people of other races. This had to begin with the men who worked for me on the farm. I had demanded instant obedience from them - no arguments. Early in the morning I would meet with them at the *kraal* gate and tell them what to do, in detail; instructions which I expected them to carry out to the letter. The result often was misunderstandings and rows; sometimes even dismissal. There was, for me, both class and colour division. I took them for granted.

¹ *Frontline* magazine, subheading to the article published, June 1985

I found that to bridge the division was quite simple - and very difficult. It meant, for me, an early-morning apology to my men for past ill-temper and dictatorial ways. I told them I wanted to begin on a new basis. They were surprised, but instantly co-operative. We found a new relationship on the farm. I discovered them to be individuals with the same anxieties, hopes, fears, and needs as I had.

At our own expense we started the first farm school in the area - and were criticised by the neighbours. I began to plan the work on the farm together with the men. Each one with a special bent, or interest, was encouraged to use it to the full. We began to discuss and solve their domestic problems. I assured them of security in their jobs, even if times were bad.

My inherited (and accepted) ceiling with people of other races had been demolished. We began to work with Welfare and other organisations in our town, and quite naturally invited leaders of other races to our home. New friendships grew.

Later, travelling with a group in Zambia, Zaire, and Burundi, I worked in close fellowship with of the founders of the ANC Youth League, Dr William Nkomo. He told me they had formed the Youth League because they felt their seniors were too slow and conservative. But now he had decided to walk a new road. Yet he spoke with courage and clarity: *"I will always fight for the rights of my people - but I fight with clean hands and a pure heart."*

Unknowingly we had begun to apply the Social Ethic: recognition that the community is interdependent. The boss, the mechanic, the labourer - all must contribute to the common pool; and they must receive their share of the products and conveniences so generated. In this way the community can be healthy, productive and permanent. But if the balance is lost, just as with the land, erosion follows: division, conflict, strikes, family breakdown.

These experiences gave me a new perspective on the needs of our own country. I realised that the answers were in a dimension beyond economics and politics. This was emphasised for me when a young African, who had been amongst the radicals, became convinced there was no answer in violence. He is still in touch with many of the young men in the townships and he says, *"If they have to choose between the present system and Communism, they will choose Communism."*

It is now many years since I made the decision to seek answers to problems in our country. It was a decision of faith and it has meant, at times, walking a lonely road. But with it has grown the certainty that men and women, as individuals, have to choose to apply moral and spiritual values in private and public, if we are effectively to meet the challenge of the age.

I certainly have no reason to feel satisfied - we still have far to go. We have but tried to make changes long overdue on our farm - it seems clear that there are changes long overdue in the country . . .

We cannot outgrow God, but we need to find the way to link the faith so many of us profess with the kind of action that can meet the needs of the times. If this fails, materialism of the Right will remain pitted against the materialism of the Left. This means, in simple terms, the continuation of insecurity and conflict.

This need not be. Government and Private Enterprise have a great part to play, but the lasting solution lies in the hands of individuals. It is time to choose. Neither Capitalism nor Socialism are meeting the needs of this age. Structures must be changed - but whatever they may be, they cannot succeed or not accepted by the people themselves, then built into Society. The answer lies in applying the Social Ethic: *caring for people as people.*

Leadership does not depend on colour or education, but on the qualities of integrity, responsibility, unselfishness and courage. Each one must decide but it is surely "*better to light one candle than to curse the darkness*".

A suggestion by the Editor that a contribution to *Withond*² would be welcomed set me thinking about the long path we have travelled to our present ideas about Soil Conservation. The path has not only been long, it has sometimes been rough, sometimes undefined, and sometimes crowned with unexpected rewards.

Since the first farmers took grants of land, agriculture in South Africa has had to face difficulties - and droughts. But it was in 1921 that, what became known as the *Drought Commission*, first focussed attention on Soil Erosion. They blamed the 12,4% loss of white farmers from Central Cape, since 1904, on veldt deterioration. At the same time the white population had increased in the North West Cape and Transvaal Bushveld by 3)% and 50% respectively. The Commission stated the erosion was due to overgrazing - and recommended that Jackal-proof fencing be used and herding of flocks be discontinued.

By then many progressive farmers - many in Graaff-Reinet district - had already fenced their farms and got rid of jackals. They had seen that, when herded flocks had to return to the *kraal* every night for protection, large tracts of ground around the *kraals* were denuded. This also happened along the sides of the watering places which had to be visited every day. But, though the danger from jackals had been averted and the stock had free range, they still had continuous grazing. This veldt only improved marginally.

In 1940, Jacks and White, of USA, published a book *Rape of the Earth*. They had begun studying the reasons for the *Dust Bowl* which had plagued the central parts of the USA in the 1930's. They warned the United States against over ploughing and over grazing, and misuse of the soil. In the same book they pinpointed serious problems in other countries, and included a startling statement about this country. "*A national catastrophe due to soil erosion is perhaps more imminent in South Africa than in any other country,*" he wrote.

World War II was still being bitterly fought. Prices for farm products had increased but in previous years and the Depression from 1929 - 33 had made very difficult economic conditions on the farms. Agricultural Organisation leaders had realised that a better deal for the farmer was essential to keep the industry viable.

The President of the SAAU³ in the 1940's, Mr Elliot of Natal said: "*The consumer must realise he cannot continue to have cheap food if the land is to be saved from destruction.*"

² *Withond* - the Quarterly Newsletter of the Conservation Committee

³ SAAU - South African Agricultural Union

SAAU - South African Agricultural Union

Although many of the young farmers, thinkers and scientists were in the armies in North Africa and Europe in the early 1940's, the big questing of Soil Erosion was beginning to get serious attention in this country. Newspaper and magazine articles highlighted the need. One result was the formation of *The Veld Trust*, of which Mr Elliott was the first Chairman and had served on the Committee (with a number of prominent men) to draft the Constitution. Since then this organisation has done much valuable work. It was urgently needed, for it was at about that time that one authority in the Eastern Cape wrote: "*Today we are figuratively and literally living on a landslide. Millions of tons of once productive soil are annually washed from under our feet.*"

The situation may not be so dramatic now. In this district there has been great progress. Nevertheless, 400 million tons of soil are still being washed down the rivers of South Africa every year.

By 1945, soil scientists and extension officers Mr C J J van Rensburg had been working with some of them on the Rietondale Experimental Station. In that year he travelled throughout the country, showing films and lecturing on the damage being done to the veldt, through mismanagement and over-grazing. Many of his excellent photographs are still available. This tour by Mr van Rensburg did much to awaken the ordinary man in the veldt to the dangers of erosion.

In 1946 the Government's *National Scheme* was launched. The war against *Nazism* had ended, the war against Erosion had begun in earnest. Plans had come to a head after a visit, by Dr Hugh Bennett of the United States. He had been invited to the country by our Government and was able to give some wise and timely advice.

In those early days we spoke about *anti-erosion works* - and work consisted mainly of dams, weirs, and contour banks. Later fencing, and rotational grazing began to play a part and we spoke of *Soil Conservation*. This developed to *Optimum Utilization*, and now we talk (rightly) of *Protection of the Ecology*. The protection of the whole of Nature. This is the concern of every citizen, not only of the farmer.

Aldo Leopold of the United States, philosopher and writer, in the book *A Sand County Almanac*, wrote: "*When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. That land is a community is a basic concept of Ecology - but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of Ethics.*"

General acceptance of this, the Land Ethic, and striving for its acceptance by all, will go a long way to achieve our real goal: A stable and fertile soil, a contented and well-nourished community, and a united Nation.

World-wide food shortages threaten, according to a report by FAO (the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations). *"Within the next 20 years, 10% of our fertile soil will vanish. Analysis of man-made land degradation raises a fundamental question. Are we going to have enough good land to feed the extra 2.6 billion people who will be on this planet by the year 2025?"* asks Mr Saouma of the FAO. Clearly, on a world scale, our soil is slipping away. If there is not a change in management, widespread starvation will be endemic.

As a farmer, I know the soil can be stabilised. Fifty years ago the soil on my farm was unstable. My system of management was causing erosion. It stopped when I introduced a strict new system of management and reduced the sheep and cattle on the farm by one-third. I learned from pioneer the American Conservationist⁴ who wrote *"The land is a community to be loved and respected. It is made up of soil particles, micro-organisms, humus, earthworms - if the balance is lost, erosion follows, the ecology is threatened."* This, I realised, was the challenge to apply moral principles to land management - the Land-Ethic! Applied world-wide, with discipline and courage, we could turn the tide of land ruin and stabilise our ecology.

We all realise, as we read our weekend newspaper, not only our soil is in danger of slipping, The normal links and loyalties in marriage and the structure of our society are in danger of slipping away completely. It is actually encouraged in some quarters. We can stop the destruction of our soil if we apply Aldo Leopold's Ethic. The same principles would apply when *"the community is loved and respected."* As we accept the Social Ethic - to love and respect people, all people, a new way for us all will open up, and a united society will grow in the place of our tottering communities. To save our soil we had to begin on our own farm, so will each of us have to begin in our own home! The home must provide the firm foundation and the return to the ideal of a sound family life is a priority.

Ethics have a moral base and, for our future society to work smoothly, we will have to learn to overcome the divisions of the past! It is right to treasure and respect our inherited traditions - but also essential to respect values other people may hold. Writing in the magazine, *For A Change*, R. Ruffin (USA) said, *"In the context of the current surge of violence, world wide healing between the races is more than a moral imperative; it is a political necessity."* Certainly there are race differences and traditions, but we have many things in common on which we can build - energy, ideas, skills, hopes. We also all need to overcome the divisive forces of jealousy, fear, hate, and selfishness.

Learning together how to apply the Social Ethic could bring peace and freedom for all. Our children could inherit a country whose people respect God's way at home and abroad.

⁴ Aldo Leopold

The Department of Welfare and Population Development has produced a good, well-documented *Green Paper*, setting out hopes and plans. But there is a lack of emphasis, or even mention, of the need for Conservation of the soil! Unless we can preserve and use our soil properly we will not be able to produce the food needed for the present population - to say nothing of the *Population Explosion*, with a baby born every 26 seconds!

Most of what we eat must be produced on the land which makes Soil Conservation absolutely imperative. Much of our soil is very friable and needs special care to keep it from eroding. But caring for the soil demands sacrifice, discipline and knowledge.

With care for the soil must also be care for our water - dams, rivers and especially the underground, supplies. These are in special danger now with the spread of the supply of electricity. Pumping of water can be and is done by many, day and night. In some areas the water table has already sunk considerably.

As someone else has said, "*Environmental Conservation must cover biological, physical, social, economic, political and historical facts.*" Without the necessary education we will fail to preserve this lovely land! There is a grim warning in the fact that the Sahara Desert was once known as "*the granary of Europe.*"

Education and encouragement for all to join in the preservation of the soil and environment should become a National priority.

The following articles were all published by various newspapers under the general title:

THROUGH THE EYES OF A KARROO FARMER:

IS FREE-ENTERPRISE PROTECTING FREEDOM

I walked up to a high point on the farm this morning and looked across to the distant blue and shadowed mountains. These Sneeuberg mountains are so beautiful in the morning light, while the frost lies white on the ground. To be free to work the farm is a wonderful thing - to know that the better we care for the land the more satisfaction and eventually, the more secure our profit will be.

We have to make the decisions determining the use of the land, and this means we are involved in "free-enterprise." But I found I had to change some of the things I had been doing - partly due to ignorance, partly because we did not understand fully the limitations nature has placed on the working of the soil. We are free to exploit it, but if we do so we eventually lose the land and our living. In doing this we mortally wound our country. I realised there was a limit in the use of land beyond which I should not go. I had voluntarily to recognise and respect that boundary.

Back in my office I picked up the newspapers and read several reports on the theme that it was essential to expand the free-enterprise system to stop the danger of creeping Socialism or, even worse, the advance of imperial Communism. If, they said, we could draw the majority of our people into the "free enterprise" system we could contain the above dangers and ward off the total onslaught.

Now my experience teaches me that free-enterprise, which demands that I use every talent I have, to do the best I can, is both satisfying and challenging. But here on the farm there are perimeters beyond which I dare not use my enterprise. There is fertile ground which I dare not break with the plow if I want to protect my real assets. Then I wonder if in the same way, there are not limiting factors for free-enterprise in business and industry?

Is there not a danger that invisible boundaries are being ignored, and crossed? If those boundaries are not respected, just as the needs of my soil must be respected, if they do not, would the nation leave it to bleed? There are voices being raised, which, if heeded, may ensure a future of freedom for all. Schumacher (*Small is Beautiful*) says "There is no answer with economists who pursue economic growth as the highest value. You cannot build peace on economic foundations which rest on greed and envy - the very forces which drive men to conflict."

Speaking in Port Elizabeth last year Mr. J.M. Rosholt (Chairman of *Barlow Rand*) wisely said "*There is a danger that free enterprise would be rejected by the majority group in South Africa unless they obtained a fairer participation in its benefits.*" I hope and believe that more businessmen will recognise that social responsibilities cannot be considered as merely humanitarian. They are, in fact, increasing returns for shareholders in the long run.

Board member of *General Motors*, USA Rev. Leon Sullivan spoke even more vigorously: "*The enemy of Capitalism is not Communism but the selfishness of Capitalists.*" (N.W.N. 1.10.33)

Clearly the search is on for a deeper meaning to life in our free societies. Young people, and some not so young, are turning away from what often seems an exploitative society. Sometimes they turn in the wrong way - but it is a trend which must be heeded. Is this not part of the haemorrhage caused by failure to recognise that profit without care for people ("*without recognition of social responsibilities*") is the way to erode the Free Enterprise system?

Yet freedom there is need for new thinking. Could we replace an obsession with "*standard of living*" with "*Quality of Life*" - for all?

LET'S MAKE CHRISTMAS REAL

In our Society and in our Soil, Erosion is far advanced. When erosion threatens the veldt we can turn to experts and they advise how best to restore our pastures so that they again become productive and fertile, and able to maintain the flocks and herds in prime and profitable condition.

In our National life restoration is urgent and imperative. As we plan at this time of the year to commemorate the birth of Jesus, and a week later to celebrate the beginning of a New Year it seems wholly appropriate to decide to restore our nation to its true destiny. A time to turn away from squalid *blame throwing* on others and sterile analysis of what is wrong, and begin to put things right. Let us each decide to:-

1. Restore to each individual his, her, distinctive value.

With the speed of communication, the rise and spread of Ideologies and Nationalism's stress is put on class, race, colour, tribe - as if each person has no value except as part of some conglomerate. We have forgotten that each person has a special role in the national pattern. If he, she, does not play their personal part the whole is poorer. Just as in the veldt each little Karroo bush, each little *Eragrostis*-grass seed which germinates is precious and valued as part of the restoration programme, so each person is not just an *Ethnic Specimen* but a special individual who can enrich our national life.

2. Restore our Ideals.

"*Without vision a people perish*" - without ideals people lose their sense of human value. South Africans, a mixture of races, language, cultures placed by fate at the Southern tip of this vast Continent, especially have this need. To expect unity merely because we are here, or for the sake of peace or profit is not a big enough aim to link us permanently. But the whole Continent awaits our care.

There are hungry millions, growing deserts, vast divisions which cry out for our compassion and skill - which we could supply. To serve in this way we could lend our backs, stretch our minds, open our hearts for something greater than comfort and prosperity. We are meant to be a people with a great purpose.

3. Restore our sense of values:

Imitators and planners in the Capitalist West and Communist East seem to believe that the only things valued by human beings are what they can touch, taste, count or swallow. But man is more than material, and will never be satisfied on this basis alone. Things can produce comfort even graceful living but that is not enough. Deep down we all feel that spiritual and moral values are essential.

That to care, to love, even to sacrifice for worthwhile causes is fulfilling and five meaning to life. With decisions like this we could at the same time restore the beauty of charity, the glory of faithfulness, the splendour of home and family life.

4. Restore God to leadership:

In our National Anthem we ask God to guide us, "*Nkosi Sikele Afrika*" asks God to bless Africa. The time has come for us all to make these things real in our home, social and national life. Let us take them seriously and accept the challenge.

When this ideal was first broached to me I hesitated for I realised I would have to put right many places where I had been wrong. I apologised to my neighbour for suspicion and resentment I had held against him (and found a friend); I apologised to my farm staff for intolerance and threatening language (and found a new basis of cooperation); I returned to the Government office a Locust-spray-pump I had permanently "*borrowed*" and was using for farm jobs, and found the road to personal freedom.

To really put God in command of our country will demand courage and humility, apology and inspired vision. But it would usher in a new spirit which could sweep like a wave up all Africa. No Government can ensure the growth of the spirit we need, but we can each grasp the opportunity this Christmas to light one candle of faith - and tell our neighbour about it.

CATCHWORDS CAN MISLEAD

Diabolical forces threaten our civilisation. We all want a peaceful stable and just society but many who could help get misled by what I call the Blue-crane syndrome. Not only in this country, but in many parts of the world, there are strong links among people who are stridently *Anti-Apartheid*.

Apartheid has been declared a heresy in some Church circles and has, rightly, been condemned far and wide. Unfortunately many feel they are on the side of the angels when they join in the chorus shouting and exploding bombs to demonstrate their rejection of this policy. But is this really the only way to deal with a hated system? Similarly here and elsewhere, there is a strong and vocal *anti-Communist* lobby. Many people and things are condemned as Communist, and therefore *beyond the pale*.

Milovan Djilas, Yugoslav author, and one time second in command to ex-President Tito, writes "*Marx did not consider revolution to be inevitable in all countries, particularly not in those where democratic institutions were already a tradition in social life.*" Djilas was a convinced Communist but maintained that moral issues were important. Because of this he was later jailed by his erstwhile comrade and leader. Merely being *anti-Communist* is no assurance that one is part of a better, more humane society. Nor does *Anti-Apartheid* make one effective in building a just alternative society.

In the Karroo we have many *Blue-Cranes*, a clever and beautiful bird. If, when walking in the veldt, you chance to come within sight of a mother you are unlikely to see her two chicks. Inevitably your eye will follow the mother crane, running zigzag dragging one wing on the ground. This is her ruse to draw away a potential enemy by pretending to be wounded, appearing an easy prey. The enemy races after the "*wounded*" bird while the chicks lie quiet and still among the bushes safe from attack.

Just like the innocent and precious Crane chicks, deeply hidden in the shrubs on the veldt, the real and vicious enemies of our country, our civilisation, remain hidden and unmolested while the pack of hunters are in full cry chasing the wounded Crane, denouncing what they are against.

American philosopher Thoreau (1817-1862) wrote "*There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.*" *Apartheid* is a fruit, not the root. *Anti-Apartheid* hacks down the branches, the root remains undisturbed. The fear, bitterness, arrogance, false pride, and selfish materialism remain rooted in the stubborn soil, in which it grew. Russian dissident, and famous author, Solzhenitsyn, who suffered in the *Gulags* of Russia writes: *The 20th Century is being sucked into a vortex of atheism and destruction.*" While in prison he realised that the deciding line between good and evil is not between states and parties, but in the human heart.

This mature judgment of a man who was a communist, and understands Ideology, who has suffered greatly, who has an intellect far above the average, must be taken seriously. Communist inroads can only be averted by men and women with a superior strategy and commitment (superior Ideology) which can unite black and white, employer and employee.

It is imperative that those of us who care for the future refuse to be lured into fighting false issues. In the final analysis the choice is not between apartheid or *Anti-Apartheid*; *Communism* or *Anti-Communism*. It is between a society built, planned and directed by men, with uncured selfishness, and a society which honours God's standards and is led by men and women who apply those standards in economic social and political life.

We all believe in freedom! Yet year by year in all the free countries liberty is being whittled away. Freedom of speech and of action are not more general, but less so, than was the case 50 years ago. We no longer expect the extension of our liberties but silently, almost fatally, accept added restrictions which, we are told, are essential to maintain *our free institutions*. How is it possible to maintain freedom by restricting liberty? Plainly something is wrong, and the fault may not be where most people like to think it is.

Many maintain it is because of the Communists; others place the fault squarely at the door of those who think as Fascists; or the *irresponsibility of the youth*, or the *immaturity of the Coloured races*, or the *greed of the Capitalists*. These may all be contributing causes - but even successfully fixing the blame does not solve the problem. Even a correct diagnosis does not cure the disease, and in this case a superficial diagnosis will be incorrect and dangerous.

The fact is that *Freedom*, like *Charity*, must begin at home! A man who is bound by a habit or a hate is not free! A man dominated by lust, exorbitant ambition for wealth or power, or filled with a growing fear is not free! No leader who is not free within himself can achieve or maintain freedom for his people - because personal and National freedom are intimately bound together. We cannot give a nation what we have not got ourselves. The simple truth is that if we cannot teach men personal freedom we dare not give them national liberty. Is this not a key to the trends of the last four decades?

Many people accept the truth that "*liberty is indivisible*", and realise that restrictions for some, ultimately, means restrictions for all. But is it not yet so generally realised that Liberty and Virtue are two sides of the same coin. And like all coins neither face has real validity without the other. Thus clearly if we wish to preserve, and extend, our free institutions we need to look to their foundations.

They were built at great sacrifice by our forefathers, they cannot be defended by ease and indulgence. The link between the individual and the nation in a Democracy is clear and essential, and those who would minimise this (not the Communists, Capitalists of Fascists) menace the freedom of the Nation. Clearly those who want liberty for their country need to accept and live to the truth that *Liberty and Virtue are forever inseparable*.

Liberty is a quality which must be *expressed* in people before it can be applied in people which creates the trust and moral character without which Freedom cannot be preserved.

THE HUMBLE PATH

Great changes in social and political structures must come - and soon - but such changes alone will not ensure the peace and understanding we so urgently need and want. There must also be, on all sides, deep change in manner and motive. Reconciliation must no longer be relegated to the Theologians, but must be a real and practical experience in our divided country. It can be. I have seen it happen.

For instance, in the University of Salisbury¹ hall in 1975 there was a lively, almost electrical, atmosphere as the big interracial audience took their seats. None of us could have foretold and few could have expected the astonishing events that were triggered off that day. On the platform sat the Chairman and a dozen or so others, including the son of Prime Minister of Rhodesia, Ian Smith.

The meeting proceeded smoothly; there were several speakers, some songs and then Alec Smith was introduced. As he came forward there was a rustle as people sat up in their chairs. He began a little hesitatingly and then said; *I have come to realise that I have a personal responsibility for my country's dilemma. It was me, Alec Smith, who was answerable because my selfish lifestyle and insensitive attitude had finally driven the boys to the bush². For my part, I am deeply sorry for the thoughtlessness of my past life and I have committed myself to find a solution for our country, building bridges of reconciliation and showing the rest of Africa that black and white can live together; that, under God, there is an answer.* There was warm applause - but young Smith admitted his legs were shaking. He had been deeply moved.

But everyone in that audience was moved and challenged - not least the Treasurer General of the African National Council, a man in close and constant touch with the men in the bush. Though a minister of the Methodist Church, he had been jailed several times by the Government and was bitter. Alec Smith's speech touched his heart and opened his eyes to a new road.

After that, they worked together in many situations and countries. He remained committed to the cause of his people - but worked to achieve their aims in a new way, which did not include violence. The joint initiative of these two men made a real contribution to ending the war.

This quality of courageous humility has had a part in solving difficult and dangerous situations in many parts of the world. Last week Frederic Chavanne visited us on the farm and we recalled how his father, a French farmer in Morocco, decided to put things right with his workers. He called them to his home and apologised for the way he had lived.

¹ Now called *Harare*, Salisbury was the capital of Rhodesia (renamed *Zimbabwe* the next year)

² To the Bush was the term used for the Guerilla movement under the ANC

He told them he knew alcohol was forbidden to them as Muslims. "*It is time Frenchmen like myself ended indulgences which offended men like you. Will you help me destroy the wine in my cellar?*" He gave them his key. They carried out the bottles, set fire to the wine and buried the debris.

This simple act had unexpected results. The trust he built with his workers won the attention of an ardent underground nationalist. He came to see Chavanne. Their discussion led directly to his reconciliation with moderate leaders in Morocco, and this eventually led to independence without bloodshed.

I have heard Irene Laure speak - she is both eloquent and fiery. She was a member of the French Resistance movement during the Second World War and the leader of the *Socialist Women* of France. She had come to hate the Germans with a burning hatred. Amongst other things, they had tortured her son before her eyes trying to extract information about *The Resistance* from her.

She was at a conference in Switzerland when a party of Germans arrived. She refused to stay under the same roof as them and packed her bags to leave. She was persuaded to stay, and after wrestling with her conscience, she decided to publicly apologise for her hatred and bitterness. Her sincerity deeply affected the Germans in that audience. Later she was invited by some of those Germans to visit Germany and spoke in many ruined cities in West Germany where she told of her past hatred and her newfound freedom from bitterness. One German woman said "*Madame Laure's gesture was like an open door to a future in which we no longer believed.*" From this, a far-reaching healing relationship between France and Germany was begun, due in no small measure to the conviction and courage of Irene Laure. It led directly to the meeting of French Prime Minister Shumann and the German leader, Audenauer and the acceptance of the *Shumann Plan*.

These events resulted from simple people deciding to face wrong emotions within themselves and put them right. It works. When I asked a neighbour to forgive me for my deep resentment against him because I thought he had cheated me on a business deal, I won a friend. When I apologised to my farm workers for rough and dictatorial ways, I got from them a response of understanding and trust - which grew into happy relationships on the farm.

I began to understand why the Russian Communist leader, Borodin, had said: "*The Christian doctrine of forgiveness - so often preached, so little practiced - is the greatest stumbling block in the path of Communism.*" To cross out our pride and put right where we are wrong (even if the other is more wrong) always leads to new relationships. It leads to the forgiveness that Borodin feared. It is possible that courageous humility by some of us at this time of challenge to our country could lead to peace and understanding of a quality not yet dreamed of....

For many years it has been my privilege to walk through the sparse veldt of these Sneeberg valleys and mountains. I watch the plants and their development with each change of season and try to apply conservation methods in such a way as to improve, thicken and strengthen veldt cover. It has meant running less livestock, changing methods of ploughing, even taking some previously ploughed ground out of tillage.

We have done this because it is our conviction that not profit, but care for the land was to be our first priority. The reward has been to see many scars on our land healed and become productive.

But as I walk through the veldt and think about the needs of the farm, inevitably I also being to think about the needs of the country. I ask myself, *if it is so important to care for the land, is it not equally important to care for the people?* If it has demanded sacrifice and careful observation to deal with the situation on the farm, must we not, with equal care, examine the situation amongst the people and be ready to sacrifice to conserve them?

Back from the veldt in my office, I open the newspaper - in large type I read that it is estimated that 3,300.000 people in South Africa are unemployed. Said quickly, it takes no more than a second. It does not sound so terrible - but is this not the greatest problem we have to face in this generation? Henry Lee, who had known unemployment wrote (*Readers' Digest* June 1983) "*Unemployment is much more than an economic disaster; it saps the soul.*"

In our own experience we have proved that employment restores self respect and personal dignity where these were lacking. To try, in a small way, to meet a disastrous situation and care for people, we were instrumental in getting a labour-intensive project established. This happened to be hand-spinning and weaving of raw wool grown in the area³. All who applied for work came to us dejected and anxious. Some had children who were not getting enough to eat. They were untrained and unskilled (on first appearance) they did not always look promising material.

But our judgment was bad. We found people eager, willing and dexterous, able to master the skills need to spin a good thread. As they began to earn a weekly wage, very gradually (almost indiscernibly) their whole demeanour changed, like the opening of Karroo flowers when rain has come after a prolonged drought. They had found new dignity and purpose and often sing as they work. Truly, as the French philosopher, Amiel, says, "*It is work which gives flavour to life.*"

³ *Graaff-Reinet Kraft*: RBK & Moira got it started (1981) in the back of the *Beerhall* in town, later expanded to give work for up to 40 men & women who had no other source of income

This experience made it clear beyond argument that basic human happiness can neither be bought nor given away free. It can only be secured through the satisfaction which comes from productive work.

The clock cannot be turned back - we live in an age when bigger and better machines and computers are replacing more and more men and women. But it must surely be possible to introduce the necessary changes and still care for people. Just as we have had to adjust our methods of farming to conserve the soil, so Industry and Commerce may need to explore new ways of conserving our greatest asset - the wealth of our nations is not vested in gold, coal, electricity, steel, maize or sheep - but in the diversity and ability of all our people.

CATCH THE JACKAL!

Individuals, parties, even foreign nations, are demanding the end of *Apartheid*. No political structure in a single country⁴ has come in for such universal condemnation. But will a change in the structure bring with it the liberty and prosperity so urgently needed and longed for?

Reading, hearing, and seeing reports and arguments from far and wide often puts me in mind of the day we hunted the Black-backed Jackal which had killed one of our sheep in the veldt. We took all the farm hands and all the dogs; after lining up in a long line, started off shouting and clapping whips, while the dogs trotted along eagerly with noses to the ground, seeking the *spoor*. Suddenly we saw the jackal as it slunk along, crouching among the taller bushes. We called the dogs as loudly as we could - but at that moment, a hare, which had been lying hidden in its grassy lair, jumped up and ran for its life! One dog barked and set off at speed after the hare, and the others joined in with a chorus of excited barking. It was a long chase but the hare had no hope. The dogs stood growling and proud over their catch. The Jackal had grasped its opportunity and disappeared.

It seems to me that some of today's anti-*Apartheid* action diverts our minds from the real dangers in our society. Which is not to suggest that *Apartheid* has not caused immense harm and human suffering (and still does). But great political statements or even theological challenges do not really get to the nub of the matter. In the final analysis, it is the individual who has to deal with the real issues in the way he or she lives in the home and workplace.

I had to learn the hard way. I grew accepting my white privilege and developed a sense of superiority toward other races. But with Stalin, Hitler and warclouds gathering in Europe, I began to realise that farming and privilege was not enough to secure a future for my family. *If capitalism, sometimes exploitative, was unable to secure a future for us, could some other system provide security*, I wondered?

I began to study Socialist and Communist literature. Fortunately, just then, I met men and women who had a more dynamic vision and answer than was to be found in the books I was reading. Their philosophy, I found, was more radical and practical in dealing with divisive issues. Painfully, I began to realise that I was not without blame for division in our country. I had used my privilege and position with arrogance and this caused division on the farm.

It became clear that, to bring the cure, I needed to apologise, not just in general but in person to the Black men who worked for me. The courtesy with which they accepted my apology opened my eyes and removed *Apartheid* from my heart.

⁴ Even Hitler's *National Socialism* was only mildly condemned; the Nazi atrocities against the Jews later were condemned - then only by certain nations

I began to work with black, brown, and white men and women with a new spirit and hope. My convictions were confirmed when one of the founders of the *ANC Youth League*⁵, walked onto the platform at a meeting in Lusaka, some years ago and said: "*Today I saw White men change and I saw Black men change and I myself have decided to change.*" From that day, he set out on a new road with great courage and affected the lives of many. Later he was to say: "*I am not less a revolutionary because I listen to God; but I have renounced the path of violence and hatred. I hate passionately the things that divide men and I'm fighting with greater passion for things that will unite men above every affiliation, above race, above colour.*"

It seems to me the time has come for us to be clear about our real enemy. With rampant corruption, rape, murder, child abuse and much more, the is not Socialism, Nationalism, or any other ".ism", but cynical betrayal of Christian values. With penetrating insight, Frank Buchman said almost 50 years ago: "*An Ideological challenge cannot be met by economic, political, and military means alone. Absolute Moral Standards are not just a question of individual conduct today. They are the condition of National Survival.*"

Let us go forward with clear minds, courage and determination and refuse to be lured, as the dogs were, away from dealing with the roots of the divisions which threaten our country. Instead let us destroy the sly Jackal and so not only secure national survival but set a standard for many nations.

⁵ **Dr William Nkomo**, one of the first black men to qualify at *Wits University* Medical faculty, had felt that the *ANC* was to slow in revolutionary actions; later he & RBK travelled to parts of Africa spreading a message of reconciliation; when he died he was President-elect of the Methodist Church; in his home town today, there is still an "*Nkomo-Day*" celebrated.

It costs nothing to point out what is wrong, but to generate the cure, there is a price to pay. Maybe that is why so many spend both time and ink in highlighting all the problems and warning us about pollution of land and sea, deforestation and desertification, drug dependence, divorce, alcoholism *et al.*.... Many voices are raised against Communism, others blame Capitalism. Expertly and interestingly we are warned on TV, Radio, in newspapers, magazines, even books that unless these things are dealt with, our civilization will collapse.

It is time for those who believe there is an answer to speak up with clarity and conviction. As the New Year approaches we must say, firmly, that we do not believe in the inevitable degradation of our planet or its people. We *can* build a world in which men and women can live in faith and freedom.

The challenge is to fearlessly look at the basic problems and for each of us to put right (not just to point out!) what is wrong in our own situation. It has become fashionable to blame the Communists for much that is wrong in our country. Certainly, they have not been idle, nor aimed to build up our best interests. In fact, unknowingly to most of us, they have successfully been deploying Karl Marx's strategy for victory. He said: "*The soundest strategy in war is to postpone the final military operation until the moral degeneration of the enemy renders the mortal blow both possible and easy.*"

If, in the West, we have (by and large) fallen into this trap, it is not his fault but ours. We have failed to live the faith or to uphold the standards on which our civilization has been built. "*Marx, in his youth, was interested in religion*", wrote Romanian Pastor Joseph Ton some years ago, "*but when his philosophy matured he realised that religion was an obstacle to revolution - that atheism was necessary to create bitter and desperate men, with no conscience or scruples and who would use armed violence to get power.*" He craftily used his religious knowledge to plan a strategy to break down the morals of his own followers, and then used the same technique to weaken his enemies.

Yet, soon after the revolution was accomplished in Russia, the Communist leaders realised they could not build a stable society on that basis. They began to call for "*a new type of man who would yield all his forces freely for others, a committed altruist*" (Ton). But not enough people have been ready to sacrifice for their new society. Recently the Russian leader, Gorbachev, had called for reform, "*Instances of drunkenness have become frequent*," he said, "*and loafers and pilferers again feel at their ease. The failure to bring improvements to many people's lives were very serious symptoms of defects which the Party cannot ignore.*"

Because Russia now has problems in no way lessens the urgency to deal with our own. But though there are social, economic and political matters which need urgent attention, this alone cannot build a society protected from Marx's strategy of "*moral degradation*".

To outlaw Communism and yet condone Marx's morality, as we do, is less than effective. The simple truth is that a nation which develops its material resources and neglects the moral and spiritual ones will perish.

We need to build anew. To build a home of bricks entails precise work. Each brick must be handled separately, placed in its row joined by mortar to other bricks. Only when the walls have been strongly built can the roof be nailed and bolted in its place. If we are to build our civilization under sound government, we must have well built foundations.

Many years ago we decided to become part of the cure and have found it both interesting and fulfilling. Aware of the dangers of desert, division, and drink, I decided to join others on the road to reconstruction. I learned to stop blaming the Government, the weather, the circumstances or other men and, instead, to care for my land on the farm, the men who worked for me, and my family in a new way. Now we can demonstrate positive changes in the home, on the veldt, in personal relations, and in the marvellous transformation in a group of disadvantaged people for whom we created employment in a labour-intensive wool and mohair spinning and weaving project in town⁶. They are a team of positive, happy, responsible workers, who have proved that employment is essential to give meaning to Life.

Our efforts to bring answers within the compass of our own lives and work has taught us many lessons but has also confirmed our faith that, if enough of us work together, we can, yet, build a world that works; a civilization in which freedom and respect for persons can reign.

It may be the answer. Worldwide devastating problems can be resolved more simply than some experts would think possible. A Red Indian Chief⁷ who visited South Africa some years ago, pointed the way. He said. "*There are standards of darkness - absolute hatred, jealousy, bitterness, pride - they come from the father of darkness. I lived those standards for many years. I hated my white and brown brothers and fought with them. Then I met the standards of Absolute Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love and I came to know the God of light.*"

It all comes back to the importance and value of the individual if we want to cut at the root of our problems. We must recognize and deal with the real enemy. Not Communism, Capitalism, nor Nationalism - but fear, hate, greed, selfish ambition, lust, corruption. We must again return to the time-honoured values and instead of deciding if something is Right or Left, decide if it is right or wrong. Then do what is right.

Surely if our ship is in danger of sinking, it is imperative that everyone aboard do his or her part to save the vessel and those on board.

⁶ *Graaff-Reinet Kraft*, giving work to over 30 unemployed; see other articles referring to this

⁷ *Chief Walking Buffalo* from Calgary, Canada, lifelong friend of Frank Buchman

ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP - An Easter Surprise

As Sneeberg farmer, I often have to climb the mountains looking for missing sheep, checking the Jackal traps or just to see the condition of the grass and Veldt in general. One climbs with interest and expectancy. But on this *Good Friday*, when I reached the summit of the mountain I was climbing, I was astonished to meet there a man from Mars!

He was almost two metres tall with a friendly and interested expression and bright clear eyes. Immediately after greeting me, he began to ask probing questions about our country which I sometimes found difficult to answer. "*This is your Easter weekend,*" he said, "*People are rushing off for their holiday. There is anxiety about road accidents and special patrols are planned?*"

"*Well,*" I replied, "*there is nothing wrong about that. The roads will be very busy but that does not subtract from the Easter message.*"

"*Easter is a very important date on your Christian calendar,*" said the man from Mars, "*but is South Africa a Christian country?*" Oh yes," I answered promptly, "*Almost seventy-five percent of our people - black and white - are Christians, and the others have regard for God's laws.*"

"*But,*" he countered quietly, "*it does not seem to me that your society demonstrates the Christian qualities!*"

I was immediately on the defensive. "*Look at the many beautiful churches all over the country. In the townships as well as the cities, even in the villages - lovely buildings demonstrating love and sacrifice. On Sundays, you can see people streaming to church for worship. And two million Zionists are meeting in the northern Transvaal!*"

He looked at me cynically, bending his neck to one side a little. Again on the defensive I said, "*You can't be critical if a few people play golf or bowls and do not get to Church on Sunday. All our people, black and white, respect the Church. I feel we can call this a Christian country. Nearly everyone believes in God.*"

He kept looking at me with those clear probing eyes. "*Believing in God,*" he said, "*is not the point. Even the Devil believes in God and fears him. But how many live the way God wants them to live - with unselfishness, love, care?*" I swallowed hard. I had no answer. "*Well,*" he continued, "*I'm not counting people, I look at results. In your country there is widespread corruption and theft of millions of Rand each year. In the Eastern Cape, fifty percent of marriages fail - possibly more in some areas. Thousands of illegitimate babies born each year, a high incidence of rape, increase in venereal disease - and a threatening AIDS epidemic chiefly due to immorality. A thriving trade in for some in drugs, and much alcoholism. Added to this, there is political violence with many tragic deaths.*"

His relentless picture of the dark side of our country shook me. I looked at the ground while desperately trying to find an excuse for the situation. *"You must remember,"* I said, *"We have a great Ethnic Mix in this country. People are conscious of these differences. That leads to suspicion and division."*

"Do you really think that different Ethnic groups are automatically hostile to each other? Loyalty to your community is natural and a virtue - but it does not need to be divisive. Division grows from pride, fear, envy and political propaganda."

I had no answer. I felt perturbed. I remembered that we teach our children and all that accept The Gospel to say the *Lord's Prayer*. We say *"Our Father"*. Illumination struck me - all who pray that prayer are then brothers and sisters!

The man from Mars noticed my confusion and clearly wanted to help me. "You are not the only country facing these problems. Kenya is another African country with difficulties. There a group of men and women, black and white, have published in a national newspaper a courageous statement. It reads, *"Kenya will become the nation we want only when its citizens are people of integrity and unquestionable character. Everyone is responsible and has a part to play in bringing about the cure that is required. All need to change in our inner selves which God alone can give. Rotten eggs will never make good food. Eggs cannot change - but men can. The choice for our nation is still the same as that spoken by William Penn 300 years ago: 'Men must choose to be governed by God or they condemn themselves to be ruled by tyrants.' That goes for multi-party or single party rule. Not just men, women too. Each man and woman, young and old, must aim to live by God's standards - Absolute Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness, Love. Kenya armed with those absolute standards will emerge as a new nation, poised for leadership on this continent and the world."*

I listened amazed. What vision, what courage! Could we rise to such a challenge in South Africa? I looked down at the ironstones at my feet, and then gazed to the far horizon in the East. Then I turned to my visitor, but he had gone.....

A long and bitter election has just been fought. It has sown animosity in the ranks of White, *Coloured* and Asian voter. The Africans have felt more rejected than ever. There have been widespread riots, stonings, shootings, bombs, strikes. Hate and Fear have grown. Division abounds. *Apartheid* is blamed.

The termination of *Apartheid* is essential - but that alone will guarantee neither Liberty nor Democracy. It is imperative that we remove those basic attitudes which made the institution of *Apartheid* possible. Concentration on all the wrongs of *Apartheid* has blinded most people to the importance of moral and spiritual values which are at the core of the development and maintenance of Democracy in the Western nations and the only foundation on which Liberty can rest.

Pope John Paul II said, "*It is precisely in Christianity that are found those common roots by which the continent of Europe has seen its civilization mature; its culture; its dynamism; in a word, that makes its glory.*" 80% of South Africans claim to be Christians - if we put our faith into action we would unite and build true freedom.

We could accept for our country what a young American journalist¹ on the *Atlanta Daily Mail* wrote as her wish for her country: - "*The hope-giving experience of people finding clarity of mind, purity of motive, and peace of heart through the challenge of the standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and the guidance of God*"

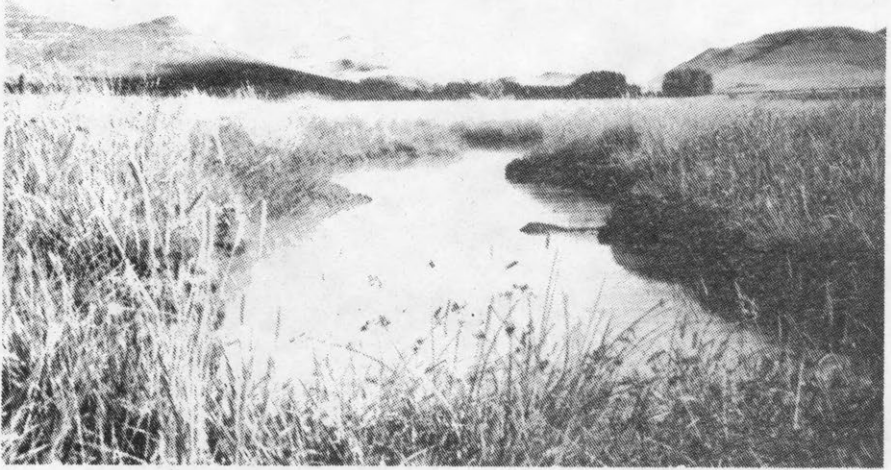
We would become free of false pride, colour prejudice and end seeking domination or revenge. We would turn the tide of family break-down, spread of drugs, increase of corruption, robberies, rape and other evils now so widespread. Instead, we could expand education for all, develop employment opportunities, and build a country honoured and respected because our measure will not be color but the qualities of character which people decide to accept.

Fear and prejudice will go, as they did with me when I accepted those standards and made restitution for arrogance, dishonesty, and self-protection in my way of living. Everyone everywhere can take action. A new spirit will spread throughout this lovely land.

¹ Portia Scott



RBK and Moira in a Cheerful mood!



Looking up the Gordonville valley - 1992



Award for contribution to Agriculture

Mr Roly Kingwill was presented with an Award of Honour by Grootfontein Agricultural College on Friday, in recognition of the valuable pioneering work he has done in the field of agriculture.

With him is his wife, Moira.

The Graaff-Reinet Advertiser, Monday, November 29, 1993

BEYOND ETHNIC HOSTILITY

Ethnic hostility was one of the things I took for granted and accepted as inevitable. When I attended a conference in Switzerland, I discovered I was absolutely wrong.

We flew from *Jan Smuts² Airport* to Geneva, then motored alongside Lake Lemman to Montreux, and then took the steep winding road to Caux, 3000 feet higher. We stopped at the beautiful spacious building and looked at the flags of many nations fluttering in the breeze at the roadside. Inside the entrance hall we were welcomed by men and women of many nations and all continents. The atmosphere in the meeting halls and the dining rooms was lively, interesting, cooperative - sometimes riveting.

One day, Madame Irene Laure³ spoke from the platform with deep conviction, eloquence and fire. She told how she had served with the French *Resistance* during the last War⁴. Her young son had been captured and tortured in front of her by the *Gestapo* who were trying to extract information from her. She had a burning hatred for all Germans. Soon after the War ended, she accepted an invitation to similar conference at Caux and arrived to find a group of Germans already there. As she felt she could not stay in the same building as Germans, she prepared to leave immediately.

Some friends said to her: "*Europe cannot be rebuilt without the Germans*", and persuaded her to stay. All that night she wrestled with her conscience. The next morning, in a meeting with many Germans present, she apologised for her hatred and committed herself to live and work for unity. The Germans in the audience were deeply affected. That day a far-reaching healing began, which later flowered into a new relationship between France and West Germany.

We met Germans who had been affected by the vision of Irene Laure. One was Max Bladeck, a small, balding, vital man. A coalminer from the *Rhurgebiet*, he had been a Communist for 25 years, a trained leader⁵. But he and several of his friends and comrades had found a new direction and purpose. They were called by the Party leaders to explain their behaviour. They said very simply, "*We have found in Moral Re-Armament an Ideology greater and more satisfying than Communism.*"

We later visited the Bladecks in their small home in the Rhur, and were welcomed. They showed us with pride their well cared-for cooking stove and told us it was the only thing they had saved from their previous home which had been bombed by the Allies during the War.

² Now sometimes called *Johannesburg International Airport*

³ Her husband, a Marxist workers' leader, she was president of the *Socialist Women* of France *World War II*

⁴ A "coalface" Communist, he had been the leader of the Communist cell for the whole area

They spoke of their new-found faith and told us how Max had always believed in *International Understanding* and was convinced a common language essential. To this end he had studied and encouraged people to speak *Esperanto*⁶. But suddenly at Caux he realised both he and his wife both spoke German - yet, at times, they quarrelled furiously!

He wrote later, "*When I gave my life to Communism, I believed it would give the world the right social order. It's means to that end was the Class Struggle. Today I realise we simply divided humanity into 2 camps that hate and fight each other. In the Atomic Age, a class conscious ideology like Communism is too small and must be superseded. Today I fight with Moral Re-Armament because it is not against Communism, nor against Capitalism - it goes to the root of evil and changes man who is the cause of failure of the system.*"

More evidence of Ethnic cooperation demonstrated at a conference in Harare (then called Salisbury) in 1975. The University Hall was full. The chairman and several speakers were on the platform. Proceedings went smoothly and then Alec Smith, son of then Prime Minister, Ian Smith came forward. "*I have come to realise,*" he said, "*that I have personal responsibility for our country's dilemma. It is me, Alec Smith, who is answerable because of my selfish lifestyle and insensitive attitude that had finally driven the boys to the bush*⁷. *For my part, I am deeply sorry for the thoughtlessness of my past life, and have committed myself to find a solution for my country; to build bridges of reconciliation and to showing the rest of Africa that Black and White can live together. That under God there is an answer.*"

This courageous speech moved many hearts in the audience. Unexpectedly there was an immediate response from a black man who had sat quietly at the back at several meetings. He was Treasurer General of the African National Council, had been jailed several times and still in close touch with the fighting men *in the bush*. He came to the platform and said he would welcome anyone who wished to come to the Church in the *township*, where he was the Minister. Many of us went and saw the beginning of new teamwork between a leader of the African Council and his one-time enemy. They worked together toward peace in their country and later visited South Africa and abroad, and spoke of their experiences.

In 1950, Philip Vundla, who had been educated at Healdtown⁸, but was now the organising Secretary of the Mine Workers' Union on the Rand, was dubbed by Police as *the most dangerous man in Soweto*⁹. He had organised the Miners' Strike of 1946, the highly successful *Bus Boycott*, a member of the ANC (elected to their Executive in 1952) and usually in the forefront of agitation against the *status quo*.

⁶ A language supposedly made up of many languages which would be understood by all nations

⁷ A reference to the Guerilla fighters who *took to the bush* against the white regime

⁸ **Healdtown** in Eastern Cape where missionaries had started schools & college many years ago

⁹ *South Western Townships* - the area reserved for Blacks working on the Witwatersrand

One day, to his surprise, a young Afrikaner¹⁰ official came to see him at his home. This courageous young man said to him, "*Something has happened in my life and I see new hope for my country. I believe that if people like you and me decide to listen to God and do what He tells us is right, we can work together and build a real future for this part of the world. For myself, I have decided to give up my old ways of thinking and start living differently so that men like you can begin to trust me.*" Vundla met others, black and white who spoke in the same vein.

He decided to join them and later said, "*I begin to see this is even a bigger fight than the one I had taken on (for Black rights); a fight to put right what is wrong, not only in South Africa, but in the whole world.*" Later, when he saw division increasing throughout the land, he called for incorruptible leadership and published an article which, *inter alia*, said, "*It is no good just blaming the white people for the situation in South Africa. No-one behaves badly just because he is white. There are forces working to exploit colour, to divide people for their own ends. It is not a question of Colour, but Character.*"

He met powerful opposition from his own people, yet he never wavered and to the end of his life fought for cooperation on this level. A man who had led a fight against white rule was in the end honoured by men of all races. He had overcome prejudice and stood firm in faith.

Looking back over many years and thinking about men and women we have had the privilege to meet, it is abundantly clear that it is not ethnic background that divides people. I began to realise this in my own life when I decided to find a way of living with a purpose instead of drifting along with the tide. My race prejudice began to diminish when I felt called on to apologise to my black workers for rough treatment and to an Afrikaans neighbour for neglect. Their response made it clear that there was another factor at work, which could unite rather than divide people.

In fact it became crystal clear that Racism, of which I had been guilty (probably the most universal cause of conflict) could be overcome. Hostile barriers of race, class, and colour could disappear. In searching for the key to this force for change, I realised it was when individuals put their faith in God into action, undergirded by moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness, love - in personal, social and national life. This is the one effective strategy to build world peace.

¹⁰ Nico Ferreira, Nationalist Youth Leader, working in the *Department of Bantu Affairs*

I believe one man may lead another chiefly in one of two ways: he may lead by material power or by moral force. The former includes such things as superior wealth, privilege, and education; the latter the power of superior personality.

To lead by material power may gratify certain ambitions and enlarge the ego - it may even win an honoured place in History, but in that case it is done for personal gratification. Success on such grounds will not completely smother the pangs of conscience which inevitably arise with every act which is not wholly in keeping with the highest moral laws.

To lead then, with any lasting happiness, the basis must be that of high moral character. Such leadership is essentially a paradox, for to attain such character, you must first become purged of ambition to lead - for ambition must carry with it the seed (if not a rank growth) of selfishness.

There are examples of such leaders in history. There is the simple countryman who rose to the highest station in his country and who set an example of integrity which has not been surpassed among statesmen - Abraham Lincoln.

The greatest leader of all time met His death upon a cross because he refused to compromise with his standards. Though from humble parents, though spat upon in his time, He revolutionised the thinking of his times and changed the course of history. He refused any but the highest moral leadership and Jesus of Nazareth became the greatest leader and teacher of all time.

That was the way for them - to set their standards and then live unflinchingly by them. And it must be the way for all. Though this kind of leadership may lead to obscurity rather than fame, yet is it not the only true leadership?

Does it mean that you should be willing to be thrust aside by those ambitious for power; that the credit for things you worked for should go to others? If your leadership is to be a moral one then your aim too must be a moral one - and you cannot be thrust aside, for you will stand aside for those who would push by. Their distinction is not yours. If credit should come, if Public Recognition should come, if circumstances should call you to some more public office than your private life, then remember such circumstances are only wider opportunities for service. Such service will always be guided and circumscribed by that which be the foundation of your life - the highest moral standard.

This, then, is the conclusion - that no leadership is worthy other than that of service must be based on the highest moral standards from which no circumstance, no opportunity for gain or for personal advancement should cause you to abate one jot. It must be your resolve to hold to the standards of Absolute Honesty and Absolute Unselfishness in private and public; in thought and deed.

South Africa is already far down the slide, and it may not be possible to prevent the descent into chaos! We are blind to the situation because as a nation in Business, Politics and Church we think materialistically. We have sold our heritage for "a mess of pottage" - immediate wealth and power.

Materialistic thinking postulates that man, by planned social adjustment and rearrangement can find a permanent and satisfactory basis for coexistence. In South Africa this thinking runs in four main channels, which cross or flow together at times, all of which are dangerous.

1. The concept of *Baasskap*!

This assumes the superiority of the white skin and tries to ensure and enforce this by law. Although the present Government is implementing this policy in their own way, it is the policy which has had the backing of the great majority of the Europeans of all the parties, and still has.

Fear is the main reason for its popularity and is lent point by the fact that South of the Sahara, the proportion of European to Non-Europeans is one to forty-five. Domination by the few of the many must, inevitably, lead to the taking of more powers and the consequent loss of liberty by all - for Liberty is indivisible. In this way, resentment of the *bossed* increases, with explosive possibilities.

2. A deadly theory that Goodwill is Effective!

A large section of people are *kindly disposed to the Non Europeans* and long to be left in peace *with things as they are*. For the sake of this, they are often willing to make considerable sacrifices, in their own way and their own time. They fail to realise that *Goodwill* is no counter to an active Ideology of either Right or left. In fact, both actually make use of such people. They also fail to realise that a people urgently seeking a sense of individuality and the expression of personality are not satisfied by houses, hygiene, and kindness from self-satisfied and self-righteous people.

3. That Liberalism is the answer!

A growing number of thinking people have accepted the fact that economic integration must take place and that this must lead to political recognition of Non-Europeans. They argue that opportunities must be opened at once. Some good businessmen reckon this is essential and urgent to keep profits up. They fail to recognise that voting rights do not in themselves make responsible citizens. Or that increased economic opportunities may only give Leftists more power. Moral values and sound judgment do not come as a result of increased rights alone.

4. That Communism is the best short cut!

More people are accepting this. Infiltration has been taking place for a long time; in the press and Trade Unions and elsewhere, every device is used to divide the people and destroy moral values. This is to be discerned all across Africa and is black against white nationalism (e.g. *Mau-Mauism*¹). Communism is an organised form of Materialism and its economic theories must appeal to the Non-European much more than the economic hardship which he has to suffer at present (in most cases). The ultimate aim of Communism is conflict in Africa and the opportunity to take over in the ensuing chaos.

The inevitable result of these ways of thinking is the destruction of all the things we value and strive to preserve.

It is late. But the situation may still in part be retrieved, if we accept that the White Man's destiny (the heritage he has sold) is to give moral and spiritual leadership to the Continent of Africa and to use the wealth and resources of the land for all the people - not to use superior technical knowledge for selfish enrichment.

This will entail a change from superiority to humble service as our main motive and the devoted dedication of our lives, now, so to live that the noble ideals which we profess are applied in practice - personally, socially, Nationally. Such a programme will demand courage, sacrifice and passionate devotion to absolute moral and spiritual standards.

The ultimate question is not whether we save "*White Civilization*" - but will Africa accept the concept of Western Democracy and Christian values? Or not? The way we live will decide that.

¹ At the time the Guerilla movement headed by Jomo Kenyatta, & known as *Mau-Mau*, was at its height, creating great disturbances in Kenya

Everyone longs for permanent peace. Yet no one seriously expects to experience this in their lifetime.

Perhaps this is because we know in our deepest heart that Peace cannot be achieved by International Agreement, *Parleys at the Summit*. or by treaties written on paper. We may wish to see the Atomic Bomb outlawed, but even this would not produce a real sense of security.

There has been endless talk of peace, but thus far the only real advances have been in the improvement in deadly weapons and greater efficiency of armies, navies, airforces. We know that just a few of the deadly weapons now being produced could plunge this Planet into darkness within hours.

The urgent need for real peace is clear enough. But the fact is it cannot come through some convenient re-arrangement of boundaries or improvement in social conditions. Permanent Peace can only be attained if we seek it in the right way - for peace is a quality, not a material thing! It is a quality which must be created in the individual before it can be found in the nation or in the family of nations.

Inward Peace and *World Peace* have the same source: hearts not set on their own way; hearts free of fear, hate and greed; hearts at peace because they are selfless. To Outlaw War and condone - even encourage - selfish living, is like inoculating the nation against Chicken-Pox and allowing Small-Pox to run rife!

"Peace is people becoming different." There is no short-cut. There is not a cheap way. But there is the chance for everyone to take an effective part in building, in this generation, the peace we have all longed for and which we are meant to enjoy. It is a simple moral decision.

LET US CURE THIS SICKNESS.....

Our country suffers from a unique disease. Everybody, at home and abroad is concerned. Many fear it may be mortal. Some hope it is!

This sickness is called *Apartheid*, but, because it is the first case ever diagnosed, there are no proven cures on the market. Healing is urgent, treatment cannot be delayed. Many remedies are being suggested, but (at this stage) we dare not administer sugared pills or *quack* medicines. Superficially some suggestions may seem simple and easy to administer - but they could, in the end, actually worsen the disease. It is a serious case and needs careful attention and skillful investigation.

With close examination it will become clear that the full cure will demand courage and, in the beginning, pain. Careful diagnosis will reveal that there is no single virus, or germ with which to deal but this disease has roots which go deep and are anchored in tough soil. It will become clear that *Apartheid* is the fruit (or the symptom), it is not the root.

It seems to me there are six main roots, and some secondaries, which have brought our beloved country to this crisis. They need to be faced and cut out fearlessly.

1. Arrogance:

Mainly contributed by the British. Because of this quality they misused and misjudged the Boers during and immediately after the tragic war at the end of the last century. We did not care enough to understand their longings or accept their right to their language and culture. (I am of British descent and deeply apologise for this disastrous and misguided sequence of events.) Arrogance on the part of the British has certainly had a part in the development of *Apartheid* in South Africa.

2. Bitterness:

When unnecessarily cruel and evil things done to people, it is normal for us to expect and condone bitterness. We feel it is justified. That the Boers and their descendants were bitter because of the treatment meted out to them, for the loss of brave men and women can be well understood. But not only they, many of us of all races, for different reasons have nursed deep bitterness. Bitterness often seeks Revenge which deepens the problem. But the tragic truth, seldom acknowledged, is that bitterness affects judgment. Without clear and clean motives and straight thinking, our sickness can never be cured.

3. Fear:

Even before the arrival of the White man in South Africa, there were rivalries and conflict between tribes. With our arrival, we took a full part in conquest and acquisition of territory. Van Riebeeck clashed with the Hottentots (Khoi) soon after his arrival. Later the English Settlers (and others) fought the Xhosas in the Fish River area and Zulus in Natal. The *Voortrekkers* clashed with local people in the Free State and Transvaal. For over 3 centuries there have been conflict and border disputes in this country. Because of this, fear of other races and tribes is endemic and accepted as normal. Fear spurs on the search for secure boundaries "for us and our people" and is one of the roots of *Apartheid*. Without removal of misunderstandings and victory over fear, our sickness can not be finally cured.

4. Greed:

A simple human characteristic - yet often the root of bitter disputes between individuals, races - even nations. It encourages dishonesty in business dealings, creates the urge to make and secure ever greater profits, to own more gold or diamond mines, and can lead to war. It is a natural desire to increase and protect personal property and this is good. But in seeking the cure for our sickness we have to reckon with this ingrained inclination. Few can claim complete freedom from greed - certainly not me - but unless its effects can be limited through moral persuasion or good legislation, our illness will linger on.

5. Control:

No Government can forgo control of national policies and essential services. But power to control can be easily misused. The overwhelming political power of the National Party in the last 35 years has been used to force legislation through Parliament in spite of well motivated arguments against it by Opposition parties. Dictatorial power is dangerous, and, when possible compromise with other parties is ignored in a Democracy, practical Dictatorship results. In this way, many of the laws so hated today were forced through Parliament and implemented in this country. But this "*control syndrome*" cannot be laid at the door of the Nationalists alone. All of us have profited and need to accept some of the blame. The demand for complete white control must be replaced by sincere and real power sharing with all the people to ensure the cure.

6. False Pride:

My dictionary defines this as "*the tendency to avoid as degrading what is not so.*" Few will dispute that there has been, on all sides, much of this attitude in our national life and that this attitude has had no small part in developing and deepening sickness the with which we have to deal. That the colour of a man's skin could in any way affect his character or his ability (or wish) to choose what is right, could only gain credence in an atmosphere where false pride flourishes. I, with most others in the country, have been guilty of this. But to see and accept this point could be the key which begins the complete cure we seek.

False pride held me back for months before I had the courage to apologise to my black staff for rough - sometimes abusive language. But when I did this, I bridged the gap with them and many others. I believe that courageous humility could heal the wounds in our sick society more speedily than anything else. When French Socialist leader, Irene Laure, apologised to the Germans (who had tortured her son) for her hatred she began a train of events which healed French - German divisions which had festered for centuries. When Japanese Prime Minister, Kishi, visited Korea, the Philippines, and other Eastern countries to apologise for the cruelties some Japanese soldiers had committed during the war, he built lasting and profitable bridges to those countries.

Maybe there are those who believe that some simple compromise in Constitution or other structure will bring change, security, and cooperation in our divided society. That hope is false. For the complete cure of our sickness we must accept the full treatment. The Diagnosis demands nothing less and the beginning will be painful. But the Prognosis is that after full healing our future will be great and rewarding. Because we had the courage to put right all that is wrong within ourselves and in our nation, this Southern tip of Africa will make a lasting and honoured contribution to all Africa. To the World.

The Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions have focussed our attention on achieving the maximum of our labour forces. Standing on the stoep of our Karroo farm one day recently, this whole question struck from a new and unexpected angle.

Hooting cheerfully to inform his wife and everyone else within earshot that he was safely back home, Douglas, the farm foreman, drove the small yellow truck through the yard to the garage. From there, he and others of the men scattered to the usual evening chores - bringing in milk cows, mothering the goat kids, feeding sheepdogs and fowls. It was Saturday afternoon and the farm Soccer team had been into the village to play a match which they had won 2 - 1. Douglas had driven them in the farm truck, played his part in the field (he was captain of the side as well), and now they were back home in good time and on the job.

My wife and I looked at each other. Quietly I said, "*What a miracle.*" I thought back to earlier years. I had tried to control everything. Orders were sharp, detailed and concise. Instant and undeviating obedience was expected. Often there were misunderstandings, mistakes and suspicion. Weekends were a nightmare. *Would the men on duty of a Saturday evening and Sunday come to work? Would they be in a fit condition? Would there again be fighting and shouting down at the staff homes?* We had no answer to the drink problem.

Rows and threats proved quite ineffective. The result was insecurity for them and for us. Labour turnover was high and often the best workers were the first to go. We accepted all this as normal. Just one of the burdens the farmer had to carry along with drought, soil-erosion, and poor product prices.

Then one day it was suddenly brought home to me that the tensions and frustrations with farm labour were reflected in my own family life. A change to new attitudes, to be realistic, needed to start with me, rather than with others. So I began with honest apology at home. I found that new trust and purpose had entered our lives.

Encouraged, I decided to include my farm workers. I called them together and said to them, "*I am sorry for my outbursts of temper. I want to work on a new basis.*" I feared their reactions would be mistrust and; instead I found a new cooperation.

It did not happen suddenly. Often much patience was needed but steadily teamwork grew. We began to get to know their families and to talk over difficulties in their homes with their children and between themselves. Later we explored other areas of unhappiness with them - lack of education for the farm children (which led to the establishment of a farm school²); we talked about improvements needed in the houses; and arrangements regarding wages and security of employment. A new

² 1946 - the first school for farm labourer children long before it became a national practice.

trust developed and teamwork grew. Slowly men began to take new responsibility and understand more of the overall needs of the farm.

On a personal basis, I had decided to take no more Alcohol. I told the men. Years later, Douglas, a near Alcoholic, came to the farm office one day to tell me he, too, had decided to stop drinking. This was a turning point. Others began to follow his lead. His improved standard of living and the new happiness in his home was clear for all to see. New values and new standards began to be accepted by most of the staff, both men and women.

Flowers began to bloom in front of their homes, a sign that they felt secure as long as they took responsibility. We now knew that our best men would not suddenly announce they were leaving. They are now settled and skilled men and women³, part of the farm management. The chief ingredient in skilled labour, we realised, were reliability and integrity.

Because of that simple decision made many years ago, we are now reaping a crop quite unexpected and unplanned. Truly an unexpected Bonus....!

³ In 1979, all male workers (8) & some wives, were either 2nd or 3rd generations (born here)

THE GOOD ROAD AHEAD

There can be no doubt that the vast majority of South Africans, Black and White, long for a new South Africa where there is peace, prosperity and an opportunity for everyone to play a useful part. However the majority of us think that this can be brought about by negotiation, a new Constitution and a well managed election. All this needs to happen - but we will not get the kind of country we long for unless we deal with some more fundamental points.

Instead of waiting for politicians and others to settle the constitutional issues, we should begin to define the kind of country we want and begin to create the good society we want. It may not be easy, but it is possible and eminently worthwhile!

For my part, I long for us to reach out to others, wherever they are and build firm foundations on which our children (and their children) can live, serve and grow. We need a society in which justice is done, and seen to be done, equally for all. Then we need integrity in business, in the workplace and in the home. We need sound family life respected and honoured. We need a work-ethic where all do a good day's work for a fair day's wage. We need a general sense of care - for the people, for the environment, for our country.

We need an Education system broadened so that everyone can become a productive citizen... an Education system which develops both the mind and the heart! We must protect and strengthen our spiritual ecology - Freedom and Democracy cannot survive without strong moral and spiritual foundations.

We should accept and respect the reality of Ethnic and Cultural differences - but never accept the myth that these differences are necessarily antagonistic. People seeking power politically or ideologically encourage division and so rob nations of enrichment which, when used aright, could touch the heart like a field of mixed wild flowers blooming after rain.

The simple issue is - what we want for our country we need to accept for ourselves. This is one way to end pointing fingers at the other man, party, creed, colour. Phyllis Konya wrote. *"A change in the system is not enough. The radical revolutionary accepts for himself the changes he would like to see in others."*

For the New South Africa, radical changes must come. They could be good changes as we apply what Michael Cassidy has defined as *"The Politics of Love"*. That would lead to a great future.

Many of our leaders today are calling for the destruction of the ANC. In the Parliament, in the Media, at public meetings, the situation in our country is analysed and argued with conviction and eloquence. Many know who to blame for what is wrong; many have great ideas of how to improve the political and economic situation. Much of what is said is well reasoned and sound - but (it seems to me) that when we try to peer into the future there is always a missing dimension.

We miss - or intentionally avoid - the fact that we live in an Ideological age and that force alone cannot overcome, or even contain, ideological attack. We have to deal with people who have a passionate, whole-hearted commitment to a single purpose which they pursue with determination and strategy to win the nation and the world. It follows, therefore, that the advance of an ideology into any area or country can only be overcome by a trained force of men and women who have a greater, more compelling, more constructive idea.

What happened to the West after the last World War demonstrates this point very effectively. The later Peter Howard (Journalist and Author) was in close touch with Churchill before the war. In his book *Ideas Have Legs*, he writes - "*Churchill is the one man in my lifetime who has been able to mobilise the British people to a passion comparable with the passion of other nations for their ideologies. 'The Nazis must be destroyed,' he said. True enough. But after the destruction, what happens to the big idea? It is great, but is it adequate for this age?*"

Subsequent events proved the idea was not big enough. The Nazis were destroyed, and without Churchill and his marvellous leadership, this would not have happened. Much of Germany was a heap of rubble, yet many of the countries which had been menaced by the Nazis (freed from them?) disappeared behind the *Iron Curtain*.

Today many leaders in South Africa are convinced the ANC must be destroyed - but we ask: "*Is this adequate as an aim in this age?*" Is it big enough to build a great South Africa?

A Black teacher from Natal, speaking in Washington, DC, many years ago put the issue very clearly. "*The real battle in Africa today is Ideological.*" he said, "*In the struggle, manpower, munitions, military strength - important as they are - are not, in themselves, the answer. Without an Ideology all these things will be in vain. We need an Ideology fundamental enough to deal with the problems raised and roused by hate, Fear, and Greed, both in individuals and in nations. We need an Ideology big enough to unite men above race, colour, class . . .*"

A man who was a leader in the Class War, Max Black, could speak from experience. He was a coalminer in Rhur¹ in Germany where Communism was

¹ Rhur: industrial & mining heartland of Germany

active toward the end of the War and some of the pits had 90% Communist representation on the Committees. In a widely circulated magazine he wrote an article which demonstrated his grasp of the real issues. *"The weakness of Western Democracy"*, he wrote, *"is the clash between conflicting interests. Each group contends on the basis of "who is right". The group which has the most power or money usually weighs most heavily with the government in power and gets its way. It is this weakness that Communism is able to exploit. It is the situation that Marx envisaged where democracies would destroy themselves by internal conflict."*

But though Bladeck² had given years, at sacrifice, to advance Communism even when Hitler was in power, his leadership quality was such that he recognised a greater idea when he met one. *"If no other factor were to emerge, Democracy would indeed be doomed. If Democracy is to survive it must accept Moral ReArmament to fight for what is right, not who is right. We have many ideas in present day democracy, but no uniting Ideology and that is why the East will win - unless we create that uniting force. Moral ReArmament offers democracy that ideology and its call to change where needed - starting with ourselves - is a greater revolution than any other. As each accepts that responsibility and carries it to the group he represents, we shall be able to create a social order which will satisfy the longings of all men everywhere."* Though Bladeck was a trained Communist, he saw that, for a real answer to the divisions the missing dimension must be included -moral and spiritual values.

There is a massive onslaught on good order and on moral values in our country. The danger is that slogans can mislead us into thinking our problems can be resolved along the lines of some physical re-arrangement. We will rise to our great destiny only as we learn to *"unite men and women above race, class, colour."*

² So-called *Pithead Marxist*, Bladeck found a new direction at Caux & dedicated his life to this, yet he never lost his passion for the Workers or his fight for their rights

We are in the midst of a worldwide transformation of society. Everywhere men and women are demanding Freedom and Democracy, and all are hoping Peace and Prosperity will result. In our own country the same yeast is at work - albeit from our own unique angle. But, for success we should learn from the experiences and convictions of leaders in other countries. They have interesting and important things to say.

Director of Economics and Political Studies in the Soviet, Dr Tsipko says, "*In the past we lived under the pressure and logic of fear - when then mechanisms of fear cease to operate, it is difficult to find new motivation. How can we turn liberation into moral renaissance and prevent civil war? We need people with a sense of guilt and responsibility who think in terms of good and evil and of us and them.*"

Famous Yugoslavian leader and writer, Milovan Djilas, says, "*The Democratic revolution of the East has the potential to establish the unity of Europe as a whole, to inspire it with new energy, to revitalise its creative powers; but whichever way the tide turns, the choice between good and evil has always to be made.*"

Another very interesting statement was made by Raisa Gorbachev, when she visited Oslo. "*The Bible*", she said, "*has an important contribution to give peace in our world and the moral rearmament of our people.*"

Jamaica's new Governor General, Sir Howard Cooke, in his inaugural address put the choice very clearly and got newspaper headlines: "*If we are greedy and undisciplined, envious, vicious and full of hate, we must change. He who sows the negative, sows destruction. He who sows the positive helps create the platform for the launching of the strategy of successful and dynamic growth and development of our country . . . let us walk with God.*"

A Hungarian leader, Mr Bulgani says, "*It is not enough to reject Dictatorship in exchange for Democracy. Winner-take-all Democracy means domination by the majority. It is true that it is closer to the Gospel than dictatorship which is the rule of the minority - be it aristocracy, oligarchy, or hierarchy.*"

With the rest of the world, we in South Africa seek a new way. To dislike domination is not enough. Everywhere men and women with insight realise we need more than a simple political re-arrangement. Change in this is essential, but we also need with Liberty, respect for the Individual, a clear perception of right and wrong.

Soon we will all have freedom to choose our government, to build the new South Africa. This will be our opportunity to set a standard for all Africa. For that we require a well drafted Constitution plus that Spiritual dimension which makes true Freedom for all possible.

One privilege we, who have reached a good age, have is that we can look back a long way. In my case I look back a very long way! On the farm, when I grew up, there were candles and paraffin lamps to light our home at night. We travelled by horse and cart - or ox-wagon. Farm work and road repairs were done with pick, spade and wheelbarrow. By 1912 we had a Ford car which could climb the *hoogtes* if you kept your foot down heavily on the low-gear pedal!

Wrestling on the farm with sheep, cattle, horses, and drought, and very occasional newspapers, we were not aware of the forces building among the nations of the world which would bring to birth three material Ideologies - one based on Class, one on Race, and one on Colour. Suddenly on 28th June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his consort, Duchess Sophie of Hohenburg were assassinated in Sarajevo, lighting the fuse which exploded into the First World War. On 28th July, Austria declared war against Serbia. Germany was her ally. Britain, France and other countries came in against Germany. Thousands of brave men lost their lives, including volunteers from South Africa. By 1918 the Allies had won the war and the fight for freedom.

But it did not bring freedom in Russia. Marxism had been steadily growing underground - now Lenin and Stalin took power as the first step towards winning the whole world for Marxism. Russia, now ruled by the *new Class*, became a world power and a threat to many countries. Clever propaganda plus ruthless force gave the new rulers absolute power.

In Germany after the war there was poverty and problems. Hitler began to fight for a new pride in their race. The Jews were blamed for what went wrong and were persecuted. In 1939 Hitler attacked Poland. Britain and France came in on the side of Poland - and for 5 years the world was at war.

Meanwhile South Africa was developing steadily. In both wars, fine men and women had served and died, but internally, mines and industries had developed steadily. Outwardly it was a peaceful society - and farming demanded energy and hard work to keep bondholders happy! We left our houses unlocked when we came to town and our cars unlocked in the streets as we attended to our business. In those days nothing was stolen.

But quietly, almost unnoticed at first, *Apartheid* was being applied. Racial division on colour lines grew steadily. New laws were made, and though opposed by many of us, segregation began to be applied strictly. Naturally opposition by the Black people grew and they began to organise opposition. Their protests were peaceful and led by men of calibre. The *ANC* had been formed before the First World War, but only became militant in 1952 when they launched the *Defiance Campaign*. In 1990 the State President, F.W de Klerk, released Mr Mandela, leader of the *ANC* and began serious planning with the leaders of the Black community.

Suddenly all three bubbles have burst - National Socialism, Communism, and *Apartheid*. failed and have left a terrible legacy of confusion. In every country there is now a demand for Democracy, Freedom, and Free Enterprise. The countries which the ideologies had a firm grip are in the greatest need for sound foundations on which to build. Thirty years ago thinking men noted the decay of these essential foundations. Well known British author and playwright wrote, "*We are in the midst of a world-wide and terrible onslaught on faith, hope and spirit. Ancient virtues are scorned and slashed away. Satan strides forward to inherit the earth.*"

Today we have the harvest - widespread corruption, dishonesty, divorce, abortion on demand, greed, hate and *AIDS*. Unless we rebuild the moral infrastructure on which Freedom and Democracy were built - established by Luther, Calvin, Wesley and other great men - we simply cannot establish true freedom.

Before the wars and rise of the Ideologies there were many rogues and swindlers but the majority of the population respected the moral fences and taught their children by sound family life. Where young people can learn that self-discipline, chastity, and respect for other people brings more happiness than does self-indulgence.

Our greatest need is men and women, young and old, who, with passion and purpose accept the challenge to bring to our unhappy hungering, fear-ridden world the determination to live with self-discipline, respect for others and the Ten Commandments.

So I look back on many great events that have had worldwide repercussions I look forward with great hope. I know we have many people, men and women, black and white, with the character and ability to take on the this great task. I believe that many will realise, as I did 55 years ago, that if we want a world that works, I needed to start with myself in the home and on the farm. There was much need, but over the years I did find many answers, purpose, friendship, and hope.

I know a great future lies ahead if we have the courage to accept the challenge.

I'M GLAD I CHOSE THE THIRD "C"

Growing up on a farm in the Karroo mountains, I took it all for granted. Our main purpose was to produce wool which we sheared from the sheep each October and trucked off to Port Elizabeth for sale by auction. The quality and quantity of wool so consigned was important as it decided the main income for the farm for the next 12 months.

Annual income varied - the market was "up" or "down", the weather was good with enough rain and plenty of food on the veldt; or bad with veldt in poor condition. These factors governed the number of lambs and the weight and quality of wool which would be produced in that season.

In those pre-Second World War days we did not question the situation. We did the best we could and tried to make a good living from the farm. Meanwhile, the cities in our country were growing, mines were being developed, new industries were being established, big business was growing and buying out the small businesses. We accepted the *Capitalist System* - the organisation of production for profit.

Privileged to own and work our own land, it all seemed good - superficially. Yet, deep down there was a feeling that all was not well for our country. Division was growing, not only politically, but economically. There were some cases of gross underpayment for employees. *Rationalisation* brought about when big companies bought out smaller ones often seemed no more than a ruse to reduce the number of employees. Machines were used more and more to replace people.

As a farmer I knew, and used, a spade as an implement with a sharp cutting edge which could be used to dig the soil, chop out thistles, or divert irrigation water. It could not do the job, it was blunt or bent, it needed repairs or (in bad cases) it was replaced.

I began to question the system under which we lived, and I had accepted as normal. Clearly there was no security for the worker, the ordinary farmer, or for the small businessman. Often decent people, willing to work, found themselves on the street without jobs. With division and insecurity growing, I began to wonder if there was not a better way?

Many voices were advocating Socialism. Russia and China had embarked on vast nation-wide experiments. A very attractive slogan was being bandied about: "*to each according to his needs; from each according to his ability.*" Millions were being influenced - including the Rev. Hewlett Johnson. "*The plan lifts the emphasis from personal acquisition to socialist accumulation . . . The Soviet citizen depends on the whole community. It guarantees his safety . . . The plan provides profitable employment for all!*", he wrote in *The Socialist Sixth of the World*. It sounded ideal!

But fact did not square with theory. Those in the Russian dominated countries could not travel freely to the West. Stories of harsh imprisonment in the *Gulags* and cruel tyrannies began to find their way into the news.

Sakarov had not yet been demeaned nor had he written his book *My Country and the World* in which he says "*Although the daily informs the ordinary Soviet citizen that he is master of his country, he realises very well that the real masters are those who morning and evening speed through deserted streets in their armoured limousines. He knows that even his personal fate depends wholly on the State.*"

Louis Fisher wrote in *The God That Failed*, "*My pro-Sovietism had led me into the error of thinking that a system founded on the principle that the end justifies the means could create a better world for better Human Beings... Immoral means produce immoral ends and immoral persons under both Bolshevism and Capitalism.*" Clearly, I realised, Communism was not working either!

But there must be a better way, I felt and continued my search. *Life Began Yesterday* by Major Stephen Foot, Soldier, Businessman, School teacher, seemed to throw a new light on the whole question. I read his book with interest and a kindling hope. "*I wanted to do something,*" he wrote, "*which could have direct influence on the question of the future - War or Peace. ... the amazing progress and revolutionary changes that have taken place on the material side of life have not been matched by similar progress on the moral side.*" He went on to tell of how he had undergone a vital Christian experience when he met a force of men and women who taking a complete new direction in their way of living and forging a practical answer to this dilemma.

In my arrogance and ignorance I had always considered religious motives were of no importance in National issues. I had learnt to respect the *Great Faiths* for teaching the moral imperatives - but, like that blunted spade, they did not seem to provide a cutting edge which could resolve the massive problems of the Ideological Age. *Had I*, I wondered, *stumbled on an effective way to build a stable peace-filled Society?*

The Capitalist system under which I lived was not *delivering the goods*. It was in danger of fulfilling the prophesy of Communist leader, Borodin (who paved the way for take-over of China for Marxism): "*Capitalism will decline and eventually fall as been presaged for the future by its own intense rivalry and propensity for self devourment.*"

Another voice was being raised which challenged the self-interest on which both Capitalism and Communism depend. "*There is enough in the world for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed,*" said Frank Buchman, speaking to the workers of the paddy fields in India. On another occasion he said: "*Our aim is to make the wealth and work of the world available to all and for the exploitation of none. God has a plan. If man listens, God speaks; if man obeys God acts.*"

Here was a programme and challenge which supplied the needed cutting edge in Christian teaching.

Dr Paul Campbell, Medical Doctor (personal Physician to Buchman for many years) and Canadian author, in an article *Restructuring Society*, writes, "*Millions are disillusioned with the present system. Can we demonstrate for them a society with moral determination, a society which needs everyone and which stimulates each person to give his best for the sake of all? Such a revolution is underway...*"

The time had come for me to decide: It was not a difficult choice.

- 1 The Capitalist Society - where greed, ambition and search for power were often the chief driving force - divided and tottering.
- 2 The Communist System - where envy, hate, and bitterness were used to win adherents which then used them without mercy as tools for expansion and where force kept them in place.
- 3 The Christian Society - which meant freedom for all, bounded only by the Social Ethic: reverence for people. A new way; a new world!

This now demanded Christian living with ideological relevance. For me it meant decisive and difficult steps to be taken. To put right with my mother for years of neglect; to apologise to my Afrikaner neighbours for superior attitudes; to seek forgiveness from my workers for unsympathetic arrogance; to end exploitation of my own land for personal gain.

But with it came new vision, new hope for my country and the world. There was no guarantee of ease or comfort, but a great goal. "*Before a God-led unity*", said Buchman, "*Every last problem will be solved. Empty hands will be filled with work, empty stomachs with food, and empty hearts with an ideology that satisfies.*" In 1985, Cardinal Konig, Archbishop of Vienna said, "*Frank Buchman marked a turning point in History.*"

As I look back over the years, I see much that is good has happened. The vision is undimmed - our country can be great. There is a part for everyone. I am glad I chose the *Third "C"*

WHY IS OUR LIFESTYLE NO THREAT TO MARXISM?

Marxism is the danger, we are warned from all sides! Statements by political leaders, broadcasts by the SABC, pamphlets - even books - warn us to *beware of the infiltration of Marxist thinking*. When, a few days ago, we were treated for the umpteenth time to another finger pointing warning on TV, I turned to my wife, who had just kept knitting steadily, "Why!", I said, "Why do the Marxists not fear infiltration by *our thinking*?" "Because," she answered, never hesitating as she purled the next row of stitches, "we do not practice what we preach. We point our finger at our neighbour and forget that there are 3 more pointing back at us..!"

Klaus Bockmeuhl, Professor of Theology, Regent College, Vancouver, says in his book *The Challenge of Marxism*, "In the West today Marxism is the most potent alternative to the old way of life. This is true not only for the emerging leaders of the Third World Nations, but also for youth. Particularly University students of many of the industrial nations." He goes on to explain, "Its appeal is because it seems to give meaning to life." He adds, "The ongoing secularisation of our society has created a spiritual vacuum. A middle class that has lost its faith has nothing to pass on to its youth, except a few material goods that would be available to them anyway."

This is indeed a challenging statement - but with truth in it. It was true for me. At University, and later, I had a general sense of loyalty to old traditions and my country - but there was a lack of purpose and direction to which I could apply my full youthful energy and enthusiasm. I was search for *meaning for life*. Among the books I read at that time were several filled with Marxist philosophy. It all sounded plausible - sometimes exciting.

Chief Comintern agent to China (1923 - 27) Mikhail Borodin, put the issue clearly: "It is true", he said, "that anti-repressiveness is something to which the common man can naturally and fully relate. The real motive of our Atheism, however, resides in a loftier plane. It is because of the little word Forgiveness. The Christian doctrine of Forgiveness, so little practiced yet so often preached, and seemingly so innocuous, is the single enemy to the dissemination of Communism. . . it counters and negates all that we wish to instill in people . . ."

That Borodin, a deeply committed Communist, a leading Ideologist of his time should have feared Christian teaching, is surely a clue to one of the greatest needs of this age, especially to the democracies.

Bockmeuhl shows the way, "We need to grasp and exercise the insight that the Christian task is not exhausted by living a decent life according to the creational order. We must learn to dedicate our lives to the larger issue of God's Kingdom with the same consciousness, purposiveness, circumspection and energy we have seen in Lenin. This means we must rid ourselves of amateurish attitudes and lifestyles."

We call ourselves a Christian country, and I do believe the vast majority of our people, Black and White, *are* believers. Yet we fear Marxism? But if we lived our faith with a passionate, wholehearted commitment with the aim and strategy to win the nation, the world, we could demonstrate a new way.

This is not impossible. I have met Marxists who had been trained and in leadership positions, who took a new direction when they met Christians living with a care and vision for the whole world. Some of these men and women have given leadership and worked with courage and conviction in their new-found Faith. They were convinced that only uncompromising Christian living can build a society without conflict.

Our urgent need is, surely, to lift our vision to the real issues - and deal with the roots of division - bitterness, fear, greed, jealousy *et al*? "*Faith cannot begin and end with the individual*", writes Bockmeuhl. "*It must reach out to society, to the world. Likewise, faith cannot simply provide motivation for actions determined by ideologies hostile to it. Faith and action must be integrated.*"

This surely is the real challenge to our country today. why can we not resolve our problems on an uncompromising Christian basis? It is essential to have Security Forces and weapons to keep order in town and country - but that can only last for a limited period. We cannot deal with an Ideological threat by Material means alone. Communism advances where secular thinking rules the hearts of people. So to warn us against Marxism is not enough. We need to see - and understand - the basic battle which is between those who would ignore, or defy God's plan, and those who seek to love and obey Him.

We need to accept what Cardinal Konig of Vienna said, speaking at Caux., Switzerland: "*Buchman showed that the message of Christ is not only meant for the cloistered cell, for private use, but can also penetrate deep into social and political life . . . Honest, frank dialogue growing from Christian roots can overturn walls that have seemed insurmountable.*"

In South Africa we have many problems which must be solved. Many people are seeking a new way. But, it seems to me that to attempt to build something of lasting value, while ignoring the importance of Ethics², is like building a house on sand without foundations. This is true of Soil Conservation, Social Structure and National Policy.

THE LAND ETHIC

Consider the question of soil conservation. Aldo Leopold, American naturalist and conservationist wrote in 1948, "*That Land is a community is the basic concept of Ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of Ethics.*" In this way he defined the Land Ethic. He went on to explain that land is like a pyramid - at the base, soil particles, micro-organisms, then earthworms, insects, rodents, mammals, and finally man. If the soil is used in a way which destroys one part of this pyramid, erosion follows. This affects everything including and insects and animals. The grass disappears, the humus is lost, fine particles are mercilessly blown away in dust clouds, the bigger granules are washed down *dongas* to become silt in dams or mud in the great rivers rushing down to the sea.

In South Africa 400 million tons of soil are lost this way each year. It is true this situation has partly been inherited by this generation. In 1910 farms now reckoned to have a stocking rate of 1 sheep to 3 hectares were carrying double that number. But we must find the answer in our generation.

Much research, many experiments, sterling and efficient work has been done by our Agricultural Department and Extension Office. The Veld Trust has played a great part in publishing essential information. Other publications have added to the store of knowledge regarding the great need to preserve our ecology.

But erosion of our wonderful land continues. It need not.

Forty years ago on our farm in the harsh Karroo there was increasing erosion. We were deeply concerned and at great expense built earth banks and stone weirs in the *dongas*. We put bushes weighed down by rocks in the footpaths and runnels, in a vain endeavour to keep the soil in place.

The tide began to turn only when we decided to put the needs of the soil of our desire for bigger and better profits. We sold one-third of our sheep and began a system of rotational grazing and resting of camps. We had to tighten our belts and forego all luxuries.

¹ *Published E P Herald, Veld Trust, Integrity International, Frontline*

² *Ethics*: to the Greeks it was the *summum bonum*, the greatest aim; *Ideal* - the highest conception, perfect

In the Karroo, changes come slowly - but after some years, the grass began to grow on the bare patches of soil. Humus began to build around the roots; the water no longer rushed away with every light thunderstorm. The sheep, our main source of income, began to produce more wool per head, and lambing percentages increased. Cattle could graze where there had been no grass before. We proved that destruction of the land could be ended.

Though there is still much to be done, we do look back with some satisfaction at what had been achieved. We realise now that the improvement only began when we had, almost unknowingly, applied the Land Ethic. We had, in fact, begun to treat our soil with love and respect. And we had been rewarded.

Experiments, information, publicity even subsidies and laws are necessary but it is clear that, without an extra dimension, we will not stop our land from wasting away. The acceptance and application of the Land Ethic is essential. By Farmers? Yes - but also by the Townsmen. By all who depend on the land.

THE SOCIAL ETHIC

But the care of the land unrelated to the condition of our society does not fulfill all our needs. The land is the foundation on which human society depends. The two are linked and, just like the soil, *Society is a Community* where each depends on the other. For the soil to be healthy all the elements must be in place, doing their essential work, or erosion follows.

So in our society each individual has a part. As in the old nursery rhyme, "*The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker*", or in our modern terms, "*The labourer, the clerk, the cook, the teacher, the doctor, the manager*", all are needed. Everyone should be able to use his or her ability or gift to maintain productivity and stability. All must have the opportunity to contribute their share to the common pool and get a fair share of the products and conveniences so generated.

But, just as with soil, when ignorance, greed or selfish ambition become dominant motives, erosion in the Community occurs and, just like the land, our community can be destroyed. Not only in country but in many part of the world, it seems to me that Society is in an advanced state of erosion.

It need not be. I have seen the answer at work.

After I apologised to my farm workers for inconsiderate treatment and rough words my attitude towards them changed entirely. From them, there was a positive response. They began to take responsibility and to make constructive suggestions in regard to the work and management of the farm.

Some years later we developed a labour intensive wool-spinning and weaving project in the town of Graaff-Reinet. Our aim was to try to reduce the scourge of unemployment in the *townships*. Many more applied for work than could be possibly accommodated. Those we took on were desperate, dejected, and poor. Most had a very minimum of education (if any). We taught them the skills of spinning, weaving, and knitting by hand. Soon they were producing attractive yarn and garments.

After a time, to my surprise, I found they were taking pride not only in their work, but also their personal appearance. Newcomers were disciplined by them and were soon coming neat and clean to work too. They also began to take responsibility for production and quality. They had found both dignity and purpose. It was like the opening of the beautiful Karroo flowers when rain comes after a long drought. This unexpected, almost miraculous change, both on the farm and here was because we were applying the Social Ethic - reverence for people. the aim was to value each person and encourage them to make a sound contribution to the community.

Politics and Economics have a part. Good laws and law enforcement are necessary. But it is certain that if the Social Ethic is not universally honoured and applied, peace and stability cannot be secured.

THE CONTINENTAL ETHIC

To take this analogy one step further, it seems to me we could think about Africa. Just as the land needs all its ingredients to remain fertile and productive, and society needs all to serve and work to remain stable and effective, so Africa needs all its countries to work together for maximum production and sound government.

Today our continent is divided. It is wracked by ideological conflict, distrust, fear, domination, and starvation. But we need each other. Already Lesotho and South Africa are planning to share water and expertise. There are great water resources on the continent which could profitably be used for generation of power, food production and pleasure for millions. Fertile soils, minerals, and forests, much of which could be profitably utilised are not being used properly today.

For centuries France and Germany were deadly enemies and at the centre of two destructive World Wars which led to the death of many millions of brave people. But the division between West Germany and France has been healed - partly due to the work of one brave lady³. That was the beginning. Now the EEC is working (amid some argument) toward Continental co-operation.

³ Madame Irene Laure whose apology to Germans for her hatred build bridges of unity

If Europe can take these steps, why should not Africa do the same? Together we could use the tremendous assets of water, minerals, rich soils, expertise, muscle - not so that one lot are richer or stronger than another, but in such a way that all can share in the bounty of Africa.

We need the Land Ethic to improve and preserve the fertility and stability of soil.

We need the Social Ethic to improve the quality of life and to respect the dignity of people

We need the Continental Ethic to unite and develop the whole of Africa.

Ethics and Ideals - such aims cannot be reached by social, economic, and political planning alone. They have a part, but the will, the direction and the power must come from Above. As a people, black and white, we honour God, but we must go the next step and apply His law of love to Land, Community, and Continent. This will call for courageous decisions by individuals and governments.

Can South Africa take the lead? If we do, if we succeed, we will not remain the *Dark Continent*, but become the *Answer Continent*.

Fifty years ago armies were being mobilised and equipped with deadly weapons. Europe was on the verge of war. Soon *Nazism* was to be pitted against the armies of the Capitalist West allied to the Russian Communists. Our leaders were divided world wide. Many voices were raised blaming the other people, the other nation - and more and more weapons of war being produced and deployed. We feared for the future, for our children, our country. The way ahead seemed gloomy indeed.

Just then, on 29th May 1938, a new voice was raised - not of blame, but of both challenge and purpose: "*Is there a remedy that will cure the individual and nation and give hope of a speedy and satisfactory recovery? . . . The crisis is fundamentally a moral one. The nations must re-arm morally. Moral recovery is essentially the forerunner of economic recovery . . . It creates not crisis but confidence and unity in every phase of life . . . This starts when everyone admits his own faults instead of spotlighting the other fellow's. God alone can change human nature. The secret lies in the great forgotten truth that 'when man listens, God speaks; when man obeys, God acts; when men change, nations change'*" Frank Buchman, the friend of many leading statesmen in Europe and Asia, was speaking in East Ham Town Hall in England when I read this report of his speech.

This clarity arrested me - although, until then, in my arrogance and ignorance, I considered *religious* ideas to be of no importance in political and national matters. I had respected the great Faiths for their moral teaching, but they seemed to me like a blunted spade, with no cutting edge.

But Buchman, whose worldwide initiative had been dubbed by the press "*Moral Re-Armament*", was outlining a program with potent, uniting ideological content at a time when men were being won by the million to divisive, materialistic ideologies. He made it clear and simple (but not easy!) when he said, "*We need men and women who will pay the full price of change, honesty and fearless leadership, if our nations and the world is to be saved.*" It was a challenge which called for decision and action. For me, it meant admitting and making amends for dishonest actions, apology to a neighbour whom I hated, caring for a mother whom I had selfishly neglected, building new cooperative relationships with the men and women who worked for us, and caring for my country in a new way.

Meanwhile, weapons were pouring from the factories of Europe and USA, armies were training and marching, war was inevitable. But Buchman was looking beyond the immediate crisis to the creation of a society in which peace could be permanent. "*God spoke to the prophets of old - He may speak to you if you listen*", he said, "*If we do and obey what we hear, it is conceivable that together we will usher in the greatest revolution of all time, whereby the Cross of Christ will transform the world.*"

⁴ Published *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser* 11 May 1988

During and, especially, after the war in Britain, in France and, later, in West Germany, many responded to this call and new understanding was built. All around the world, men and women began to catch a vision and saw a good road all could take. After centuries of division and wars, France and West Germany found the way to lasting peace.

The Swiss took the lead and provided a meeting ground for people of all races, all denominations; a working model of a new world society. "*At Caux, Switzerland*", writes British historian Robin Mowat, "*we are reaching the end of an age of crisis and pioneering an era of cure . . . Coming from a background where racial and denominational division was taken for granted, it was a revelation for me when I visited Caux to find a basis of friendship with people from all background. . . Africans who had been in the lead of anti-Colonial agitations; ex-Communists who had found a new, and greater, ideology; leading businessmen beginning to build a new style of free enterprise. Divisions had been bridged - men and women were finding new purpose and direction*"

Now, 50 years on, the European Economic Community is a fact - certainly partly due to the statesmanship of men and women with a wisdom and determination who had suffered and understood the need. Now our own country is divided as never before: white and white, black and black, black and white, distrust, often insult, sometimes kill each other. None of us is happy about this situation. Many ideas advocating change in structure and system of government are urged - and opposed!

Some politicians, foreign propagandists, even Church leaders, blame *Apartheid* for this situation. Indeed, *Apartheid* in application has been responsible for much that is wrong - but to denounce a structure vehemently, and not to denounce the roots of the division with equal heat, is superficial and unrealistic. To change a structure which has brought division and leave untouched the pride, fear, greed, bitterness, envy, and corruption which produced the soil from which this political system grew cannot bring about the united and prosperous country we long for - and can be!

The time has come to accept the constructive, moral and spiritual Ideology which Buchman defined in the 1930's and '40's and apply the pioneering experiences in other lands in our country. With new vision and determination, by putting the faith we profess into action, racial divisions and hurts could be healed, inherited prejudices ended, and a future free of fear secured. We could build a society where God's standards are honoured and applied in personal, social and national life, and, as a people, reach for our true destiny.

With the privilege of reaching Four Score Years and Four, it seems timely to record a few important conclusions.

I was born on a farm 80 km from town, among high mountains. Our only means of transport was animal-powered; a horse under saddle, a buggy drawn by two strong, restless horses, or the Ox-wagon. I was 9 years old when my father came belting down that last incline to the homestead at a speed of maybe over 15 miles p.h. in a Ford, the first car to travel those mountain roads. Since then, transport has developed from horses and donkeys to fast cars, aeroplanes and spaceships. Our communications have gone from Penny-postage letters to telephones, radio, Fax machines. Instant communication is now possible across thousands of miles.

In those early days on the farm we took for granted that black people were servants - some honest and energetic, some not. Maids cooked and washed and looked after children in a wonderful way. However, we just accepted they were different. In Junior and High school, we used to emphasize differences, using uncomplimentary names for Blacks, Jews, Indians, and Chinese. It was the accepted thing amongst our people, so most of us were open to the philosophy of Ethnic division. Clearly there were differences; this no one could deny.

These facts seemed to be emphasized by two devastating World Wars. In 1918, Kaiser Wilhelm and the *Huns* were blamed and hated. In 1939, the Allies joined forces against Hitler and the *Nazis*. In both wars, South Africans with courage and sacrifice, joined with Britain, France and other nations - and ended victors.

So most people were easy targets in the '60's and '70's when radio and other media constantly harped on the validity of Ethnic differences and the advantage of separation. It was argued that through *apartheid* (which merely means separatism), peace and stability could be ensured in our country. It was easy to point to conflict between different groups in this country and abroad.

Though well-known leaders and professors were quoted in favour of this type of policy, I had begun to realise it was a completely false philosophy. I had met people who had found freedom from ethnic prejudices and taken part in important healing actions. Madame Irene Laure, Communist trained Socialist leader of the women of France had apologised publicly to a large group, including Germans, for her bitter hatred of anything German. She had had to watch her son being tortured by German soldiers in Paris because they wanted information from her about the underground Resistance movement. There was an immediate positive response from the Germans in the audience. That day was the beginning of a process which had a major part in healing the centuries of conflict between France and Germany. This was clear proof that there was a way to unity beyond ethnic differences.

This was confirmed for me in Africa. At a conference in Harare (then Salisbury), Alec Smith, son of then Prime Minister Ian Smith, spoke with great courage from

the platform of an inter-racial meeting. "I have come to realise," he said, "that I had a personal responsibility for my country's dilemma. It is Alec Smith who is answerable because my selfish lifestyle and insensitive attitudes had finally driven those boys to the bush. For my part, I am deeply sorry for the thoughtlessness on my past life and have now committed myself to finding the solution for our country." There was an almost instant reaction from Rev. Arthur Kandoereka, Church minister, but also Treasurer-General for the *ANC men in the bush*. He kept constant touch with them. These two men, from such different backgrounds, began to work closely together. Their teamwork had a part in finally bringing peace to their country.

Language, history, and culture do have a part in linking people together. But the differences between such groups are no reason for hostility. With the right approach, co-operation could replace competition. When I decided to apply the Social Ethic (caring for people as people!) - and apologised to my farm workers for rough handling and insensitive attitudes, we found a new basis for co-operation, and I found myself freed from the bonds of ethnicity which had bound me since my youth.

My dictionary defines **Ethics** as *the science of morals*; and **Morality** as *the sense that distinguishes between right and wrong*. Clearly **Ethics** is more important than **Ethnicity**!

It seems to me that, amid world divisions and (in some parts) chaos, we are inexorably being forced to accept that Saul of Tarsus (himself no stranger to ethnic convictions) had inspired foresight when he said that, for those with a true faith, "*there is neither Jew nor Greek, Slave nor Free, Male or Female.*" All can unite in living the true and absolute way of peace. His outlook was confirmed by St. Peter when he said, "*God shows no favouritism. He accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right.*"

The time has come to apply these truths in practice. This is the challenge for the 1990's! While respecting each other, we could still be united in using the vast assets of our world, and the highly developed technologies, in freedom and peace for the benefit of all.

Some years ago we launched, optimistically, but with sincere intentions, a labour intensive wool and mohair hand spinning and weaving project. Our aim was to try to relieve the grinding poverty in the large townships caused by lack of job opportunities¹. But we have found it is one thing to plan for people on a Committee; it is another (and a sobering experience) to be in close touch with those seeking and needing work.

We have learned to know the face of Poverty more intimately, but have also discovered a vast pool of skills - imprisoned, unused, and eagerly seeking an outlet. We have also been able to watch the growth of self-respect in someone who is able to have a job and master as skill.

Handspinning wool straight from the fleece, shorn from the veldt, is a skill which not everyone learns quickly, and some never master. Licity asked for work 2 years ago. She was very small, 16 years of age, had gone to school as far as Std 2, had a baby and was neither clean nor neat. She did not look like promising material, but we decided to give her a chance. We gave her a spinning wheel to work at, asked one of the experienced ladies to teach her, and waited to see development. To our surprise and delight she soon mastered the art and, before long, was producing good thread. Now she does a First Class job, often sings as she spins, is neatly dressed and clearly has found a sense of purpose.

Tersia asked for work. She was so obviously in need... She settled down quickly and worked steadily. After a time, some of the other workers complained that her dress was not clean - she was no credit to the "team". We found that she and her husband lived in a small room in a backyard. He gave her R10 a month for household needs. The 3 children had to live with the grandmother; wardrobe and laundry facilities were almost nil.

Hetta was obviously bright and soon learned to spin the finest thread, but after some time we discovered she had a problem. She had bought clothes on credit, had fallen behind in monthly payments and was getting letters of demand from an attorney. Because she changed her address, the letters no longer arrived - but they were sent out regularly, none the less. The debt of R37,00 at the shop had become R130,00 to the Attorney. When the Messenger of the Court arrived to take her to court, she appealed for help. We found she was one of many. Businesses eager for trade are not always scrupulous in their care for people, allowing unwarranted credit, and then hand over debts to collectors.

¹ Besides the normal constraints in lack of jobs in the rural areas, Graaff-Reinet (though with a large Black component) was in those years a *Coloured Preference Area* making it hard for a black lady to find employment of any nature

Josie grew up on a farm. Her mother died when she was very young. Her father moved to town, and took to drink. Their house, high in the *township*, had two small rooms, the roof insecure and windows are mere holes in the walls. She was inclined to be temperamental, but, as her skills increased, so her manners improved. She graduated from spinning to hand weaving and shows remarkable skill in this work. From her disadvantaged background she is steadily moving on to taking responsibility and leadership.

Betty joined us right at the beginning. It was soon clear she did not have the aptitude for spinning, but was gifted with an attractive personality and a friendly manner. We realised she was first-class material for supervisor and sales-lady. She came from a home with 2 handicapped brothers and several other siblings in the small house. All of them depended on her. She worked well and happily for many months. Then she began to suffer from headaches. Visits to the Doctors were many and expensive. Eventually she was sent to Port Elizabeth for treatment by the Specialists. She was operated on for a tumor on the brain. After some weeks she was back - cheerful and energetic. Not for long, though, as the disease overtook her and she was buried, with honour.

The village of New Bethesda lies in a deep valley in the Sneeuwberg mountains, with the spectacular *Compassberg* peak overlooking it to the north. It is an attractive and quiet little place, but in the *township* there is much need. Ina was born there and lived her early years in the village. When she was in Std 5, her father died suddenly and she had to leave school to work and help feed the family of 6 sisters and 2 brothers. When she came to ask for work with us she was mature and with her own family to care for. She proved a first-class hand-knitter and served quietly and steadily. With the passing of Betty we needed a Supervisor and Ina was the obvious choice. She has proved to be a strong and reliable leader.

Each of the 28 people now employed by this Cottage Industry has a story. They have come from different backgrounds. They have faced poverty and seek a sense of purpose.

But using the wool and mohair, grown in the surrounding districts, does not only produce work. They also produce garments and other goods in line with the present world trends, where natural fibres are being sought and worn. We were encouraged to read in *The Australian* (July 1977) "*one of the newest status symbols in clothing does not come from Parisian or Roman haute couture - but are handcrafted from the spinning wheel. The soft, country nubby look and feel of a handspun wool jumper is fast becoming the most prized possession in the wardrobe of the rich and famous - a unique collector's item.*" We might add that, besides being unique and cosy it is flame-proof, long-lasting and wholesome to wear!

Processing the raw wool to the finished article is what these workers are doing. They have learned a skill, they are earning for themselves. They have found a sense of purpose.

This is only the tip of the iceberg. Many more need work - with skills and abilities locked in and needing the opportunity to be recognised and used - like the bud of a flower, which needs only the right care to burst open and to blossom. But without opportunity, their skills and purpose are trapped. The greatest and growing need is for work. This is the keystone to personal self-respect and a peaceful society.

Six years ago, long before the present recession, there was poverty and hunger in our *townships*. We launched a Relief Committee to feed the hungry, but at best this could only be an interim measure, and did not get down to the root of the problem. We began to search for ways to create employment in this rural Karroo area.

After some investigation we decided to launch a labour-intensive wool and mohair spinning industry. To this end we were able to buy and loan five spinning-wheels and were given accommodation behind the Beer Hall² in one of our *townships*. Generous ladies³ travelled from Johannesburg to give lessons. Wool spinning is not as simple as it appears when one watches a skilled hand spinner at work. With only 5 wheels we could not accommodate the 50 or more who lined up to seek work that first day - but on that day, *Graaff-Reinet Kraft* was born.

We had much to learn. It took time and sacrifice, but the project has grown steadily. As we had no capital, we had to rely on a Bank Overdraft, guaranteed by kind friends. Slowly workers began to master the art of spinning - which demands the co-ordination of hand, foot, and eye. We began to sell finished woollen thread and were able to acquire more wheels and expand our workforce. Then we were offered better premises, near the town centre, and began weaving and handknitting our own thread in new premises.

Established in 1786, Graaff-Reinet is celebrating its 200th year of existence as a town. It is the 4th oldest in South Africa, at that time the only inland town⁴. For many years the administration of most of the Eastern Cape (including Algoa Bay) was done from here. But without Industry or mines employment has been scarce. In days of boom, many workers could commute⁵ to work in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage.

With a population of over 25000 (20% white), jobs are scarce, especially for Black women, thus many applied and still apply for work with us. We have been able to increase from the original 5 to 33 full time employees, producing a large volume and variety of hand-made, attractive and unique goods. But it has not all been simple. Taking the raw, greasy wool from the fleece of a sheep and turning it into a strong, even thread demands energy and care. Weaving by hand is a slow process which requires skill and artistic talent. Equally, knitting a special jersey or *gilet* demands concentration and proficiency. To dye wool or mohair makes special demands on the person responsible for this tricky job.

² Beer Hall, built to sell *Sorghum Beer* to residents of black township by *Bantu Administration Board*, was the official drinking place (it was illegal for Blacks to buy *white* liquor!)

³ Judy Sevenoaks & others of the Johannesburg Spinners & Weavers Guild

⁴ After Cape Town, Stellenbosch & Swellendam

⁵ A good rail service to the factories in that area was still in use

Today many of our workers are highly skilled and motivated, but, when they first applied for work, they were in obvious need, with little education, many children to support, a few with rudimentary ideas about hand knitting but none with any knowledge of spinning or dyeing. At first we had doubts about their ability to learn to do the work, but I was about to learn of the greatest lessons of my life. Most of these people were quick to learn the needed skills for handwork. They soon began to dress more carefully and became clean and neat. They set a standard and demanded that any new workers who came onto the job did the same. I realised that we had been doing much more than simply finding a way to give employment.

People had come from townships, unknown, uneducated, unskilled, and were learning skills and beginning to take responsibility. Some of those who had been with us longer became supervisors in one or other department - spinning, weaving, knitting, dyeing, displaying the goods. I realised we were unknowingly reaping the fruits of applying the Social Ethic (reverence for people). We had given them a purpose in life. It proved with no shadow of a doubt that "*people need work not only to support themselves but also to give meaning to their lives.*"

The project is administered by a Board. In recent months we discussed and decided in favour of linking wages with profits (and losses!). In this way everyone would be encouraged to see themselves as part of the whole business. To implement this, we felt it imperative to have worker representation on the Board. They elect 3 from their ranks who are now part of the decision making process.

Recently we have been able to move into roomy and attractive premises and hope to increase our job opportunities. We realise that, for this, we need a much expanded and regular market. To this end we aim at a high standard product - unique, lasting and attractive.

PLAYS

Only 2 plays have been included in this collection.

They are but 20 pages long and could take place in most towns or farms in this country

- 1. MY FATHER'S HOUSE**
- 2. THE OTHER PATH**

MY FATHER'S HOUSE

A SOUTH AFRICAN PLAY IN THREE ACTS

INTRODUCTION

Protection of ourselves and our property is deeply ingrained in human nature. The most kindhearted people often do not realise how methods of self-protection devised by men and Governments may be affecting others. It is also natural to turn our minds away from these problems and to rationalise the situation.

That truth that human nature can be changed when facts are faced and when inspired decisions are taken is the great hope of this tottering civilization. Our temptation is to think in terms of mass movements and crowds - but the decisions which eventually will turn the tide are those made by individuals and then courageously lived out. The question mark which hovers over all: *Will we make them in time?*

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Pete McConnel	an old man, dignified, sincere
Janice McConnel	his daughter; mature, attractive woman ¹
Stanford McConnel	Pete's youngest son, employed in a nearby town
John Allright	an Official, very definite, stiff
Hermione Allright	his wife; basically kindhearted, indefinite
Jane Freeman	the wife of
James Freeman	a farming couple in the same district

ACT 1 Scene 1	The McConnel family home
Scene 2	The same, 2 months later, 3 days after Pete's death

ACT 2 A few days later in the Allrights' home.

ACT 3 Scene 1	3 weeks later in the McConnel home.
Scene 2	The same room, 3 days later

¹ The character seems based on Sister Alice Meyer, who cared for her people for many years in the village of Nieu Bethesda (& her father Piet Meyer) gentle, sophisticated *Coloureds*, forced to vacate their lovely home (bought & paid for by schoolteacher Piet) when *The Group Areas Act* was enforced after some years. RBK had befriended & tried to help them to no avail.

MY FATHER'S HOUSE

ACT I Scene 1

A Sittingroom, comfortably furnished, tasteful but very simple. Janice McConnel is in an easy chair, reading a book, when the door opens and her father, Pete, followed by her younger brother, Stanford, comes inside.

Janice Oh you are back at last, Pa - and safely. I worry when you go off to the city and stay away a long time. It tires you - and you must remember you are precious to us. Please, you mustn't overdo things, Remember that the doctor said that you mustn't get tired...

Pete: Yes, my dear, I get tired when I have to be amongst all that rush of people. And then to go up and down in lifts, which I do not always understand, to offices in those huge buildings. So different from the little town where we grew up and live. But I do not think I will have to go for a long time again. I was finishing off some important business today - and I want to tell you about it.

Janice Wait a little. I have the kettle boiling and I'll make some tea quickly - then we can talk. *(She leaves)*

Stan: Pa, you've had a long journey and you seemed to be a very long time in that office. You must be tired. Shouldn't you rest for a day or two? You know you've not been so well lately -it makes us all feel anxious.

Pete: But Stan, I must just finish off this business now. It has been on my heart for a long time now - ah, here comes Janice with the tea. I'll enjoy that. It'll perk me up! Then we can talk a little and after that I can relax.

Janice: I'm going to put a little extra sugar in your tea. You know they say sugar increases your energy! Now just sit there and enjoy it and don't let any serious business worry you, Pa. I think you often take things too seriously *(Carries tea across and offers a biscuit)*

Stan: Janice, you don't see the real issues these days clearly enough. I don't want Pa to worry, but we cannot let things just drift along. Anyway, pa, what is it that's worrying you?

Pete: Well, today I signed my Will and I wanted to tell you about it. I don't want to just leave things in the hands of the lawyers. They are honest men but they do not always understand just how things are in the family, and I want you to know my real wishes.

Janice O, Pa - I don't like to talk about things like that!

Pete: But there comes a time when we must talk about these things - in this family anyway, because of some of the decisions I have made. I want you to know what I would like to happen - everything cannot be explained in legal terminology. Behind the words there is a spirit and a hope which only I can explain to you.

Stan: Pa, you have always had a great hope - I'm a doubter.....

- Janice** Come now, Stan... Pa, we would like to hear what you have to say and we will try to act the way you would have liked us to
- Pete:** Janice my dear, you have always been a strength to me. Especially since that day when that mad, careless driver raced down this quiet street and knocked down your mother as she walked across it.
- Stan:** O God..! Terrible day. The arrogant bastard didn't even stop to see what had happened. And he never even got into any trouble. She was a good mother to us; I remember how she thought for each of us, and wouldn't listen to complaints about the others. I was watching through the window when it happened - and it was a shock I will never get over.
- Pete:** Yes, it was soon after we had moved into this house. And that made it all the harder to bear. We were very poor when we got married. Dad had come here as a skilled welder - but when he got injured, he was put off work. You two will remember the small mud-walled house with only three rooms we used to live in..
- Janice** Yes, and I remember how we had to get up early because we girls all slept in the Living-room - and we had to have all the bedding away and the room tidy and clean before the sun came up, just in case someone came to visit!
- Pete:** That's right. Your mother was very particular. She worked hard. She liked nice things but only bought what was absolutely essential. And we saved all we could! I used to put it in the Post Office Savings Account. How slowly that grew! But the family grew too - three girls and two boys. Stan here, being the baby, was loved by all!
- Janice** I remember - in the Summer we never wore shoes. We were allowed into school in bare feet - and after school we used to paddle in the water furrows on our way home. . . I remember them as fun days
- Stan:** One day was not so happy for Betty when she dropped all her books in the water and old *Grump* made her stay in after school 3 days in a row!
- Janice** And as soon as we got home, Ma whipped off our school clothes and put us into old dresses to play in. Those were happy days. Stan was such a caring boy too! He used to pick bunches of wild flowers and bring them home to mother!
- Stan:** You're trying to make me out a softy!
- Janice** Nonsense! I don't think caring for people makes one soft! If really gives character.
- Stan:** Well, there are some people I don't care about any more and they will find that out one of these days!
- Janice** O, Stan, you say hard things sometimes. But Mother was good, she taught us what it was to be clean, careful and constant!
- Pete:** After many years of saving and denying ourselves all kind of luxuries - you kids were not always happy about this - we were able to buy this house. I took out all our savings and we even had to borrow a little. But it was a proud day when we moved in here, with title deeds to prove ownership.

Remember how we invited many of the family and friends to a special Sunday dinner - and we all went to Church in the afternoon. We thanked God for helping us to buy this home and prayed for His blessings on the house.

Janice I remember the dinner - Betty and Stan both ate too much pudding and had a pain afterwards!

Stan: Janice, why do sisters always remember such silly things? I don't remember that at all - but I do remember we had many happy days here. Ma so busy getting the house just as she wanted it.... But we had to work hard after school. We had to help lay out the garden, dig big holes for new trees, work on the fences. Often I had blisters on my hands!

Pete: Maybe, maybe - but hard work never did anyone any harm. It is being without work which is the terrible thing. Besides, when people don't know how to work with their hands, their heads often lead them into false, dangerous ways.

Janice Well, now this house has become the family home. We all love it. The trees in the holes than Stan and Johnny dug are big and bearing fruit. Before mother left us so suddenly, she made a real home of it - and even now, though the others are married and live far away, they come back here and they all say it is like a lighthouse in their lives.

Stan: It has been a great achievement, We can be proud our parents bought the house and established such a sense of family. We can stand our ground now.

Pete: Yes, there is much to be grateful for. I say every day that God has been good to us. And it is the future of this house that I want to talk about. I signed my Will today and left it to you, Janice.

Janice O. . . . Why me?

Pete: You have cared for me since your mother left us so tragically, and I know you will care for the house the we liked to have it. Though it be in your name and you will be the owner, in a way it is a kind of trust too. I hope you will keep it in such a way that others of the family, like Stanford here and his wife, can come for Christmas and at other times for holidays. They like to get away from the rush and noise of the cities where they work. Stanford, I hope you understand.

Stan: (*Softening a little*) Yes Pa, I think you have been wise. We all trust and love Janice and look up to her. We know she'll care for all of us. She always does.

Janice (*A little tearful*) This is such a surprise. I would want nothing more than to keep this house and to treasure it. To look upon it as a home for the family. But will the others understand. I don't really want anything for myself.

Stan: They'll understand. I'll make it my business to tell them. They cannot be here today, but I am sure they will be as happy about Pa's decision as I am.

- Pete:** Everything else I have - which isn't much - is divided equally amongst the others. The house took so much I wasn't able to save much after we came here. But you are all educated, you all have jobs, you know and care about the importance of work and responsibility.
- Janice:** *(overcome and sobbing a little)* I'll do my best. I am just an ordinary girl and this seems such a big thing. Pa has been good to us and we'll never forget that. This will be a family home - and I will do everything I can to keep it that way. Thank you Pa, thank you for all your care over the years for us. In my work as a nurse among the people, I realise everyday how important it is for families to care for each other. Where they do, there is stability and peace. Even if they have very small homes - they need the security of a house which is their own.
- Stan:** *(Sneering a little)* Well, not every McConnel is safe in their home!
- Pete:** *(troubled and anxious)* Stanford, why do you say such a thing? We have the Title Deeds to this house. This will be secure for all time. Well, I've talked over what I wanted to. You both understand and, if I don't see the others soon, Stanford will explain my wishes and feelings. I will go and rest a little. *(Leaves the room)*
- Stan:** *(Looking at the door as he closes it)* It's not easy to talk about these things. It's almost as if the old man has a foreboding.
- Janice:** Stan, I am glad you have been here today. I will want you to help me in this very big responsibility. This house is a trust, a stable centre to which the family can always come.

CURTAIN

ACT I _____ Scene 2

The same room, two months later. Stan and Janice are together. She is dressed in mourning. Pete McConnel had been buried 3 days before

Stan: Sis, I'm glad I could get leave to be here for these few days. It's only 3 days since the funeral, but I must take off soon and get back to my job. It will not be easy to adjust to living alone here.

Janice: No. I miss Pa so much *(sobs)* but I have my work and that takes a lot of time and hard work. In the off times I can work in the house and do some things in the garden. Pa loved the garden - I don't want it to go back in any way. I'll . . . *(she is interrupted by a knock on the door.*

Stanford goes to the door and ushers in a visitor dressed in a dark business suit, holding a file of papers)

Janice: Good morning. Take a seat and I'll bring us some fresh tea.....

John Allright: No thank you. I am John Allright of the Planning Office. I have come on important official business. It will not take long. You are Janice McConnel?

Janice: Yes.

John: Your Attorneys, Wilson and Hocht have just informed you that you have inherited this property from your father?

Janice: Yes. They were here yesterday. My father bought this house 20 years ago and he willed it to me. But he told me before he died that he wanted me to keep it with an open door for the rest of the family.

John: I have come on behalf of the Planning Department to inform you that no McConnels can live in this area. This property cannot be transferred to you.

Janice: What do you mean?! We have lived here for more than twenty years. We have the papers which gave father freehold of the property!

John: But it is against the Law. No McConnels or any of their relations may live in this part of the town. So it is quite clear: under this law you cannot get transfer.

Janice: *(stunned)* I have inherited it. My father paid for it. He slaved to be able to make it his own. I know he really did it for us. We have every right to stay here - and we will stay!

John: You cannot go against the law. No McConnels may stay here. I have to warn you that you must vacate this property within 30 days from today.

Stan: Good God! What are you saying man? That we have to walk away from our own property? That my sister here is to be thrown out on the street when she has been left, honourably and honestly, our family home?

John: O, we will pay compensation. We pay well. You need't worry about that.

- Janice:** (*furious*) Money? Money! Do you think money can take the place of a home? My father's home! He earned it, he cared for it, he built it into what it is now. It may not be very grand but it is good and well built. No. No. NO! I will never leave this place!
- John:** The Law is the Law. It must be obeyed. It is not good trying to argue with me. I have been appointed to uphold and enforce the law. The simple fact is that you have to go. You are a McConnel and there is no way but the way out.
- Stan:** What Laws are these? Ours is supposed to be a Christian country! How can there be a law which says, just because you are a McConnel you have to get out of your lawful home?
- John:** Young man, do not stand there and question the leaders of your country. The laws have to be obeyed. Laws are made in the interests of everybody.
- Stan:** Everybody? Ha, Ha! I suppose this law is in the interest of Janice and of the McConnells? We are to be thrown out of the house, our property to be confiscated, stolen from us by law? Lawful theft, I suppose you can call it! It is unjust - it is
- John:** (*interrupting, very stiff, very formal*) Be careful! I will report you to the authorities if you talk like that!
- Stan:** (*incensed*) Carry on! Report me. So these are the laws of your so-called Christian country! For a long time now I have been seeing the need for a new way. I had some doubts, but now...! No, I will go all the way. We must have something different!
- John:** (*turning toward the door*) You will have the valuation of the property within a few days - and a month in which to make your arrangements and get out. (*he leaves*)
- Janice:** (*weeping softly*) I will not go. I will not go! I do not want their dirty money. I never thought such a dreadful thing could happen. And I was just beginning to think I could take on life again...
- Stan:** Yes, I should have warned you. I suspected that there was going to be some difficulty. They have been pushing at us for a long time.
- Janice:** I am stunned! I just cannot believe it - it feels like a nightmare.
- Stan:** O, it is real enough, This is the world we live in these days. It needs to be re-organised. You should join us. This is going to be fresh fuel for the fire! Good!
- Janice:** Stan I don't understand what you are talking about. It is not the way. But I feel hurt. This is cruel, after all our father and mother did, all they sacrificed, all the love they put into this place! It is devilish!
- Stan:** Your Minister talks on Sunday about loving God and turning the other cheek! I believe we have done that for too long...
- (*There is a sharp knock on the door. Janice opens it and James and Jane come inside. Jane carries a little cloth-covered basket*)

- Jane:** Good morning Janice, 'morning Stan. We came in from the farm this morning. We have just heard of your Dad's death and wanted to tell you that we are thinking of you and grieving with you at his going. I brought in some fresh farm eggs and a pound of butter. They may come in useful.
- Stan:** It's a bad morning - nothing good about it at all.
- Janice:** No Stan! Thank you Mrs. Freeman. It was kind of you to come and the farm produce will be most welcome. I haven't been able to get things all that organised - now I don't know if I ever will..
(weeps quietly)
- James:** I am sorry. I hope we did not come at a bad time, but I thought it might be helpful if we came. I know that, when I lost my mother a year ago, it was those who had suffered too, who could help me the most and bring understanding.
- Jane:** We all respected your father for his integrity and the way he cared for all.
- Janice:** Please feel welcome! I do appreciate it.
- Stan:** Well, at least it is preferable to the visitor who left just before you arrived.
- James:** Who was that? What happened?
- Janice:** He was from the Planning Office. he came to tell me that I could not inherit the house - which my father left me in his will
- Jane:** But why on earth? Is there a big debt on it? Or what is the matter?
- Stan:** No, there is nothing owing on the house. It is freehold and all paid for. It is something we can do nothing about - unfortunately Janice was born a McConnell.
- James:** So What?
- Stan:** So the Law! The law which says that no McConnells can live in this part of the town.
- Jane:** How terrible! How awful! What did you say? What are you going to do?
- Janice:** I said I would not go. he offered me money; said the house would be well valued. Money is nothing when you lose your home, lose the sacrifice, the faith, the love of Ma and Pa. Money cannot grow trees and flowers in your own way. Their spirits live here. It is all so hateful!
- James:** We can understand how you feel....
- Stan:** No you can not! You can't because you know this would not happen to you and to the farm your father left you. You are forever above that sort of thing.
- Jane:** No Stan, you are wrong. We can feel, and this is terrible injustice. I have injustice with every fibre of my being. When I see it, it makes me bitter. Yet I know that bitterness is not the way. I often have to fight the bitterness I feel for others.

- Stan:** There is a way to answer this problem. A quick way. Karl Marx wrote about it - from each according to his ability; to each according to his needs. A brotherhood of man - when your name or your race will not matter, but your ability will count.
- James:** Nice words! But there is another factor needed to make it work. There are countries that have tried it without the extra factor - and millions have ended up in Gulags and behind barb wire.
- Stan:** You can talk! But I have known for a long time that it would not go well with us. When that bastard, excuse the description - killed my mother through his own careless driving and got off with a light fine, the truth entered my heart.
- James:** We understand I know your outlook can be justified. But we need to find another way. We have glimpsed it. that is why Jane, who is by nature intense and sensitive lets bitterness rise to the top sometimes - but, as she says, it is not the way.
- Stan:** Pa believed in God's goodness. He tried to teach us these things too. Janice here and some of the others just accepted it - but I see too many folk talk piously, walk to Church in their best suits and hats - but are blind to the suffering of the simple people. We McConnells know all about that. It is these people who light the long, slow-burning wick of hate!
- Janice:** Sssshh Stan - Pa would not like to hear you talk so ugly. But, Mrs Freeman, I want to believe in God. I want to be a Christian, but these things make it difficult - if only Mr. Allright could see things in a different light, he could help.
- Stan:** That man! As hard as nails. He needs help himself, anyway
- Janice:** What do you mean? he seemed very sure of himself and satisfied too.
- Stan:** My wife, Maria, knows what goes on around town. She as the women need to be careful. Flint McConnel's sister, that lovely, innocent girl - he took her to Mackies' Hotel for two days. Flint is furious and walks around with a gun in his pocket. But it's getting late. I must go fill my car and get home early tomorrow. *(Leaves the room)*
- James:** Janice, you have every reason to be bitter, and so has Stan. But it is not the way. That man is in great need, according to what Stan just said and what you told us this afternoon. But it may be you can help him to find a better way.
- Janice:** *(shocked)* Me! I hate him and people like him.
- Jane:** You are being honest anyway. Have you thought what those deep feelings in you have done to Stan? You have tried to smooth them over, but there has remained deep-seated bitterness.
- Janice:** I know that you want to say to me that I must love those who persecute me. But love? How can I love them, when all I have try to do is being pushed out of my house? *(weeps again)*
- Jane:** Real love is not sentimental or fearfilled. Sometimes it is like Iodine spilled over a raw wound - but it is a great cleansing force.

Janice: *(disturbed, talking as she slowly thinks)* O God, what can I do? I tried to do right, but I have failed so often. Stan, such a simple, loving little boy, has grown into a man filled with hate, working with the subversive forces. It is true that hating Allright will not bring any answer to my problems, our problems. Hating one man cannot. Perhaps there is another way - but can it be possible? If so, I must find it, soon. All I have built on has crumbled.

CURTAIN

ACT II Scene 1

A modern shiny living room, new showy furniture. It is Saturday morning, 3 weeks later. John Allright is sitting with a glass of whiskey in his hand. He is strained and stiff. Mrs Allright comes into the room. She is somewhat ill at ease.

Hermione: John, why are you drinking whiskey at this time of the morning? I think you are using too much of the stuff these days

John: Nonsense Hermione. Why are you always nagging me? I am an adult now without having to ask permission for what I do and drink. I have difficult things to face and important work - very important work to do. I deserve a little upliftment from time to time.

Hermione: I don't think that will lift you up. It will rather lift us both own. You know the children are beginning to notice it too.

John: I don't believe they think about anything. They must know a little drink is the acceptable thing for mature and responsible people.

Hermione: Well, the children have their own ideas. They don't always see things the way we would like them to. You know they are teenagers now, and, - well, they say "*If Daddy can drink whiskey, then we can drink beer*". And sometimes they bring it into their rooms.

John: Oh, you are a nag! I get tired of it. The children must be told what the rules are and they must obey. I was whipped when didn't do what my parents told me to do. And they had hard shamboks in those days! Maybe I haven't whipped our children enough.

Hermione: John, don't go on like that. It is awful to talk of our children in that way. Why do we get so divided? O, John, I am not happy these days.

John: You have more or less everything you ask for. This new furniture - you said that it would make you happy when we looked at it in the shop. If cost a small fortune anyway.

Hermione: O, I don't know. There is something wrong and I don't know what it is. I do not seem to have a purpose - besides that of getting the house cleaned and cooking meals for the family.

John: Oh help! What more do you want? Can a woman ever be satisfied?!

Hermione: Please John, don't go on so. Let's just forget it - perhaps it is all my fault. Perhaps I am wanting something that is just not possible, just an idealist dream. Anyway, John, I'm expecting some visitors to tea in few minutes.

John: *(Emptying his glass with relish)* Who?

Hermione: Mr. and Mrs Freeman. You might know them.

John: No, I don't know them at all! Where're they from?

Hermione: They farm in the district. I have known Mrs Freeman - Jane - for some time now. She 'phoned to say they were in town for the weekend. I invited them for tea this morning. They are folk I wish we could get to know better.

John: (*Irritably*) You know I don't like meeting strange people! Our old friends are quite good enough for me. They have the same ideas as I have. Some of those farmers are not as responsible as they ought to be. Just look how they want to control everything with their Control Boards!

Hermione: What a horrid thing to say! I grew up on a farm and

John: (*breaking in*) Well, did I not say some farmers are not as responsible as they should be? Some farmers' daughters . . .

Hermione: (*quickly*) Please John, I do not want to quarrel with you now. Mrs Freeman is a friend I often meet when she comes to our Bible Study Group on Fridays.

John: Well, I just hope they don't come here with a lot of new-fangled and goody-goody ideas! My old pals and the ways I know are good enough for me.

Hermione: Please John, they will be guests in our home (*the doorbell rings*) I'm sure that's them (*goes to the door and ushers in Jane and James Freeman*)

Hermione: Do come in. Meet my husband. James, this is Mr. and Mrs Freeman from the farm Onbetwis.

John: (*comes forward a few steps, shakes hands stiffly*) Good morning. Please sit down.

Hermione: You will have some tea won't you? (*pressing a bell*)

Jane: Thank you, yes. Tea after the drive will be very welcome. The farm is 40 kilos out and the road is not always good. It was not good today!

James: It is time they put the scraper over the road again. We pay the taxes but do not always get the service we are promised at election time! (*a smartly dressed maid comes in with tea set nicely on a tray*)

Jane: What a lovely tea Service - and how quick your maid is!

Hermione: Yes, Annie has been with us a long time and she really is good.

John: So you are in town for the weekend?

James: (*looking across the room, spots the empty glass*) Yes, it seemed right to be in for the weekend. The Agricultural Show is on. Besides, I have been invited to serve on several committees in town. I need some time to catch up.

Hermione: So you do get quite a good idea of what needs to be done in the town and district? It must be very interesting.

James: It is. There is a good deal which needs to be put right. A great deal of new planning and thinking is needed. This is a community with problems.

Jane: James comes home very disappointed at times!

John: I don't know why that should be - we are a happy, progressive community. Very united too. Nearly all are Church-goers and the Churches are full on Sundays.

Jane: Last time we were in town, we went to see Janice McConnel and her brother.

- John:** *(visibly startled)* You went into the McConnel house? Whatever for? She is a difficult person, I must say. *(hides his glass behind the flower vase next to him)*
- James:** Do you know her well?
- John:** She's a McConnel - I'm not likely to know anyone like that well. They are a lot on their own.
- Jane:** But you just said the community is united. It does not sound too happy that way to me!
- John:** *(a little flustered)* Well - each has his place. That has been the way things have always been - and a good tradition too. I respect the old ways and am not for some of these new ideas which are being put around. I can't stand Socialism - which is what some of the young folk are really getting at - though they don't call it that.
- Jane:** Don't you really think we need a new spirit to blow through our district? Do you think the old ways are bringing co-operation to people - all the people?
- Hermione:** No they are not! The world is divided and we are just as divided here, too, in this town. John says "Just apply the laws strictly and all will be well". And so he is taking steps to get the McConnels out.
- John:** That is my duty...
- James:** So that will bring unity, security, peace, prosperity?
- John:** The laws must be respected. Law is the basis of a stable society.
- James:** Just laws are to be respected. But laws to maintain our prosperity, our position, our privilege and which is enforced at the cost of others' property, rights and privileges, could be a cause of an unstable and unsafe society.
- John:** You are going a bit far now. You are calling into question State laws?
- Jane:** No, that's not what James is saying. What he is saying is a simple, general truth. But there is another way. We found it was so on the farm. Tell them about it, darling.
- James:** I had very strict rules for my staff. They had to arrive on time and had to obey orders without question. I decided what was good for them and what time they should be on and off duty. I planned where and how their houses should be built. My laws were strict, but, I felt, quite fair. Then I realised one day that I was not thinking of them as "people" but as "hands".
- Hermione:** What a deep truth! Don't we all do that in a way? Like I think of Annie.
- John:** Well, not all people are the same. Some need strict rules or they get uppity. I stand by the law as the way to ensure progress.
- James:** Well, I called my men together and told them I was beginning a new way. I apologised for my dictatorial ways, and said I wanted to plan with them in future.

- Jane:** And it worked wonderfully. A new sense of teamwork began to grow. Everyone feels that he or she has a part on the farm. We believe this could happen all over. Not only on farms. Then you would not need harsh enforcement of the laws.
- Hermione:** She is right, John. I have always felt there is something wrong. I felt there must be something wrong in having to push out the McConnells. *(turning to the Freemans)* But John is so sure that this way will bring security and keep up the values of our property.
- Jane:** Bravely spoken Mrs Allright! There is a need for us to see what needs putting right. I am sure we are meant to build a united society. We believe everyone can have a part!
- Hermione:** How I wish we could do something like that. I long for something and I don't quite know what. So often my life just feels empty. I work for Charities, but, well - something is missing. Real hope?
- John:** Come, come Hermione. Keep your feet on the ground. We have to deal with real things as they are.
- James:** *(looking straight at John)* Be honest Mr. Allright. You are not happy either. You are strained and worried!
- John:** *(shocked at such straight talking from a stranger, almost drops his teacup)* Hermione! Have you been talking behind my back? Have you been saying I am under strain or rot like that?
- Hermione:** *(angrily)* Of course not! You know I don't talk about you to others!
- James:** *(holding up his hand for peace)* No, Now! I didn't want to start a family argument. But, you see Mr. Allright, to anyone who as found the way to deal with strain in himself, it is easy to recognise in someone else. *(laughing)* Even my sheep recognise each other a long way across the veldt!
- John:** *(sulkily)* I'm not a sheep!
- James:** I'm just trying to say I used to be strained and stiff and anxious, and, like you, I began to drink earlier and earlier in the day. *(points at the partly hidden glass)*
- Jane:** That's true. I was so worried. And we used to have such awful fights. I even threw a teapot at him once!
- John:** *(interested, in spite of himself)* What made the difference?
- James:** I decided to accept the challenge of a friend - to stop running my life in my own way, and listen to God for direction in all things.
- Jane:** We decided to try it together - it was the most wonderful experience of our lives.
- Hermione:** *(eagerly)* Can anybody? I mean anyone who's not especially religious?
- Jane:** Of course! It is not special. Anyone can make an experiment. *(she walks towards Hermione as John walks closer to James, both couples start to talk quietly together as the Curtain falls)*

CURTAIN

ACT III **Scene 1**

Back in the McConnell Sitting room. Janice is moving around, putting things in their places and looking unhappy, despite having heard nothing further about the eviction order. Stan comes from the inner room with a suitcase, clearly planning to leave.

Stan: Now I must go. I hope it will go well with you here. Have you had the marching orders in writing yet?

Janice: No. I've heard nothing more. But I wake every morning with a deep depression in my heart. I find it difficult to begin the day.

Stan: Well, I guess it will come one of these days. You better call me to help when it has to take place. Many will come and watch as we take out all the furniture. Each piece bought at some cost!

Janice: Oh don't be so hard, Stanford. I need you to help and understand, not to mock!

Stan: Well, all you do is agree that we must take what is coming to us. But I must warn you about these friends of yours - the Freemans.

Janice: Don't be silly Stan. They are fine people and they are doing all they can to build unity and understanding between people. God knows, we need it badly enough!

Stan: Ha! That will be the day! They are on the wrong track - but **our** plans are maturing. We will bring about the things this country needs....

Janice: Oh, Stan, don't get mixed up with these dangerous things. Please!

Stan: Janny - you hate this whole set-up too!

Janice: (*deeply perturbed*) O my, what has come out of it all? I have tried to do right - and have done it wrong. But I wanted only the best for my family and you, Stan, have accepted the road of bitterness.

Stan: I have put my feet on the road to victory and will never turn back

Janice: That is a dangerous way to think, to go. Stanford, for Pa's sake, don't do it!

Stan: How can you say that when that man Allright comes and orders you out of your own house? He says go! But I tell you, he won't last long! Not only Flint McConnell is out to get him! But it is not just the man - it is what he represents!

Janice: There must be another way. Is this the price I have to pay? All of us have to pay for the years I have lived with both bitterness and fear in my heart crushed down and hidden. I wanted you, Stanny, who I love so much, to grow into a man who could set a standard among our people. Like Ma and Pa did in their time. And so I prayed and tried to do the right things - and hid the hate I had for all those who have been persecuting the McConnells for years and years.

Stan: I never heard you say anything like that before - but we felt it. Your deepest feelings are expressed through your spirit rather than your words and actions. But for me it is too late - we are going into action.

- Janice:** Stan, Stan, O my dear brother, do not take this road. It is dangerous and it does not bring any answer. There is no real peace through violence.
- Stan:** Things have gone too far. There is no other way.
- Janice:** Pa would not let you talk like that - or even think like that! Remember his gentleness, his patience, his marvellous loyalty.
- Stan:** Yes, Pa was a good man. But he lived in the last generation. We are not going to stand on the side-lines any longer. We want to see change and it must come soon. Men like Allright with their inflexible attitudes simply recruit new volunteers for their brotherhood. That is one reason why I hope Flint does not have a chance to pull the trigger too soon. But the slow burning fuse of hate is near the detonator now!
- Janice:** Stan, let me plead with you. Do not meet with those chaps anymore, Think of Maria and your two little children. They need you. You can set them up on the road to an education. They are so young, they can't manage without you.
- Stan:** Jan, it is no good. It is because of them I must do what I am doing. I don't want them to have to grow up in the circumstances that you have had to - and we all have had to face. Because we are McConnells, they can push us out here, and later will be there - and then there. No. It must end.
- Janice:** But Stanford. Think of Maria! She is so thoughtful, so careful in the home. Such a lovely woman. You should help her more there, and care for her.
- Stan:** Maria is loyal. She is very good, as you say. She does not see things quite the way I do - but she is loyal and doesn't demand that I pull out.
- Janice:** O, Stan, so often have I seen sadness and fear in her eyes.
- Stan:** No good, Janice. We are committed to the advance and we cannot stop now. We will not stop now!
- Janice:** I had no idea things had gone so far! I fear for you.
- Stan:** Don't worry, Sis. I must leave now - but they will never get me. They will not get me.

(He picks up his suitcase and leaves through the door. Janice sits down, with her elbows on her knees, her face covered)

- Janice:** *(she speaks, as to herself, but loud enough to be heard)* Dear Lord, what have I done? Show me the way! Is there any way to turn aside the violence threatening to erupt. And that my brother should be so deeply involved I am guilty for I nursed bitterness - justifiable bitterness, as I thought. But its consequences none can control. As Mrs Freeman said, "bitterness is not the way to the answer"; she also said "love is a great cleansing force". *(gets up, walks up and down clenching and unclenching her fists)* Yes, Yes, I will forgive them. I will accept the ruling and plan to leave this house. I will tell them. I'll tell Mr Allright. Love is such a misused word - not a general kindly feeling; it must have direction and purpose if it is to be alive, effective. I would do anything to save Stan; this means humiliation for me. I

have kept upright; I have not wanted to bow down to those who thought themselves superior; now I see my pride was blinding me. Pride and bitterness bound and blinded me. But now suddenly I see clearly - I know what I must do; where I must begin.

(she turns decisively and goes to the telephone upstage left, and dials a number)

Is that Mr Allright? Janice McConnel here. Mr Allright, I would be glad if you could come to this house and bring your valuations and details. I am sorry that I have been difficult and resentful. I have now decided to accept your conditions. (listens) In three days time, you say? . . . Thank you. I will expect you then.

CURTAIN

ACT III **Scene 2**

3 Days later. Back in the McConnel Sitting room. Janice is nervously puffing up the cushions and moving around the ornaments with no clear plan in view. There is a knock at the door - John and Hermione Allright enter.

Janice: *(surprised that Hermione has also come)* Good morning. Please come in. *(looks enquiringly at John)*

John: Thank you. Hermione asked to come with me this morning.

Hermione: I wanted to build a bridge. I am sorry I have never been here before. One doesn't do all one should, you know.

John: Your telephone call the other days was a surprise! I should really say, a shock. It made me think about what I was doing.

Janice: It was a hard decision for me. I suddenly realised that I had been going about things the wrong way. I nursed ill will and from it, evil things were growing. It became clear to me that the first thing I must do is to accept the ruling; that I should tell you I was willing to move now. So you have come to give me the valuation for the house?

Hermione: If it was only that, I would have not come. We also have made some very big decisions.

(there is a knock on the door. Janice opens it. James and Jane Freeman enter)

James & Jane (together): Good morning! Good morning all!

James: I thought the car outside was familiar - but wasn't sure. I am surprised to find you both here!

John: Miss McConnel phoned me 3 days ago and invited me to come value the house. And that made me . . . well . . . shook me in a strange way. When she said she was sorry for having been . . . er . . . difficult! There was something in the way she spoke!

Jane: That was a brave thing, Janice, what do you plan now?

Janice: I saw what was happening to my brother Stanford. He used to be the kindest hearted and happiest boy in the school. A real leader. He was always thinking of others. Now he is hard. I know tragedy lies ahead of things are not made different soon. It came to me that my hatred and prides stood between me and the love of God in Stan's life.

James: And so you phoned John here and told him to come take over the house?

Jane: You have decided this for Stan's sake?

Janice: More - more than that. Oh, I cannot tell you all, but if something does not happen soon, there will be a terrible tragedy.

John: It was the way Miss McConnel spoke. Suddenly something you said hit me. The way you said, so simply, that you had decided to find and follow God's plan for your life. If felt you said it in a clear, free way. You weren't mouthing platitudes. I wondered whether it will work with me. And it did.

James: It always does. Is that why you came today?

- Hermione:** That is why we are both here. There has been some very hard thinking and feeling in our home these last two days.
- John:** A major revolution, you might say! I felt I needed to review my whole life. What you had said, James, about the strain in me, is true. My traditions, my background, made me a respecter of the law. I practically worshipped it! I thought it was the way to keep the peace, and to build up the nation. I care about the nation. But suddenly it broke through to me... *(stops speaking, looks around doubtfully)*
- James:** You began to realise the law alone was not enough?
- John:** Yes that, but more. I . . .
- Hermione:** John, don't hold back anything. We need to make a clean break with all that is wrong, was wrong. We have decided to start all over again.
- John:** Oh, the terrible thing I suddenly realised.... I was champion of the laws made by man; I regularly mouthed the laws of God in the Church - and strictly applied the fourth Commandment, it suited me. The others, I set little store by. The Seventh I broke.... *(hangs head in shame)* ... with a McConnel girl more than once
- Hermione:** I was shocked and hurt beyond words when John told me. I wept and wept for hours, but afterwards I realised I had known there were wrong things in our married life, and all I could do was nag and demand. I was ambitious and thought a bigger house, and more clothes would buy me happiness, fulfillment. But it was all so empty.
- John:** I acted superior to all the McConnells, and I was sure I could do more important work than they ever could.
- Janice:** This is all so unexpected. Oh, it is more than I can grasp now. *(looks from one to the other)*
- Jane:** But Janice, you set things going. Why did you do it?
- Janice:** I suddenly realised that bitterness was destroying me, my family, the McConnells. I wanted to say to Mr Allright here, I was sorry for my hatred; that I had felt hurt for years because of the way the McConnells were being treated. In Mr Allright, I saw the very embodiment of this evil thing. I blamed him, but he was really only a cog in the terrible, merciless wheel of history which picks up all the old prejudices from the past and visits them with new intensity on the present.
- James:** Janice, from you we can learn so much. You have been hurt and now you have the courage and the power to forgive. That can build bridges - maybe it's the only way to build.
- Janice:** I hope it can stand the test!
- James:** But what is the next step, John, regarding the house?
- John:** Oh, I don't know. I am deeply perturbed. It is not in my power to change the law. I realise now - as I did not before - how this can affect Janice's future.
- Jane:** And all her family.....

John: There is only one thing I can do. I will draw up a petition and go round to all friends and neighbours, and my congregation, and ask them to sign it. A petition which asks that this family be left in possession of their home.

Hermione: You will need a lot of courage, John, as many will be critical and all will want to know what has happened to you to want to do such a thing.

John: I am ready to face the music. I cannot guarantee success. I cannot change the laws, but it is possible that, if all the community ask for it, another way can be found.

Janice: That would bring new hope to my people. I must let Stan know about this at once.... O, I wonder where he is now? *(goes to the phone and dials)* Is that you Maria? I have some important news for Stan. Where is he now? *(listens)* Not been in last night at all? *(listens)* You don't know where I can reach him? *(listens)* . If you see him ask him to phone me at once. At once! *(comes back to the group but does not sit)* I hope it is not too late. *(looks out of the window anxiously)*

Jane: Are you very worried about Stan? He seemed to be such a sensible man.

John: He holds a good position in his job. But he is a hard man to deal with. I have heard that some of his associates are not quite trustworthy.

Jane: Janice, I do hope you are worrying unnecessarily. You have been through such a difficult time lately, losing your beloved father, and this of having to vacate the house. We feel for you.

Janice: Thank you. You have helped me more than I can ever say.

James: Well, we have to go back to the farm again. We have been away longer than we really afford to be at this time of the year. But the Show is important to the community and we wanted to do our part.

Jane: Anyway, we will go back with happiness in this wonderful development.

John: I have stumbled onto a great truth. It is this: Unless we are obedient to greater laws than those made by men, our laws can never survive.

Hermione: You also said something yesterday which I felt was very important.

John: *(looking enquiringly at her)* I said a lot. Maybe I said too much. I spoke more than I usually do

Hermione: You said "Arrogance ignites Bitterness"

Jane: True - so true.

Janice: I feel I am now ready to accept what must be done. If I must, I will leave my father's house in peace.

(shouts outside, the sound of running feet. Stanford bursts into the room, dishevelled, hurrying from the back door of the house, with a gun in his hand. He stops for a moment, wild-eyed)

Stan: The Cops! The Cops - they're after me! They'll never get me! Never..!

(runs out of the front door, stage right. All stand looking alarmed in the direction in which he went. There is silence for a few seconds. Then the sound of a single shot. Distraught, Janice slumps into a chair)

Janice: Too late. Too late. Regular prayers were no antidote while the fatal poison of bitterness remained cradled in my heart.

FINAL CURTAIN

THE OTHER PATH

A SHORT SOUTH AFRICAN PLAY IN THREE ACTS

INTRODUCTION

History has prepared for South Africa the greatest destiny a country can have. But the glorious possibilities are hidden by the conflicts which have grown out of our development.

The seeds of greatness were sown by those first farmers when the Cape began to grow from a mere victualising station into a permanent settlement. Confusion of aims developed as White met Coloured and Black when they moved into the interior. Confusion increased when imperial and international conflicts were projected to this far off - but important - seaport, and Britain occupied it in 1795 to keep the French out.

Early in the 19th Century, British governors, already unpopular because of their failure to understand the needs of the Colonists, enforced the edict freeing slaves. This encouraged the already bitterly dissatisfied Afrikaner farmers (Boers) to Trek to the unexploited North. Here they were to face, and overcome, great physical hardships and become involved in fierce conflicts with the African tribes in the interior.

Meanwhile, more than 4000 British Settlers had been unceremoniously dumped, with no training and inadequate equipment on the borders of the Eastern Cape. This was the meeting place of Whites moving East and the African moving West. Conflict was inevitable. Later the British leap-frogged along the coast and began to develop interests in Natal. Here they again came into conflict with the Boers, who had already occupied part of natal, and the Zulus, who were the strongest. and best trained and organised military force in the country.

The Boers suffered grievously when Piet Retief and his men were treacherously murdered by the Zulu leader, Dingaan, and avenged themselves at the epic Battle of Blood River, ensuring their foothold in the country. Some years later, the British were routed and humbled when, out of a force of over 1000 men at Isandhlwana, only 23 escaped the ruthless Zulu spears. The next day, Rorke's Drift was held, at great cost and immortal courage, by a handful of British soldiers.

Later the power of modern weapons gave the White man dominance in the country. In different areas Boer and British enforced Peace and the Black man began to accept some of the culture and values. Because they came from different backgrounds, Boer and Brit did not always see eye to eye. The discovery of diamonds and later rich gold reefs in the Transvaal, attracted thousands of fortune hunters, speculators and genuine businessmen from Britain and elsewhere.

Britain began to expand her dominion and enforce legal government on the sprawling and thinly populated country. The Boers wanted freedom from British domination and from the slavery of materialism. Part of that battle was fought out in the Anglo-Boer War (1899 - 1902). The peace was signed but has not yet been fully accepted in all hearts.

Since the early 1800's, missionaries from Britain, and also from other countries in Europe, began to teach the Bible and also to educate the Black and Brown people. They responded eagerly to the great Christian truths and began to learn industrial skills and adapt to Western Civilization. Increasing education, accepted later as State policy, created the urge for self-expression and political participation. The combination of Christian and State education produced many able and intelligent leaders, no longer satisfied to be only labourers or domestic servants. They began to make demands which cannot yet be fully met¹.

Yet every South African knows that the racial and colour conflicts which have come out of the past must be resolved in this generation. That knowledge has spawned dozens of political theories, purporting to bring peace, co-operation and security for all; but no political dispensation alone can meet the demands of the complicated social structure which has grown in this country.

The path we are travelling leads only to destruction. We need to find another way. This happens when men and women decide, one by one, to free themselves from the iron bonds of racial pride and prejudice and seek the *source* of all freedom - the power of God. That South 'Africa has in its diverse people and its background the potential to reach out to such greatness is undoubted; if we *will* do this is the burning question and the challenge of our age.

I have written this short play to depict how some South Africans have, in actual fact, responded. The characters are fictional by the actions are from real life. My prayer and hope is that enough will accept this step onto "the other path" to lead our country to its God-ordained destiny.

¹ This was written 1977, nearly 20 years before the Republic became a true democracy

THE OTHER PATH

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Jack Western	farmer, normally quiet, almost taciturn, rigid of thought
Lydia Western	Jack's attractive wife, thoughtful, slightly insecure
Fiona Western	their lively daughter. in early 20's
Jaap Widman	farmer. Assertive with strong political views
Marie Widman	his wife, a quiet, solid homemaker
Jannie Widman	their sturdy, open-faced son; mid-20's
Marta Feitjies	<i>Coloured</i> domestic who has worked for years for Westerns
Abram Mgoli	Foreman and tractor-driver on Widman's farm

ACT 1	The Bar of a country hotel, Saturday evening
ACT 2 Scene 1	The next day, in the Westerns' Living Room
Scene 2	The same room, 2 weeks later
Interlude	3 days alter, in the Veldt on the Widman farm
ACT 3	Some days later, on the verandah of the Widman's farm

ACT I

A Bar Lounge in a typical Country hotel. A group of a dozen or so talking loudly, laughing; some still in tennis clothes. Calls for drinks. The Westerns and Widmans move to a table, left front, where a young waiter takes their order.

Jack: Yes, some more drinks - and quick my boy.

Jaap: Now what will you all have? Same again? Beer for two. Beer shandy for Lydia and, of course, whiskey for the Engelsman!

(Fiona, Jannie enter stage right, dressed smartly, obviously on the way to a party)

Marie: Oh, there you are! We were missing you!

Lydia: You both played so well; if it hadn't been for that blistering backhand of Jannie's in the 10th game of that final set, the whole match could have gone the other way!

Jack: Mmm . . . looks like you're all dressed up and nowhere to go?

Fiona: Oh no! You're wrong. We have got somewhere to go - and we're on our way. Off to Palmiet for the evening - dancing and fun...

Jannie: I'm planning to take the old Ford bakkie, Pa?

Jaap: Ja; but none of your hell-bent driving. Roads are tricky after the rains.

Fiona: You all look so serious; you look like you're getting ready for political arguments again. Why take it all so seriously! Leave it to the Government and those people. We don't worry - we just have fun.

Jannie: Ja! These are the days of our youth and all is lovely in the garden! Some of you are always trying to drag us into serious affairs. We say leave it to other folk - we'll just get on with the job.

Jaap: There are many things that need our attention, my boy. You can't just live an irresponsible life - not after all your years at University,

Jannie: *(a little sulkily)* Well, I do my work on the farm - but the weekends are for relaxing - so we will enjoy ourselves at Palmiet. All the young folk will be there, full of fun and song and music - and dancing!

Marie: Dancing?

Jannie: Ja - we hear there's going to be a live band and not just records.

Lydia: Fiona dear, is your dress not a little . . . um, . . . too revealing?

Fiona: Oh Ma! Don't be so old-fashioned! Don't you know we are moving into a freer way of living? We are happy to be able to meet our friends and have fun together. Don't be so stuffy or worry about us. We don't worry about anything - do we Jannie? Come on now, let's go. Goodnight all - and don't get too serious!

Jannie: I'm glad we managed to scrape the match - it gives us a good chance to win the Cup. Sport is important - it gives a good excuse to get away from the farm now and then... If not for sport and weekend fun and games, we would get serious too! G'night all!

(The young couple move off with a skip to their feet as they go; as they do so, the waiter is busy putting more drinks onto the table)

- Jaap:** Gosh, I'm really ready for that beer now! (*almost drains his glass in one draught*) After all that tennis I deserve a drink. Mike and Johnny were really on form for a couple of old men! (*the men drain their glasses and sign to the waiter for refills*)
- Marie:** Look who's talking! Mind you, you did darn well yourself. I was proud of the way you played. I caught a few of your games when Jack and I lost rather speedily to their first couple! You seem to be getting that devastating service back again! Watch out Wimbledon!
- Jaap:** Well, it's all that practice against you that did the trick and I must say, Lydia was in great form herself. You're really great partner, Lyddie!
- Lydia:** Thanks partner! At least we did our share in the match!
- Marie:** I just wish the youngsters would be more responsible.... Did we seem quite as irresponsible to our parents?
- Jack:** Not me. I was a model child and nobody in this bar can say different!
- Marie:** Ja - that's because nobody here remembers so far back!
- Jack:** Oh get off! I'm perfect and everyone knows that! (*he savours his drink elaborately and raises the glass*) I drink to my perfection...!
- Jannie:** Typical! How's your imported whiskey, man!
- Jack:** I don't know, Jaap, why you have to make snide remarks about my drink. It's just one of the many good things we English brought to South Africa!
- Jaap:** Many good things! I like that! You've tried to take away from us all we had, all we'd built up. Ag, you British have been the worst enemies this country has had!
- Jack:** Rot! Absolute tommy-rot is all I say! You Afrikaners have one-way minds. You turn it whatever way you want and forget the things we've done.... all you owe us.
- (*More drinks arrive and they eagerly enjoy them*)
- Jaap:** Owe you! Like what? You know its true that if our forefathers hadn't had the courage to trek, ja, the faith just to take the little they had with them - this wonderful country would never have been opened up.
- Jack:** That's what you say. But remember how we were just dumped in the Eastern Province - hostile country - with a governor who didn't give a damn what happened to us. If we hadn't sweated blood and taken root, the Blacks would have swept across the Cape from the Zuurberge and your links to the South would have been cut! That would have been the end of you!
- Jaap:** Then your people tried to take away our hard-won freedom, our independence. If it wasn't for the Voortrekkers, where would this country be? It's that kind of strength and faith that builds a volk.
- Lydia:** Come on now, you guys. We're enjoying a party. We won the match. So lets celebrate and forget all this politics....
- Jack:** Just a minute, Lyddie; Jaap must get to understand the truth. Yes, the Voortrekkers may have had courage. Maybe they did have standards - which most of you and your party no longer have! And don't forget the development done by us. We opened the mines.

- Jaap:** Ja, you were quick after the gold and the diamonds!
- Jack:** Maybe we were. But look how we laid out and built the railways. Now that really opened up the country! And what about the freedom of the press? That was all our work.
- Jaap:** And what does that do now? Divides us and tells a lot of lies! Who can read those newspapers and believe what they say?
- Jack:** Go on with you! They tell us many thing that your guys are hiding. They don't just sell us one line like the SABC!
- Jaap:** What do you mean - one line? It's the truth!
- Marie:** Kom, kom! Julle raak nou lelik. We don't need this kind of talk. Look, we've just needed each other on the court to beat Fynfontein. We need each other to keep this country on the right road. But, still, I agree with Jaap. The English, the Sappe¹, must wake up. See what is happening.
- Jack:** (*really aggressive now*) You too, Marie? This is too bad. Look, the Culture, the Business, the Educational system - all the things that make for Civilization - we brought them, Why can't you Boers just appreciate a little of that for a change?
- Lydia:** Jack! That's your fifth drink and I think you've had enough. I don't think this kind of talk helps anyone.
- Jaap:** You're right, Lydia. When Jack drinks five whiskeys, he is a very loyal Engelsman. He forgets that this so-called Liberalism, - this soft and sentimental handling of the blacks makes us suspicious. They don't know how to handle these things. We do! A strong hand . . .
- Jack:** You mean a Jackboot!
- Jaap:** (*undeterred*) It must be a firm hand. You have to understand the differences. Look, Ethnicity is important. That is the basis of our policy, which the whole world will understand and follow one day. If people are divided on ethnic lines, they will not quarrel or be suspicious of each other.
- Lydia:** Like you two now . . . ?
- Jaap:** (*Opens his mouth and closes it, looking from one to the other, temporarily at a loss*) But you heard on the radio that Ethnicity is something the sociologists are paying more and more attention to. They realise it can be at the bottom of the divisions and wars. If we see this and give it its place. . .
- Jack:** Then there will be peace, eh? How naive you people are. Peace will come with prosperity. That's what we've been telling you for a long time. Improve the working conditions, give people better education, better wages. Take away the laws that hold them down.
- Jaap:** Ag! You are dom! Do you think you can buy peace that way? No! It will only come from good political policies - and that's what we have: hard-nosed political action that's what's needed.

¹ The Official Opposition of the time, the **United Party**, had grown from the old South African Party, (SAP) called *Sappe*

- Jack:** Hard-nosed bullets - that's what you're talking about - and it won't be the politicians who have to face them either...!
- Lydia:** Oh, how awful you two are when you get like this! It's not getting us anywhere. I want to go home.
- Marie:** Ja. I think so too. That's the end of our evening out.
- Jaap:** You women must understand these are important things. Our country is in danger. We have to look at these problems!
- Jack:** All you people try to do is avoid the real problems by using more and more force. That's no answer!
- Jaap:** All your people advocate is surrender to our enemies and let them take over the country and destroy all that has been built over the years with the sweat and blood of our forefathers.
- Lydia:** Oh stop it! I'm going. I can't stand any more of this. It just goes on and on. What future for our children to have if we go on like this?
(she leaves)
- Jack:** *(gets halfway up to go after her, then turns angrily to Jaap)* It's your narrow ways and your hardness that does this!
(Jaap and Marie get up and leave without another word, leaving Jack to follow)

CURTAIN

ACT II Scene 1

The next day in the Westerns' Living Room. A pleasant room, tastefully furnished. The maid, Marta Feitjies, is busy putting things ready for tea. Lydia comes in, showing signs of unhappiness and strain.

Lydia: Oh, there you are Marta. Are you getting on all right?

Marta: Yes, Madam, I am almost ready if the Master comes for tea now

Lydia: *(sits down and watches Marta. Suddenly she speaks)* Marta, what's happened to you? You look so much happier. Not so worried as you always seemed to be...

Marta: Yes . . . Well, Madam, I'm looking at things in a new way.

Lydia: You used to go around muttering to yourself and looking so sulky. I've not known what you were thinking. What's happened?

Marta: Yes. Well...*(hesitates)*

Lydia: *(trying to draw her out)* What do you really feel about this country, Marta? As a Coloured, whose side are you on?

Marta: *(stung)* I'm not on any side, Madam. I have the blood of everyone in me. My grandmother's father was an African chief. She, herself, worked as a young girl for Mr and Mrs Donker of Strydfontein. They were good to her and she stayed with them. Mrs Donker taught her everything. She could cook and clean, make biltong and rusks; she could wash and iron and clean clothes so well! And Mr Donker was a good boss. So she grew up there. None went hungry on those farms the way some do today!

Lydia: But I suppose the men had to work very hard?

Marta: yes, and the women too, when needed. Work started before it was light enough to see the footpaths in front of the hut. The boss's children did not stay on the farm, they went off to University and Mr and Mrs Donker stayed on and farmed.

Lydia: By then your grandmother must have been a grown woman. Did she stay with them?

Marta: Our tradition is to be loyal. She stayed. Then one day she came back from a visit to her family and she found Mrs Donker had died. So all the work had to be done by her. But she had been well trained and knew how to look after things. . . . *(she stops)*

Lydia: Well, what happened after that?

Marta: Mr Donker was a good man; a strong man, a leader. *(she looks away)* But after that he became very lonely. Well after that my mother was born. *(she stays quiet for a while, overcoming an emotion)* Nobody ever spoke about the father - but mom was much lighter of skin than any in the family. All knew about but kept quiet. And hated.

Lydia: (*visibly shocked*) Is that true? That's a side of life I've never thought about! I suppose I've not wanted to think of it. . . . Oh, this country has so much that is good . . . but it misses so much that could be wonderful . . .

Marta: That's true Madam, but it's not too late. We can still find the other way.

Lydia: Do you really believe that Marta? I wonder . . . I wonder . . . After last night I feel desperate. (*almost to herself*) Two fine men, good farmers, with good families, yet they cannot find a way to work together. They can't even drink happily together! (*sound of footsteps in the hallway and she looks around*) Oh here comes the Baas. Marta, we'll have tea now, and . . . (*she seems about to say more.*)

(*Enter Jack, wearing farm working clothes*)

Jack: (*speaks rather bluffly to cover his rather shamed feelings*) Well, my dear, I've been checking the lambing ewes all morning, what with the men off for Sunday and all. I could do with a cuppa. How are you? Still a bit under the weather?

Lydia: Oh, Jack, don't be horrible. Last night was awful. Not the first time, but surely the worst. I'll never go to that bar again when you and Jaap are there. And it's awful for the children.

Jack: Oh, don't be so upset. We'd just had a little too much to drink. Anyway, the children weren't there. What's it got to do with them?

Lydia: You know that Fiona and Jannie have been going out together. . . .

Jack: Have they indeed? Fiona must keep away from that young Boertjie. He won't do her any good. I don't want to be mixed up with them, thank you.

Lydia: Jannie is a nice, straight young man. He works hard and he's well educated. You know how well he did at Stellenbosch.

Jack: So what! Must I accept him just because he's a Matie and played good rugby? The things that matters is what he feels about how the country should be run - and on that, he'll be the same as his father. They all are.

Lydia: Jack, you're just filled with these prejudices . . . and just because you had another fight with Jaap, you want to take it out on the children. How on earth can we build a better country like this? I wish I . . .

Jack: Well, it won't be better if Jannie marries Fiona. It will be worse. And that's flat!

Lydia: (*desperately*) Don't you care at all about your daughter and what she feels? Or just how you feel?

(*Jack takes his cup of tea and walks out. Lydia moves distractedly around tidying things. Marta comes in to clear the table. She is singing quietly to herself*)

Lydia: Marta! How can you sing when there's so much in such a mess? . . .

Oh I don't know what to do . . . What did you mean about a new way?

Marta: Well, Madam, it was about three months ago. Someone invited me to a meeting. It was in the Church Hall. There were many people there. Some young people spoke. They came from Europe and America, and

from this country too. They were telling of how they had begun to find a new way in their own lives. There was one Black man who told how he had earlier schemed to kill all the Whites because of his hate. And there were young whites who apologised for their selfishness, and told how they were ending that way of doing things.

Lydia: But are there really people who want to kill us or throw us into the sea?

Marta: There are many, Ma'am. Their hearts are filled with this hate. *(she hesitates, then goes on)* Mine was too.

Lydia: But how could you hate Marta? You've been so well looked after!

Marta: Well. . . .*(hesitates and does not quite have the courage to speak out)* These people

Lydia: But what was so different about these people? You and I, we've been brought up as Christians . . . Was this just Politics, with Black, White, and Coloureds together?

Marta: No, Ma'am, it wasn't politics. It was just that they seemed to have found a way where all of us could have a part.

Lydia: I don't like these goody-goody things where people get all worked up about Seeing The Light - but then take no responsibility for the country. It doesn't do any good and it never lasts.

Marta: But, Ma'am, it wasn't like that. They said we are **all** responsible for the country. One man said, "As I am, so is my country". When I thought about that, I saw that, if all South Africa was like me, it wouldn't be so good. I've always been blaming the Whites. Then they said the trouble is, we are all trying to put things right **our** own way, but that is really just selfish. They said that they had found that God had a plan for each one. Then I asked if they thought He has a plan for a Coloured girl like me.

Lydia: So?

Marta: Well, Ma'am, I thought there was something here for me to try so I did.

Lydia: But do you really believe all this?

Marta: Well, God did speak to me Ma'am. He told me to lose my bitterness and to care for the Whites. But not just that. He told me to care for some of my poorer relations, of whom I have been ashamed. I went to ask them for forgiveness - and they are beginning to get a new sense of self-respect down at the Squatter camp. . . .*(she hesitates again, then takes a deep breath, resolving to speak out)* And, Ma'am, I must ask you to forgive me too. I've sometimes hated the dirty work, but more, I hated the way you sometimes spoke to me - as if from a height - when you told me what to do. I felt you and the Master had everything, yet you quarrelled and used much of your money for whiskey - and I have to wash the glasses - while some of my people cannot even buy food or clothes. Some have to live in shacks. But, please, forgive me for my hatred...

Lydia: *(taken aback)* Marta , , I didn't know . . . I never I never thought you could feel like that. I . . . I'm sorry.

- Marta:** And I also hated and felt superior to many of my Black relations as I felt myself better than them. In this country, the paler your skin the easier it is to get work and be accepted.
- Lydia:** I never thought about things that way...! And you apologised for this?
- Marta:** *(wanting to help by getting onto safer ground)* Ma'am, Mr Jannie and Miss Fiona were at that meeting too. And the Mayor. He said a welcome to everyone. And I even saw Abram Mgoli, the *Voorman* on the Widmans' farm.
- Lydia:** Are you saying that Jannie and Mgoli were sitting in the same room?
- Marta:** Yes, but everyone seemed so interested in what was going on. They both asked questions.
- Lydia:** Marta, this is all so new to me. *(almost to herself)*: I know I need something. but how? How?
- Marta:** Well, Ma'am, these people. They said to me that, if you sit quietly and open your heart and let God speak in your heart, He will. They didn't try to tell us how to think or what to do - except listen to God (as they called it). They just said that He is the only one who knows.
- Lydia:** Oh . . . I don't know . . . It's all right for you
- Marta:** Ma'am, *(taking a small book from her jacket pocket)* I read some things in this book. They helped me know what is right. *(hesitatingly)* Would you like to see it?
- (Lydia does not answer, appearing lost in her own thoughts. Marta leaves the book on the table, picks up the tray and exits)*
- Lydia:** *(looks thoughtfully at the place where she has been, walks to the table and picks up the book, reads)* "We need men and women who will pay the full price of change, honesty and fearless leadership for our nations if the world is to be saved"... *(turns a page)* "The thing you have to decide is between God and you. Do it alone. Write it down if you want to. It is a deed, like the transfer of property - so you turn your life over to God, for full, complete direction"....

CURTAIN

ACT II Scene 2

Westerns' Living Room, Two weeks later. Slight air of disorder. Breakfast table is partly laid. Lydia comes in with a pot of coffee.

Lydia: *(calls out upstage)* Come on now Jack, you must have some coffee and something to eat. You really need it.

[enter Jack, troubled and unshaven, clearly under stress]

Jack: Oh, I'll try and have some coffee. But I don't think I'll eat anything.

Lydia: But Jack, whatever happened, you still have to be fit for the days' work and all this responsibility.

Jack: Responsibility! Oh, I've had enough. From when they phoned last night for all us Commandos to get into town and I rushed in, ready to do my share. God, now I'm sorry I went!

Lydia: But you had to! You'd signed up. And we've all got to do our share. I know none of us expected there to be a riot in our little Location².

Jack: It was terrible. They just hated anything White! Those children shouting slogans and beside themselves as they burned down their own school!

Lydia: Did you have to go right in? Did you have to shoot?

Jack: No. Thank God! It was a miracle, though, that we could stop things before we had to shoot. I take my hat off to the Police Major. He had guts and he wouldn't be rattled. Which is more than I can say about some of the others. Those buggers were just itching to pull the trigger.

Lydia: Marta and I just sat in the study and prayed. We didn't know what to do. We just heard some things on the radio, but didn't know what was happening. Neither the Police nor your Headquarters were prepared to say anything except that it was all under control and nothing to worry about.... as if that helped!

Jack: I just didn't know how bad those conditions were. You know, I've never had to go into the Location before. It's terrible! And, God, I've never seen anything like those children! Those kids were just out of their minds - like fanatics - and absolutely fearless.

[Marta comes in with a steaming bowl of porridge]

Jack: Oh there you are Marta. I'm glad you could stay with the Missus last night. It was a bad night.

Marta: Yes, Sir.

Jack: Did you know what was going to happen? Were you expecting trouble?

Marta: Well, Sir, I knew it might. Some of my family living in the Location have told me that there is a lot of unhappiness and there were people wanting to bring about violent change.

² **Location:** the areas where Blacks were allowed to live, as separate from the Town

- Lydia:** I wondered how I was going to live through last night, not knowing what was happening. Marta, you were such a help. I'm glad we've been able to talk this last week, or I don't know what I'd have done.
- Jack:** But why didn't you tell us how things were, Marta?
- Marta:** But Sir, you white men don't listen to us. You don't think what we say is important at all. You often laugh and make fun of the things we say - and that makes us afraid to speak in your company at all. But my brother . . .
- Lydia:** Your brother? Was he in that crows wanting things to change?
- Marta:** My brother - he's not afraid to speak. He says things and they sometimes get him into trouble. My mother especially, but all of us, sacrificed to get him a good education. I had to leave school early and get any job I could. We were poor. He was the youngest, but he was clever and worked hard. He got his Teacher's Diploma - and then a B.A through Correspondence Course. But even with all that, he could get no decent promotion. He felt these things deeply - especially when he saw white kids get jobs who had less qualifications.
- Jack:** Are you saying your brother has been involved in the unrest? Has he even being encouraging it?
- Lydia:** Jack! Don't be so insensitive! Can't you see Marta has deep things on her heart?
- Marta:** Yes, Ma'am! Deep. Very deep. That boy was fine and straight. He had great promise. We loved him, but the system was against him. He could never rise to his full potential - because he was classed as Coloured. He became frustrated. In bitterness he turned to drink for a long time. Mother and I prayed for him, and he was big enough to see drink was no answer. He loves this country, so he doesn't want to emigrate as some have done. But he says that new ways must come. A way where all can live together and benefit from the richness of different races - instead of fearing and hating.
- Lydia:** Did he go to the meeting too? The one in the Church Hall?
- Marta:** No. He turns his back on such things now, He says Black people need to stand alone. He is hurt. As I was. But it is difficult for teachers now, he says. They have to teach the children and the children have many questions. And in some books he has to use, are things in which he doesn't believe. But Willie, my brother, is a good man. He is a Christian at heart - if we could only build the right kind of bridge....
- Jack:** A bridge? Josh yes! A bridge! By God, Marta, you've said the right thing now! A bridge to those people who live down there. So near - yet they've been so far from us.
- Marta:** But Sir . . . *(obviously deeply stirred as she lets her real feelings out)* they just want to be thought of as people. Some people talk of giving us new homes, and roads and electricity. We need those. But we are people too, with hearts and minds and love in our families *(she begins to cry softly into her handkerchief)*
- Lydia:** But, why cry, Marta? Do you feel it so much?

- Marta:** *(sobbing)* Two of my family, my sister's boy and girl, have been picked up by the police and put in prison. They are not bad children. They only want what is right. But they say they will not wait any longer. They won't wait another generation with hat in hand to be recognised as people.
- Jack:** Marta, I want to help. Really I do. I think I know what you say. last night I saw that the things I've always talked of - better homes, better pay - would never be enough. But now... we need more than that. But how? How...
- Lydia:** Jack, that's just what I've been asking myself. I've wanted to talk about it, but been afraid you'd laugh at me. You know... last week I got on my hands and knees and asked God to show me the truth about myself. I saw how much superior I had felt to Marta. But now she is my friend. This can only go from one person to another.
- Jack:** Well, of course, I've seen the difference in you, Liddie. You've been like a new person these last few days. But I'd been afraid to ask you. After the last fight we had... But I don't know... Is this something where God...?
- Lydia:** Oh, Jack, I'm sure there is!
- Jack:** You know, after the horrors of last night; after all those things I saw and heard; those eyes looking at me with such bitter hatred, shining in the red light of the burning school - well, all I can say, if there is a God Who can do something. I'd be ready to try anything.
- Lydia:** There's so much you could do, Jack. We've got to build it together. Couldn't we try it? I'll back you with all my heart!
(Jack looks at the floor thinking. Suddenly he looks up)
- Jack:** I have stood back - I have blamed the Afrikaner. But I am as much to blame. My ancestors were responsible for many bad laws. I didn't care enough. But, by God, now, and with God's direction, I am going to take full responsibility. I will do everything I can to get the right spirit into the country.
- Lydia:** Oooh! Jack, if you are really going to live like that, I will have a whole different husband! I won't know you!
- Jack:** But you won't stop loving me, will you Liddie? I will need you more than ever...!
- Lydia:** Jack, I even loved you when you were insensitive and arrogant - I will honour and love you even more if you really stand up with courage and fight for this new spirit. But do you think there is still time?
- Jack:** I believe, if we accept the challenge there is a chance. To Hitler it looked as if victory was in his grasp when Britain stood alone. It is when we have the odds against us that the best comes out! Now the odds are bitterly against us - but I am going all-out. Thank God you are with - no - ahead of me!
- Marta:** I'm sure we can build a bridge, Sir. It won't be easy. Some people don't want it anymore. But it can grow. And we do need each other. I'm learning that. I'm sorry we couldn't do it before the riot... but that

would have been worse if some of our young people there hadn't stood for a new way, too.

Lydia: You mean - even with conditions as they are?

Marta: Oh yes. (*with dignity*) No one can take that right away from us. To be builders. Some whites make it very hard for us. And some of our own people attack us. But this is something no one can take away from us.

Lydia: Marta, we **will** help.

Jack: By God! Maybe it could work! There're so many things I've not seen. I've been so wrapped up in myself. Lydia, you've felt it. And Marta, you must have felt it too. God. . . forgive me for being so insensitive..

CURTAIN

INTERLUDE

[The scene is the veldt, a few days later. Fiona and Jannie are walking together. It can take place, downstage, in front of the curtain. They come in from Stage Left]

Fiona: Jannie, where's it all leading? All this unrest. The riots. What's the future going to be like? Is there one for you and me?

Jannie: This is our country. It's a good country and I love it. But often I wonder, too, what lies ahead. I often get afraid. One thing I'm sure of now - if anything is to work, there's got to be a new spirit. I think I'm beginning to see how.

Fiona: Oh, Jannie, but is there time? I don't know. It seemed straightforward at that meeting and I thought I caught a glimpse of something. But now, the riots and so much has gone wrong. I never knew there was such bitterness towards us. I was going to let all that stuff drift out of my life again - but these riots have made me want to think again about what we heard that day.

Jannie: I know. I've been shaken too. We all have. But somehow that decision to bet my life that God does know what He's up to; that He actually has a plan for me - well - a lot of the fear seems to have gone. I've got a new certainty inside. Somehow, I don't have to depend so much on what others do.

Fiona: But I'm so scared all our friends will laugh at us . . .

Jannie: That doesn't worry me so much now. Look, Fee, you and I have to decide what we're going to live for. We can go along with the crowd, make money, build a nice home with plush carpets, antiques and all - or we can say, "Whatever anyone else does, we're going to be responsible for building something new in this country."

Fiona: But having a nice house and being successful isn't wrong!

Jannie: No, but are we going to bow down and worship them? Because I think that, if we do, we may lose our country.

Fiona: Oh, I just don't know. Jannie, I get so scared of it all. It's too big.

Jannie: Of course you do. But . . . You know, when I first fell in love with you? It was at school that day when you read the poem that you'd written, to the whole school; when you won the Junior Prize for poetry. To me, as a matric boy, it had some kind of vision in it, looking away ahead. It went right into my heart, and so did you. I've never told you that before, have I? But I'll never forget that day, with sun streaming through the high window onto the school platform, and the quiet as you read. I thought, "Fiona has the courage to look ahead." Now . . .
(Abram Mtoli approaches from Stage Left)

Jannie: Oh look - there's Abram. Are you looking for anyone, Abram?

Abram: Yes, Baas Jannie, there's trouble with this tractor part.

Jannie: Trouble, trouble, everywhere trouble...!

Abram: *(looks at him, not quite knowing what he's getting at)* Yes, Baas, lots of trouble.

Jannie: How is it in the Township, Abram?

Abram: It's bad. There is hatred. The riots last week . . . My people are drinking the cup of bitterness, I was visiting my brother and the police broke into the house and made threats. They hit me with a baton *(shows the bruise on his arm)*

Jannie: Oh, I am sorry Abram. Were you hurt badly? Many bad things are done these days when people are afraid.

Fiona: It is all so bad.

Abram: Yes; I had hoped that maybe we did not have to fight. My school mate. my best friend, he is a headmaster, was only trying to speak the truth. He was trying to tell the Location Superintendent how people feel and what they needed. But they put him in the Van and we do not know where he is. His children are crying for him and for food. The Police just say they know nothing.

Fiona: *(covers eyes with hands)* Oh, what can we do? How can we help?

Abram: When our people are taken away like that, we get afraid. We know they often get hurt. They do not have a proper trial. This makes fear and suspicion grow in our hearts.

Jannie: Abram, do you think that, if the laws were changed, there would be understanding and peace and quiet like we used to have?

Abram: No, Baas Jannie. Things will never be the same again. Some of the laws are like dry sticks on the fire - they feed the flames of bitterness which are then fanned by evil men.

Fiona: Oh, how dreadful. What can we do Jannie, I'm terrified.

Abram: No, Miss Fiona, there is another way, there is another path. My people have warm hearts, they accept sincere friendship. They want to be treated with dignity. We could, still, find God's way for our country. We all belong here.

Jannie: I see what you mean. I have been guilty enough when I shout and swear at you Abram, and the other men. And tell them to hurry up.

Fiona: Can we change our ways fast enough? What can we do?

Abram: We do not want so much. We want to build our homes and have a better education for our children. We only want to "do what is just, to show constant love and live in fellowship with our God" and with all people.

Jannie: Good Heavens! Abram, you are quoting from the book of Micah! But what you say is what we all want. I understand, Abram. Or think I do. I saw you at that meeting in the Church hall a while ago. I've been thinking a lot since then, realising I don't know all the answers. One thing I've seen is that so many people like me have just been out for our own comfort and success. I've never let myself feel what others feel. I'm sorry Abram. I just want you to know that I'm going to try being different. And I'll need the help of men like you if I'm to do it.
(he holds out his hand. As they shake hands, Abram speaks)

Abram: I never thought I'd hear a man like you ask for my help in that sort of thing, Baas Jannie. You know I've felt so hopeless these days. Many of the young men do not really want violence. But then their hopes fade when they never hear of young white people with the courage to bring the changes that are needed.

Fiona: Oh, Abram, I've been standing here, trying to pull Jannie back from doing what God tells him. It's I who should be sorry. I've been so concerned with myself. In my heart I **do** want to find a way where we can trust each other and work together.

Abram: Miss Fiona, you give me new courage when you talk like that. Perhaps that's what I need too - to stand before my God and be able to say, "I've been true to what is right; I've not been a coward." But it won't be easy.

Jannie: Not it will be the hardest thing any of us could do.

Abram: But Oh, I'm forgetting about the tractor. If I don't find Baas Jaap, he'll be telling me all kinds of other things....!

(He walks off Stage Right; the other two exit Stage Left)

LIGHTS DIM DOWN TO DARKNESS

ACT III

Some days later on the Widmans' verandah. Jaap and Marie are enjoying a sun-down cup of good farm coffee. Jack and Lydia approach. Jack seems a little shame-faced

Jack: Naand Jaap, naand Marie! Hoe gaan dit met julle?

Jaap: Kom binne, man. (*teasingly*) En jy praat so goed Afrikaans!

Jack: Don't laugh at me now, Jaap! Look, . . . I'm sorry about that evening after tennis. I . . .

Jaap: Ag, man, moenie jy jou daaroor bekommer nie! We'd had a few drinks and people say things then.

Jack: Well, Jaap, it was a bit more than that. I'm not all that surprised now that men like you hit out at men like me. I've been so damned stiff-necked and I've felt deep down that being English made me a better man, somehow. It seems silly when you think of it, but I thought that, if only you were English, you'd be more reasonable! I'm sorry. I guess I've been pretty arrogant - not that I'm saying I agree with your politics!

Jaap: Man - I never thought I'd hear an honest Englishman!

Jack: No? Well, the riots have shaken us all up, I think. I begin to see how often I must have hurt people by not thinking what **they** felt. Lydia knows what I mean!

Jaap: But, man, what's this all about? I'm not sure I understand all this.

Marie: Kom nou, Jaap. This man is saying something important.

Jaap: Yes, well, maybe. But there seems to be a lot going on these days. I don't understand it at all. There was Abram the other day - he told me he was sorry for being bitter against us. Now what has he to be bitter about? Look at the way I've cared for him and his people on the farm; all we've done for them! He talked some nonsense about his father being the son of the Chief who had the freedom of all this country. Now, he said, his people were just street sweepers and house boys. Look at him though! Foreman on this farm - what more does he want? We helped him to be educated. Now he has a good job. As long as he works well he gets paid enough. What has he got to grumble about?

[Jannie and Fiona have come from Stage Left while Jaap blows off steam]

Jannie: I know pa. I've wondered this too. Maybe he wants a part in building **with** us. A part where he feels really needed as a man.

Jaap: No don't you come at me with any of your University ideas. I don't trust these "liberals".

Lydia: Oh, Jaap, I'm not sure I blame you. We've often talked so big, but when it comes down to it, we've lived for ourselves.

Fiona: Yes, Oom Jaap, Jannie has been helping me to learn so much these days. I didn't worry about the country. The next dance and the next party have been enough for me. I've not wanted to get involved.

- Jaap:** (taken aback by all these fresh angles, takes refuge in a change of tactics) Is that so. Well . . . and are you going to marry this Engelse meisie, Jannie? Is that it? Is that why you're looking so . . . so . . . ?
- Marie:** Oh, Jaap, You can't just ask Jannie like that!
- Jaap:** Oh - and why not? If my sin is getting so mixed up with these Engelse, then I can ask anything I like!
- Jannie:** Yes, Pa, of course I hope Fiona will marry me. I think you've known this for a long time. But it's more than that. It's
- Jaap:** Oh, son. I know. It's just that so much is happening here that sometimes I don't know if I'm coming or going. All this talk of change! Why do we need change? This is a good country. Our policy is good, our leaders are good . . .
- Jannie:** Pa, now don't get angry again. I'm not running down our people. I'm proud of them. It's just that, perhaps God wants to show us some new things - like He has done in the past. New roads to take. He's been doing it for me. We've got to move out in our spirits again - like our fathers did.
- Marie:** Jaap, Jannie is saying the truth. The old ways have meant a lot to us. But you remember the Dominee telling us last Sunday that the Lord always has new things to teach us.
- Jaap:** yes, well ... (*hesitates, obviously something on his mind*) Jannie, call Abram for me [*Jannie exits. Jaap turns to Marie*] This thing has been worrying me, worrying me. I didn't treat him right when he came to me the other day. I didn't understand why he should say what he said. I felt he had no right to speak to me like that. So I swore at him and told him to go - I wouldn't listen to such talk. I was angry because I didn't know what to do.
- Marie:** Abram will understand, Jaap. He's a good boy.
- Jaap:** He wasn't a boy that day, Marie. He was a man. And I didn't like that. But I haven't been able to get him out of my mind
[*Abram enters with Jannie*]
Naand Abram. Do you know why I've called you?
- Abram:** No, baas.
- Jaap:** Well . . . it's about the day you talked to me about those things. I didn't treat you right. I listened to you - but I didn't really hear. Now tell me, what is this you say about a being on a different footpath?
- Abram:** Yes, Baas Jaap, it's true. I told you that day that I and my people were feeling that we had no future in this, our own country. We seemed to be squeezed down everywhere. But then I've seen that I've seen that I've often been squeezed in my own heart too. I've often hated the white man, but sometimes I've hated my own wife - when she didn't obey me, I hit her. My hate and my fear has shut me in and made me a prisoner in my own heart. But God has told me I can be free. That it doesn't have to wait for what the other man does. So I wanted also to say how sorry I was for my own hate and bitterness.

Jaap: It's not easy for me to understand all this. What you say, Abram - and the rest of you. I've been so sure that I knew. But I don't know about this kind of thing you've been saying. It's so new. I'm not sure that I like it. . . .

Marie: But Abram speaks the truth, dear.

Jaap: Ja. Dis reg. It is the truth, I suppose. But it's hard truth. *(pauses)* Maybe this is what is meant by "The Lion shall lie down with the Lamb". Maybe I need to start learning again. Maybe we all do, like you've been saying. It will be a hard road. But perhaps the Good Lord could show us together, like here on our farm, here on this stoep. *(he looks around at them all)* . . . Maybe He could . . . Maybe.....

LIGHTS DIM TO FINAL CURTAIN

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TO DAD - 1931

Gordonville mountains

are rugged & steep
The valleys are fertile, & rich & deep;
And the love of the Lord has given to us
These acres of mountains & plain & grass
We work them for Him,

for He is the Boss
If we work them with Faith
there is never a loss
For His ledger has columns
not in our books

It's the heart of the farm
& the cover He looks
To the spirit of give & creation we bring
To the love of the soil
& the joy of the thing

HOME IS THE FARMER

*Ascension Day, 1956, on burying his
father, Pannel Kingwill*

Home is the farmer, home from his field
Sleep in the soil which you taught to yield
Rest in the land where you

lived & rejoiced
Sweated & sorrowed,
yet always you voiced
The faith that all would be well in the end
If any were struggling,

a hand you would lend
Great hearted, for always
of others you thought!
Peacefully rest, honest, true, noble soul
You lived simply the life
you believed was your role.

We'll e're feel the love your great
generous heart;
Of us all & of *Gordonville*,
you'll e're be a part.

THE URCHIN AND HIS MARBLE

A happening in Whale Street - 1925

A joy it was to see him run
And chase his marble down the street;
His only marble was this one;
His clothes were sparse, he had bare feet.

Yet would he smile, so broad and bright
As in his marble's wake he raced;
To see him was such pure delight -
All sorrow from the street he chased.

To men and women that he passed
Smiles - all unbidden - always came;
They wished he had not run so fast
And turned to glance at him again.

I would that I through life could go
And follow up this urchin's lead -
Where'ere I go I smiles would sow
And waken joy to those in need!

6th January 1946

ON A TENNIS-COURT BENCH

Farewell *Westaway*¹ - you have been
our home for many years
We have known here warmth and joy
& deeply heartfelt tears.
But we must leave you now -
a built-up, growing farm;
We've toiled & planned & prayed
& saved you from all harm
Now we leave you but
our hearts will ne'er forget
That to this hallowed soil
we owe eternal debt.

¹ *Westaway*, RBK started his new Conservation ideas before moving to *Gordonville* in 1946

*From College House in Orangezicht
we often walked through the Oak lined
Avenue to Town, May 1925*

THE AVENUE

The Avenue is long and wide
With sturdy oaks on either side,
And up and down the whole day long
Pass a vastly motley throng.
Some are fair and some are foul,
Some will smile and some will scowl,
Some go to work and some to play,
But seldom stop and never stay.

I much have learned from all these folks
That pass along between the oaks,
For this is life on smaller scale!
We come and win - or else we fail.
We work, we play, we smile thro' life
We laugh or scowl thro' earthly strife -
But to foul and fair there comes one Day
We seldom stop and never stay.

ON GORDONVILLE SNOW 1928

The snow comes whispering
thro' the trees
Which sigh and swish in the gusty breeze
The flakes, as they fall without a sound,
Lovingly caress the cold hard ground;
And as I watch, are gathered in heaps
By the souging wind as it gust'ly sweeps
The scarcely resisting flakes of snow
Hither and thither where'er it will blow!

The storm is over! The earth is white
The snowclouds drifted into the night.
As the moon comes out
pursuing her flight
She throws a ghostly shimmering light.
Where the earth's bedecked
with his mantle of snow
And now, as the wind has ceased to blow
Deep peace will reign,
while the moonbeams play
And wait, with me, for the coming day...

RISING TIDE

Jan 1938²

The call has gone out to town & to farm
The sweep & the duke have heard the alarm
Come fellows awake for the fight is now on
Bring courage & strength,
there is much to be done!

Yes, we are ready to fight to the end
For our world is sick
& our strength we must lend
But alone we are weak & selfish & bad;
It's all such a mess
that to fight seems quite mad,

You can do little alone but come join in the fun
With God, if you're willing, it soon can be done
We'll shake the world once & turn it right round
For under God's Guidance
the Way will be found

His voice has been heard
the whole world around
And many have jumped
their feet at the sound!
They are marching along on every side;
God helps us to keep this a great rising tide!

² When he first met the ideas of the *Oxford Group* (later called *Moral ReArmament*)

The crunch & crackle of dry brittle stalks
 Louder than cannon of desperate drought talks
 I look to the north & no cloud can discern
 But the cold wind whines as southwards I turn;
 And my heart is heavy as sadly I ponder
 While across the bleak flat,

then uphill I wander
 I think of the loss and the tragic fate
 Of men who have worked both early and late
 Who now face their ruin

from droughts deathly toll
 And bitter the anguish that writhes in my soul
 As I walk I can see this dear wide Karroo
 With the rich green pastures

my forefathers knew
 And the flocks that grazed
 & the cows that lazed
 On the banks of the Zeekoei³ -

now barren, sunglazed
 They worked & they loved;
 they fought & they planned
 To build up these farms & tame down the land
 Was it - O was it just utterly vain?

Or can there have been
 too much seeking for gain?
 I turned to the Lord & asked Him the way
 For there seemed nought to do

but simply to pray
 And He said, "Awake, & do what is right
 "Give back to the earth & live in the light;
 "This country now calls for only the best;
 "It calls you to give with a generous zest;
 "To cease from the struggle

for loot off the land,
 "To draw on your courage
 & take up the stand!"

My heart was much lighter
 as I saw this clear path
 A hope & a promise for my soil & my hearth
 As I God's whisper obey,
 there'll sure be no harm
 To my family or friends, my veldt or my farm

1958

From age, he was frail & wore a gray beard
 He spoke about service for Jesus who cared
 "Our gifts are all different

but all here can learn
 "To give as he did, not for what we can earn
 "But freely & humbly as He loved us first
 "We can fill all hunger & slake every thirst;
 "For Caux is the fountain of water that lives
 "And each has a share when simply he gives
 "The best that he has & does it each day
 "As part of this family for all of his stay!
 "There're some who can cook

& others who paint
 "Serve meals or wash dishes
 (like Lawrence the Saint)

"Then others can write, make music or sing.
 "The Spirit will grow as each of us bring
 "All that we may have & take a full share
 "In giving this home our best love & care.
 "We learn then together to fill the world need
 "With love that is humble,
 with freedom from Greed
 "With faith that is true,
 with the end of all fear;

"With Union which comes
 through personal care!"

Your service is freedom -

I'll serve you dear Lord
 So help mold new plowshares out of the Sword

³ Zeekooi River drains this part of the Karroo

⁴ Caux, world Headquarters of MRA, high above Montreux, overlooks Lake Geneva (Lac Lemman)

REFLECTIONS

'Twas late one night & great dark clouds
Hung from a darkened sky;
Gazing from my casement thro' the dark
I scarcely repressed a sigh.

For far away in murk I saw
A light, a flick'ring spark,
Reflected how we Humans come,
Flicker and leave no mark.

We come into this great dark world
To fight our way thro' Life;
Ah! now we win; and then a loss;
So 'tis eternal strife

We are like weak and fragile ships
Which trail away from land,
To sail on wild and wintry seas -
Our guide an unseen hand.

And if we put our faith in Him,
He'll bring us home at last,
But if we lose our faith at all
We'll on the rocks be cast.

But like the ship and flick'ring spark
We pass away the same!
The World fights on just as before
We came - and went again...

EASTER DAY 1982

If Easter touched your heart and mind
It would your life to Jesus bind
Then you could live to help Mankind,
The only path to freedom find;
In glory then, accept this way,
Make this a lovely Easter day
Ask Him to come to you and stay;
He'll give you purpose - make you gay
And teach you how to know the truth
He brings new life to age and youth.

HE SAID TO ME!

Just walk with me this whole day long
And in your heart will be this song:-
*"Only believe and you will see
"How great the changes yet to be;
"While you work or when you play
"Listen to Me and simply obey.
"There is work for all to do,
"To build a world for me and you.
"Then none will need to walk in fear
"They will have found the way to care.
"With passion deep and purpose true,
"We'll build a world that's really new -
"Greed and Hate and Fear will cease
"And all will walk in Love and Peace.."*
Creative and caring is what I should be;
Thoughtful and honest, open and free -
So all that I meet surely will see
That I listen, obey & have full faith in Thee

REFLECTIONS - BY THE FIRESIDE

Before this dastard civilization,
This hypocrite veneer,
Man had no earthly tribulation
And walked in Godly fear
Sweet Nature's wind was his covering
His hearth, the glorious Sun,
His home, the plains and the hilltops,
His faith - in the world begun!

He looked not to av'ricious gain
To clutching filthy gold;
Nor trampled his weaker brother;
Nor his honour sold.
He did not care for carnal pleasure
Nor suckle beastly lust,
He knew his soul was eternal
His body was but dust.

So he lived 'neath the starred' heaven
Among the brush and broom,
Loving the calls of Gods Nature,
The light of sun and moon.

This Carol, set to music by Lady Penelope Ogilvy who was staying at Gordonville at the time, is often sung by family and friends at Christmas

A CAROL FROM THE KARROO

*Come follow me, He said to them
As they laboured by the sea;
It was not just for fishermen,
But also you and me.*

Refrain:

*Oh Holy Child just born this day,
Lead us clearly all the way*

*As workers could respond to Him
Down there in Galilee,
So we, though rough and full of sin
Accept His call simply.*

Refrain:

*There, gusty winds blew on the waves
Here they flip o'er veldt and hill!
It is not fish but sheep we seek-
And to the same Lord kneel.*

Refrain:

*Today we rejoice, say thanks to Him
For the wisdom He has taught;
For challenge, courage, strength & rain
And the wondrous good He's brought*

Refrain:

A CALL TO ALL

August 1985

*There's a new way for us to go -
Let us move at double speed.
There's the urgent call for all of us
To give a brand new lead!
Some people say "Change policies
"And that is all you need"
Others say "Just raise the Wage,
"The Economy you must heed"
Then look at all the Media,
And all the things we read!*

*Not one has said "The trouble is
"With Hate and Fear and Greed"
None have said: Just face the facts
And clean out every weed,
No crop can grow good food for all
Unless you sow good seed -
Nor can it yield a harvest true
Unless God's rules you heed!*

*From moral weakness, violence stems -
Through love alone can all be freed -
So come let's link our arms together
And meet our nation's need
With Standards God has set for us,
We'll give that glorious lead!*

AT CHRISTMAS

1989

*When I call you to this task,
Love and forgive is all I ask
"Come build a world of gracious care
"Remove all doubt & needless fear;
"Just live the simple, humble life
"And cut the rot as with a knife.
"While seeking truth, both clear & pure
"You demonstrate the life secure."
New strength with Christ can fill us all
And we can walk both straight and tall!*

A CANDLE FOR CHRISTMAS

Lines written when discouraged by the flood of negative news, justification for revenge, bitter rhetoric & emphasis on material rewards

No need to make a statement
That's loud, or big, or grand -
Just light a single candle
And put it on the stand!

Then those who seek the way
Will find the road that's true;
The way that Jesus showed,
And brought His light to you.

It is not always easy
To keep that flame alight,
Protected from the Tempter's breath;
To live by Faith - not sight.

There'll be great joy this Christmas
With all the candle-light,
When many fine, brave people
Stand clearly for the right.

He does not ask to see your gold,
Or if your house is grand,
But if you lit a candle
And put it on the stand.

BE BORN AGAIN 1986

When Joseph first sought shelter
There was no room for him;
And so Your birth took place
In the stable of the Inn.

You called all men to build
The Kingdom of God on earth;
But chose to begin by having
A lowly humble birth.

The Church you sought to enter
And bring to it God's plan -
They turned away and killed You,
And said: "*He's just a man.*"

You weep for the world that's lusting
For pleasure and power and pride;
They've forgot you hung for us all
By nails - with a deep wounded side.

Then, through ages of pain and division
You've stood at the door and knocked;
But we have just thought of ourselves
With hearts all closed and locked.

What joy it surely must be
When the few have said "yes" to You-
"The way I have lived is putrid,
"The things that You teach are true"

And I? ... "*I have lived for myself;
"My heart has been closed and cold;
"I have sought for the things of pleasure
"And things that are bought and sold.*

*"I promise to never more think that
"I must be the foremost again.
"I will live in Your power and courage
"And I'll bear with You the pain."*

O, be born again in us this Christmas
And let Your blessed Spirit guide;
Help us live for Your need
To spread Your plan worldwide.

SONGS OF LOVE & PAIN

December 1924

Another year has gone;
 don't yearn for what is past
Enjoy each day for time is passing fast;
Live to the highest
 for that's the way to peace
And live for what is right,
 in striving never cease.
May in this year ahead,
 you scarcely know a frown
Each day can be a jewel
 set in a queenly crown

ON LEAVING SCHOOL 1924

I parted with the school which I
 have loved for many years
And I have parted with my friends
 and crushed down many tears.
For seven years I strove my best
 and gave my all for *Grey*,
Now I have left it all behind
 and journeyed far away

I loved my work, my play, my friends,
 and gloried in them all;
To part with all this happiness
 was bitterer than gall;
But love can never fail for that
 old Institute, the *Grey* -
Ay, I will honour you, old school,
 until my dying day!

TO LOVE SICK FOOLS 1925

Since the day the world began
Women have lured the hearts of man,
Who offer then their strength & lives
To these women. Then each one strives
To show his love is true and strong
And sighs and dreams the whole day long
And falls in sweet & blissful passion
And rolls his eyes (as is the fashion)
To show his love for that fair wench -
Until one day there comes a wrench!
Fools, Asses, Dolts, we Idiots all
Talk of love - there is none at all!

A RESOLUTION

My heart has been lost to one I love
But one who doesn't love me.
I give it to her with all my soul -
But what is the end to be?

Too soon the time comes
 when we must part
And she will be far far from me;
She loves me not now - how can I hope
That it is ever to be?

Too soon she'll forget she has my heart
And my love with all my soul;
I do not blame her for I know I am not
E'en worthy a beggar's poor dole!

Alone on the farm and dreaming of her
I will fight as best I can,
And tho' I may have failed in love, I swear
I will live and die a MAN!!

PHOEBE!

May 1925

Ah, Phoebe, with thy smile so bright
Cause many men sublime delight,
And tho' I love thee from afar -
As if in worship of a star -
Know that my love is true and strong
And heart and soul to thee belong.

Ay, homage is thy common due,
Thy lovers, surely, not a few,
But does this give thee any right
To fool those who for thee would fight?

So, Phoebe, tho' I love in truth
And am perhaps somewhat uncouth,
Know, Phoebe, thou wilt not fool me!
Have me, alone - or to Hell with thee!

ONE SHORT MOMENT May 1925

A man grown cold and bitter
Am I, a lonely wanderer;
No faith in any of my kind
And animals to men prefer.
Yet in some unknown way to me
She set my turgid blood astir

'Twas on a calm and lovely night
How't happened yet I do not know;
She set her arms about my neck
As if she would not let me go.
my heart then beat so hard and fast
It seemed my blood could never flow.

Then slowly stealing thro' the trees
The dancing music softly came;
She left me, then, amongst the trees
Alone - the same, yet not the same.
For now I had one moment sweet
To treasure 'midst my grief and pain.

So now, tho' still alone, I fight,
With none to cheer me on;
I have one spot that's very bright
In the cheerless days now gone....

HONOUR 1925

As long as a man keeps his honour bright
So long as his conscience is clear!
As long as a man fights the straight fight,
So long has he nothing to fear!

COALS OF FIRE Dec 1926

There was a time when I believed
No woman's love was true!
I often swore ne'er would I love -
Young fool - how little knew!

One day I saw her midst the throng,
So fair above the rest -
Not feature nor in stature, yet
Something made her the best!

I loved her then as I love her now
With all my heart and power.
I can't account that change of mine
In that short glorious hour.

How can I stone invectives cast
At love and its fair name/
For I was shamed and bent my head
When into my heart love came!

Then was I shamed, what am I now,
For now she loves me too.
Ah, moment sweet, yet bitter sweet
For I know her love is true.

How can I atone for words I said,
Before 'was revealed to me?
How true and strong a woman's love
For an erring man can be!

RBK met - in a new way - Moira Massey at a dance in 1927, which took him in a new direction in more ways than one....

MOSTLY TO MOIRA

RENUNCIATION November 1928

I have left her, though I love her;
God have I done what's right?
She cared for me a little,
And I cared with all my might.
I had not much to offer
Besides my love, 'tis true,
While other men had riches
And said they loved her too.
I know their love is never
The love that I would give,
But if they make her happy,
I have not heart to grieve.
I have torn myself asunder
But I Have done now what's right,
And now must fight my battle
In drear and hopeless night

IN AN ART GALLERY

Johannesburg Dec 1928

As I sit here among these works of art -
Born of love, made by master hands -
My feeble soul comes fluttering
Tries to break through iron bands,
Bands built up of prejudice
Of earthly hopes and fears
Formed and moulded
By trivial foolish cares.
Oh, let my soul fly free,
Soaring to the heights
Tho' but for a fleeting instant
To see the Heavenly lights
Lights seen but by the souls
Creators of these works.
Ah, in each one of us
The love of Beauty lurks,
Tho' tied and held and governed
By convention love and hate.
But rise, sweet soul, rise up,
Before it is too late....
See the greater beauty
And return again to me,
After this thy mission.
Expunged and clear and free.

NOW 26 YEARS**Wedding Anniversary 1955**

The years slip by so fast while we are growing old
But they're linked together by a thread of burnished gold.
We've always stood together, and faced the battle line,
And you have stood out bravely for all that's good and fine,
And proudly I can say today "*thank you deeply, dear*
"I'll stand and fight beside you all the coming year!"

We know not what lies out ahead - of few things we are sure,
Except: *the sight of God is for those whose hearts are pure...*
And that's the thing we need to see this loved' nation through,
It is the challenge Jesus gives to men like me - and you.
For when you've learned to love, you've also learned to give -
And love is the ingredient which makes us really live;
To give the things that matter - a faith that's true and strong;
A pain - and not a blaming heart - when others do what's wrong.
A joy that's deep and lasting; a heart that's full of song,
A patience when we tarry, no matter for how long.
Thus in living unto others, and not in selfish ways,
You'll have true joy and beauty in your brimful, busy days.
For the way to save your life, is simply lay it down -
And you will find a radiance that's richer than a crown.

42 YEARS**Wedding Anniversary 1971**

We have walked along together, for two and forty years,
We have known the cost of battle; we have shed so many tears;
But far above the sad things - are memories good and gay,
Of things we've done together, I think of - and bless the day
We walked united down the aisle, and pledged to build together -
And so we go rejoicing - come wind, come sun, come weather!

I remember well - those dancing feet, the bright clear Irish eyes,
The caring heart for weak or small, the spirit blithe - yet wise

I remember well - the hopes we had when starting on the farm;
You'd make a home for just us two; I'd protect you from all harm!

I remember well - the care you gave to the little that I had;
The times of poverty and struggle; the days when drought was bad!

I remember well - when babies came, all born in love (and pain!)
You gave your best with courage great, smiled brave with joy again.

I remember well - as each grew strong; you proudly taught them all,
And cherished each with tender care - as Madonna in the Stall!

I remember well - as each left home, you gave your wisest word;
That God in His great wisdom guides all those who seek the Lord.

I remember well - how each grandchild was welcomed with great joy;
How you wrapped and cuddled them and cared for each small girl and boy!

Now - many years along the road you love undimmed I see;
That tender heart, so deeply stirred, is precious, more, to me!

Now - Irish eyes, still bright and straight, are often filled with tears,
For what is bad, or sad, or wrong - to a heart that truly cares.

Now -lively feet at slower gait still take you to the heart
Of many needy, sad and seeking to play a healing part!

Now - I look back across those years, along our road of life,
I thank our God for caring friends and your true love, dear wife!

Now - I have learned the greatest wealth is not in *things*, nor gold
But in the joy of finding Faith, which two, together, hold...!

For the Collegiate Re-Union at Graaff-Reinet, an annual event where Old Girls get together for a function with husbands and friends from the Grey and its rival schools from Grahamstown: Kingswood and St. Andrews

A DREAM May 1991 -

"*Facta non Verba*¹" is our motto, they sing
Their sweet voices all had a melodious ring
Then "*Collegiate! Collegiate!*" from sidelines they shout
When goals are scored with a good hockey clout!
School days are fine if you stick to the rule,
And live out the motto of that dear old school -
But beware of the times which often do come
When *Verba non Fata* is the thing that is done..!
Then we boys of St Andrews, Kingswood and Grey²
Ask the very same questin: "*Which is the way?*"
Will the girls keep the *Verba* always in check -
And the *Facta* right here and clear on the deck. . . .!

67th Wedding Anniversary 21. 12. 1996

SIXTY-SEVEN YEARS OF CARE

Maybe feet do not dance quite as lightly as they did in those days gone by,
But her spirited heart is As good and as sprightly and her ideals are ever as high.
I remember with joy and much value her courage when we started to farm
My housekeeping was judged *not good*, but she promised to keep me from harm!

"*The worms in your meal-bag are awful! You surely need someone to care!*"

Her horror was really quite lawful and her love for me really quite clear.
She moved furniture, dusted the rooms; made it lovely and tidy and clean!
My bachelor home got a wholly new face so I loved her more (know what I mean?)

Now 67 years is a very long time, we've lived through such wonderful days -
The words I need do not always rhyme - but true love shines in a great many ways!
So Moira, my dear, I sing you this song - but must stop before it gets boring & long!
You have been a good & a wonderful wife & helped me to live a purposeful life..

¹ The *Collegiate* (where Moira went to school in P Elizabeth) motto: *Deeds not Words*

² Boys who went to these schools would have had girlfriends at *Collegiate*

A HOME IN CALGARY

A farewell to the Davidsons 1987

Betty and Bill are a wonderful pair
Their life is poured out in generous care -
Their home is a tower in God's great plan
To build a new world & use ev'ry man
Ready to listen & stand for what's right
And care like these two
 who fight the good fight;
They did not wait for the others to start
But bent to the yoke & opened their heart

IN TUCSON *Esther Smith turns 90*

Esther at ninety is a challenge to all.
She takes on the Nation, lives on the ball!
We wish her the best, this special day -
Filled with rich blessings, she walks in
 "the way"!

Farewell to the Morrisons²

**IN ST. PAUL - MINNESOTA -
A HOME AND A LIGHT**

High on a street in St Paul is a light
Where faith and care are always bright
The Saint, himself, would fully approve
Of the way they plan and bravely move.
Always there's love
 for each friend they meet
In their home, on the farm,
 or right in the street!
Their challenge to each is ever the same
Come build a new world - this is our aim
This, it is true, is a pearl of great worth,
Surely they are the salt of the earth!

NO DESERT IN THIS HOME!

*Farewell to Paul & True Colwell,
Tucson Arizona* 1987

This is a home and a fortress strong;
The battle we fight is 'twixt right & wrong;
Here is living water in an arid land,
Where True and Paul have made a stand!
They've raised a flag where others fear;
For family, for friends
 & for nations they care
God bless and keep you in the days ahead;
Thanks for they way our spirit's been fed!

LINES WRITTEN IN LISBURN

CATHEDRAL (Ireland) 1987
When Paul Hewitt was ordained

In Lisburn Cathedral is hallowed ground
As this brave young man in faith is bound
To serve the Lord, with deep full heart,
To help his country play its part;
He'll care in sunshine, & often in rain -
But when there is sorrow, fear & pain,
Then is faith and courage needed
And God's word most surely heeded;
Don His full armour and fearlessly speak
The truth:- that Christ
 can care for the weak!
And those who know not where to turn,
Can all the glorious Good-News learn;
Then in His power Paul surely will lead
Many to a life free of hate, fear and greed

² The family most responsible for inviting RBK
etc to USA as well as raising the money for it

POST SCRIPT

by the Editor/Compiler - David Kingwill

I must stress the notation made at the beginning of this compilation: A great amount of Dad's writings have been left out. All have the same theme as those that have been included - but, perhaps, a slightly different emphasis to some. Retelling some of the events and decisions which changed his life (and the lives of those around him) and the recurrence of these themes is not by chance. However, the simple, incontrovertible fact is: Dad changed his life, ran it with God's direction for 60 years, and brought about profound change in farming methods and in the lives of the people he touched.

We have had less than great success in dividing the themes into separate parts. Nor much greater success in printing them in chronological order. Dates have been put in where known. In some cases, they were guessed at, but mostly some form of annotation was made on the originals to hand.

RBK inspired many to follow his path towards finding God's direction. He also was my inspiration for both Public Service and Art, Writing and Poetry. I never could rise to quite the same heights of Unselfish Devotion to God's Word, farming expertise, oratory skills, honour, or writing ability, but there were some poems which I wrote for him or about him which I think may be appropriate to share here.

Here follow, then

SOME POEMS FOR DAD

The Kingwill Clan had a big Re-Union in Bethesda. About 100 family were there, a service in the Church, where this was read, then tennis etc at the Club, RBK features as one of the names (all known living Kingwill males mentioned)

THE KINGWILL CLAN

9 October 1988

There's a story to tell of the Clan of the Kingwills who settled this country we love.

They have built in the fabric & growth of our land -

always aided by strength from Above.

Let us start then with John and his wife (Martha D.)

who sailed bravely for Algoa Bay -

It is them & their children, of whom 6 survived¹,

whom we honour while gath'ring today.

Daughter Annie was followed by William, then John,

Richard Darby (who northwards would go),

And then Alfred, who married at age 23 to the young Settler lass, Charlotte Stow.

First a Merchant (at 14!) then Transport to ride,

then a farmer at Houdconstant Ranch,

He was General Booth's friend, helped the Army² for years

as he Treasured the Graaff-Reinet branch

It was Alfred & Charlotte whose courage & love of the land

was passed on down their line.

We give thanks for their courage, devotion & strength;

for the lives, honest, upright & fine!

Now we come to a Kingwill, much famed in the land,

"Uncle AA", some called him with awe!

First he helped Oom Paul Kruger (*The Jameson Raid*),

then a guide for the British at war!³

After farming at Brits, he came back to the Cape,

when his big brother William was killed.

First he cared for *St Olives* then *Koloniesplaats*,

where a stud farm with winners he filled.

He was stockman & sportsman & Churchman of note

through the 93 years his life spanned;

He was Mayor and Chairman of Council and Boards -

but he never tried being too grand!

¹ John Kingwill & Martha (Darby) left Yeoville area to settle in SA - but he died on board ship. Only 2 of the children had issue in SA

² General Booth, founder of the **Salvation Army** in SA used him as advisor; he was Treasurer of the **Army** in the area

³ Uncle A.A., 2nd son of Alfred, went to the Transvaal & was used by Paul Kruger as a guard during the Jameson Raid; later he became a Scout for the British Forces during the **Boer War**

TO DAD, 52 YEARS 1957

So Dad adds one more year today
A year of *Ford* trips fast -
For though his years may still be gay
His carefree days are past.

Commitments he has made to keep
Must all be carried through
In order for the Youth to reap
A crop of nations new.

Today we find the nation's slide
A factor sad but true
And from this fact we cannot hide,
It slides for me and you.

The answer to this tidal wave
Of decadence and dirt
Lies only in the hands of brave;
Of men who fear no hurt.

So Dad, I feel I'd like to tell
My thanks for what you do,
To keep me and my crowd from Hell,
And pray that you stay true.

Thank you for the way you live
The way you seek the best;
The way you give and give and give;
The way you seek no rest.

With me I feel as all feel here -
But feelings don't stop sin -
I hear God's voice say in my ear:
"*My boy, don't feel. MUCK IN!*"

Written for RBK when DMK Overseas
1960

MECHANICS OF THE SPIRIT

Release from my defeat has been
The balm for which I'm crying
But now at last I've been and seen
Life wholly satisfying.

I find that I am like a car
With all its mechanisms
But I have found an answer now
To all the different ". . .isms"

My motor-car was made by man
And that has set me thinking -
If man can't fix it - then who can?
And who will stop it *pinkin*?

On four good wheels the car must glide
Each one to defined standard.
If each was made as I would like -
The car would soon be stranded.

If any wheel did not roll true
From dirt or poor inflation,
I'd soon be in a pretty stew -
You get my implication?!

If anything goes wrong inside,
The garage can't do good
If all my buggy does is hide
The fault beneath its hood!

I know my car would never go -
And this you may be sure -
Unless the fuel that is to flow
Is Absolutely pure!

For little specks of dirtiness
Will clog the whole *caboodle*.
'Tis dirt that gets us in the mess -
Just get that in your noodle!

The gas you use you'll all agree
Just cannot be diluted;
Or sugared up - I guess we'll see
This fact can't be disputed.

If dirt's the problem on your mind,
Don't just go sittin', mopin';
This is the fault, I think you'll find:
You leave the tank-cap open!

For if you leave a loophole wide
For any dirt to enter,
The dirt will multiply inside
And clog up in the centre!

My car may differ much from yours,
But this I am assured:-
If I clean out the dirty muck,
My problems will be cured....!

FARMER OF KARROOLAND

On Dad's 65th Birthday 1970

In the heart of the Karrooland
Lives a father and a farmer
Who is more than just a father;
Who is more than just a farmer;
He has taken up the battle
To restore our mountains' grasses
To bring back the verdant cover;
To restore denuded valleys
There the red earth bakes unsightly.
He has made his Life's Ambition
Bringing back to our Karrooland
Waving fields of natural pasture
Where the sheep can graze in plenty,
Where the cattle, sleek, shall flourish,
Where the wild birds find their shelter
In the pasture of the prairies,
In the reed-beds of the rivers;
Where the future generations
Can wrest from the soil their living
And can know the Great God's giving.

He has taken up the battle
For the future of his children
For the future of all children
Be they from whatever hearthland
Be they of whatever colour;
He has taken up the battle
So that they may know the glory
Of a nation that is God-led,
Of a nation without hatred,
Where each man shall love his brother
As a friend and as a partner,
As a builder for the future
Of a great, united nation.

He has visions for this nation
That can lead the world from bondage
To a new and greater freedom -
Where no Drugs nor Drinks are masters
Where no Fear or Greed are Rulers;
Where each man can do as God bids;

Where each soul is free to listen
 To the voice of his Creator -
 Be he Black or White or Coloured,
 Be he Muslim, Jew or Gentile;
 Where each man will take the trouble
 To help bear each other's burden,
 So that peace and joy may flourish
 Where once there was dark suspicion;
 Where once Hate and Selfish grabbing
 Were the Normal Way of Living
 For each child that's born of Woman....

Yes, this Farmer of Karrooland
 Gives his life to bring an answer
 To the many man-made evils
 That would threaten to engulf us;
 That would threaten to destroy us.
 He has made his life's commitment:-
 Live an answer to the problems
 Of our loved but bleeding nation;
 Not to Preach - but Live the answer.

There are those who've
 sworn to break him
 There are those who scoff and libel -
 Men who ever fear his challenge,
 Who prefer the passing pleasures
 Of acclaim and ease and riches;
 Who would sell their souls for treasure,
 Who would kill their land for profit -
 It is they who scoff and libel;
 It is they who would disparage,
 As each seeks to still his conscience,
 As they go their ways uncaring,
 As they choose the selfish pathways.
 But the Farmer of Karrooland
 Has stood steadfast in commitment;
 Never moving to the right-hand;
 Never shifting to the left-hand -
 Ever steering on the straightway,
 As commanded by his maker;
 Ever steering on the straightway
 As his God gives him direction,
 As He guides him through the darkness.

Yes, this farmer of Karrooland
 Has stood steadfast in commitment
 To bring Faith and food to millions
 In his much beloved nation,
 And to every other nation
 As his God gives him direction;
 There he brings his simple message -
 Learned with pain and fight and sorrow
 From the land he loves unstinting;
 From his farm in the Karrooland.

To this father of Karrooland
 Say his children on his birthday
 On this bright November Sunday
 As the birds sing in the heavens,
 As the sky shines blue above us
 As the sheep, contented, wander,
 As the cattle graze in plenty,
 Say his children on his birthday:-
*"We are proud and we are grateful,
 "Dad, that you have been so steadfast
 "And have shown us the direction
 "We must take if we would fight for
 "Lasting future for our children;
 "Lasting future for our young ones
 "Who now play around us laughing;
 "Who play day to day believing
 "That their parents shape the future;
 "That their fathers and their mothers
 "Who gave in their tender young years
 "All the succour and the comfort,
 "Will yet build for them a Future.
 "You have shown us the direction;
 "We are proud and we are grateful,
 "Oh, our father of Karrooland!"*

Hail the Farmer of Karrooland!

Since the "Forties" Dad's fought
for a new kind of life
For his Farm, for his Fam'ly, his State;
He has battled for leaders
to live what they preach:
Without selfishness, greed, fear & hate.
He has steadfastly stood
for the right of Mankind
To be free from the bindings of Sin;
He has struggled for folk
to make Character count -
Not their Cash nor their Colour of Skin!

It has never been easy
nor lined with success;
It could never be said that it "paid" !
But through half of a Century
he has been true
To the Faith & Commitment he made.
There were some who reviled him
& laughed him to scorn
And they said his ideas were *passé'*,
(While it's true they are nearly
2 000 years old,
They are just what is needed today!)

As our Nation lies bleeding
in pain and in fear,
As the drought & debts
make our life bleak,
You will find his advice
is forever the same
If an answer to problems you'd seek:
*"Take some time from the turmoil
to read from The Word
"Say a Prayer to your Father Above;
"And then listen & write down
the thoughts that you get
"From the God of Forgiveness & Love"*

*"Then obey the Small Voice
that we all have inside,
"Whether youngster or old, bald, & gray
"If you want God to help
run your farm or your World
"It is, truly, the only sure way!"*

That's the pattern he's lived
for a great many years,
Never letting God out of his sight;
Tho' we may not have always
been willing ourselves,
We've been privileged to know
what was right.

He's a man who has lived
to bring Change to the world
To our Systems, our Cities, our Soil,
And he's done it by living
a true Christian life,
By his articles, letters, and toil.
All his actions have grown
from what he believed right
Not from what he believed he could get
As his children we gather
to thank him today
For that pattern of Life that he set.

In this task that has spanned
over 50-odd years,
You've been backed
by our Mother, your wife.
As we thank you for all
you have done thru' the years,
We add thanks to you, Mom,
for your life.
In these terrible, wonderful,
technical times,
Maybe Man will yet heed God again.
But whatever decisions
our leaders may take,
May you know:

Your fight's not been in vain!

Loved by all who learned his ways;
Not for him a path of Praise!!
Building bridges through all Nations
Spokesman for real Peace Relations
Statesman for the whole world's Poor
Seeking both to Calm - and Cure;
Hate-free, Fear-free, Greed-Free soul,
With one God-directed goal;
Fighter for new ways of Living
Filled with Selflessness and Giving;
At Ninety Years you show each one
How Godfilled Living can be done!
For you have done what's Right & True
Regardless of the pain to you.
Your children honour you this day,
Our lives enriched in every way..!

Some Limericks : -

60 years ago, **Roland** began
To farm following God - and not Man;
And the secret he found
Is today just as sound:
"God has always a practical plan.."

A Karroo farmer chose as his fate,
Fighting both Soil Erosion and Hate;
The things he then decided
Were at first much derided -
But are now key ideals of the State

At the start he was laughed *out of class*
Grazing practices hailed as a farce!
Farmers called him a fool
When he started his school -
But he won back both honour & grass!

Grandpa Roland turns 90 this year!
Yet his heart and his goals are still clear:
He has fought hard and long
To put right what is wrong
As he fights against Man's greed & fear!

DAD 91 15 November 1996

The 15th of November sees
My Dad turn 91!
It makes me feel at (60 years)
A very proud young son!
For over 90 years he's seen
His share of flops & messes
But also he has had the odd
Sensational successes!

Two Massive Wars where all the world
Seemed only bent on killing;
The Great Depression where his sheep
All sold for just a shilling;
Thru' Locust plagues & deadly droughts
Through bloody revolutions -
His only thought - to ask his God
To help him build solutions!

Tho' sometimes friends & fam'ly scoffed
He made his steadfast stand -
For 60 years his only goal:-
To build a God-led Land,
Tho' some³ have kicked
against the pricks
We know you've done what's right
So as we honour you today
We thank you for your fight...!

THE END

³ Mostly DMK (me)!

THIS COLLECTION OF SOME OF THE WRITINGS OF ROLAND B. KINGWILL CAN POSSIBLY BE SUMMED UP, IN PART, BY THE FOLLOWING EXTRACT:

Believing in God is not the point. Even the Devil believes in God and fears him. But how many live the way God wants them to live - with unselfishness, love, care? As I look back over the years, I see much that is good has happened. My vision is undimmed - our country can be great. There is a part for everyone.

"Before a God-led unity", said Buchman¹, "Every last problem will be solved. Empty hands will be filled with work, empty stomachs with food, and empty hearts with an ideology that satisfies."

It was towards this single goal that RBK lived, fought, thought, spoke and wrote for 60 years.

- DMK, Editor 1997

¹ **Frank Buchman**, USA born founder of the World-wide movement called **Moral Re-Armament**, (**MRA**) whose thinking helped RBK find a faith.

EPILOGUE

"IF YOU WOULD SEEK HIS MONUMENT, LOOK AROUND YOU . . ."

A few weeks after he had proof-read and corrected the foregoing chapters of this book to his satisfaction, RBK began, on the night of Saturday 6th September, to retch badly and was taken to the Midland Hospital on the morning of Sunday, the 7th September 1997. By that afternoon, he had died as he had lived - quietly and unobtrusively. Totally unexpected, but the shock was tempered by the knowledge that it had been a quick and fairly painless going. At almost 92 years, it had been a rich and full life and the family feel that we should be happy that he was spared a long and humiliating sick bed.

For Moira, it was particularly hard to take, as she arrived to see him a few moments after he had died - expecting to sit by his bedside and comfort him. Later it was to emerge from medical opinion that he had endured great pain and discomfort in the previous days and weeks - but, as he had never complained, nobody had realised quite how much pain he had been enduring.

His funeral service, on 10th September, was attended by many from district and far afield. He was buried that afternoon near his father on *Gordonville*. Pall-bearers were his brothers' 2 sons, Colin (Keith's son) and Neville (Con's), three of his four grandsons (one was in Kenya) and Isaac Memani, whose father had worked for both RBK and his father Pannell, and who had himself been born, gone to school, and worked most of his adult life on *Gordonville*.

It seems appropriate to end RBK's life story (for it *has* now ended) by chronicling the events of that day as well as including some extracts from faxes and letters from all over the world with appreciation for his life of commitment to God's will for his own life and the lives around him and his country. There is neither the time nor the space to include all. A selection of some of the messages from RBK's special friends from all over the world follows:

South Africa

Allan Hardie, (one of the founders of Life-Line) Roggebaai, Cape Town:

Roly was an amazing man in his lifelong steadfast commitment to the things he believed in. His influence for good was quite out of proportion to any power he might have wielded and his values will be enshrined in the lives of many for generations to come. He always approached life as an uncomplicated, practical farmer and yet brought to bear on wider issues his deep wisdom and incisive mind. In the best of senses there was an unchanging quality about him and it made him a dependable rock of reference in often confusing times.

Judge John & Izobel Trengove, Somerset West, Cape:

We shall always remember Roly as an outstanding South African - a man of unquestionable integrity, a man with a vision, and an unswerving faith; a man who fought courageously and fearlessly against injustice and discrimination; a man who loved his country as it was and strove selflessly to make it what God intended it to be. Notwithstanding all these qualities, Roly was also a very modest and endearing man.

Phil & Elise Abrahams, Kelso, Natal:

Roly was more than an ordinary man as God had given him a secret - the secret of discovery that God does actually speak to each one of us in the most practical and simple way.

Marie van Selm & Vilma Maritz, Cape Town:

Roly has gone home; God's trumpets are sounding and rejoicing, let us in our grief also rejoice and marvel at Roly's life; so many have found renewal in faith, healing in pain. He was truly God's shepherd.

Ds. George & Joey Daneel, Marguerite Horn, John Mallory, the Pono Family, Ralph & Joan Travers, John & Suzanne Burrell, Finlay & Kath Moir (Scotland) & Rosemary Mattingly (Australia), friends from Hatfield Pretoria:

Saddened by the news of Roly's passing, but grateful that he will be joining the ranks of so many fellow-fighters in Heaven. Not only we, but History itself, will record his prophetic witness in the action he took to revolutionise people's attitude to land in this country which in itself put him 50 years ahead of his time. We give thanks to God for a great heart whose concerns were not only with the people of his village and family, but extended to thousands in other countries across the globe. Our heart-felt prayers are with you now as you say your farewells to a devoted husband and father, who was also a giant amongst men.

Eastern Province Agricultural Union, Port Elizabeth:

Words cannot express our sincere thanks and appreciation for his valued contributions towards Organised Agriculture and his fellow farmers over the years gone by. We pay tribute to a great pioneer who had a vision to lead and serve his community.

Soil Conservation Committee, Graaff-Reinet:

He was a man who meant a great deal to the conservation effort in the Karoo. Without his foresight and dedication the Karoo might have looked very different today and the district would have been a great deal poorer. His compassion for his fellow men of all races and creeds made him much loved and respected and he died having truly left this world a better place. We must remember the inspiration of the great leaders like him and not let what was started in difficult times be allowed to be abandoned.

Florence Bandey, Grahamstown:

Roly never spared himself but, obedient to God's guidance, he travelled the world witnessing to men and women of all races and all walks of life

Great Britain and Ireland

Pat & Kristin Evans, Erica, Robin & Yvonne, Worcester, England:

In Roly a great spirit has passed over. A man whose God guided action shaped his philosophy and whose love of the land gave him a vision for all Africa. A true pioneer on the road to eternity.

Barbara Burns, Archie & Ruth Mackenzie, Andy & Hazel Hastings, Lady Penelope & Francis Ogilvy, Lew & Anne Mackay, Scotland:

Your friends in Scotland have long appreciated the special qualities of Roly and of all your family. Amid upheaval here over political changes and national mourning for the Princess of Wales, we remember the staunchness and stability of South African friends. Roly not only put his property and work-force under God's control, he affected national policy.

Many clamour rightly that care be given to the environment. Roly lived this for decades when it was not yet fashionable!

Peter & Lady Fiona Hannon & Family, Coleraine, Northern Ireland:

Roly set a pattern of faith, of courage, of vision which remains a challenge to all of us who knew him. And even more than what he did is what he was in himself - that bigness of heart which took all of us into his care. He will always hold a special place in our hearts.

Jim Wigan, Tirley Garth Trust, Cheshire, England:

He was a most remarkable man. He will be remembered for the remarkable life he led. His example is a lesson for all involved in Agriculture World wide as well as those who knew nothing of farming but whose hearts are warmed by that experience of his and Moira's. It's something that all can relate to.

Campbell & Claire Leggat, Oxted, England:

Our thoughts are with you as you bid farewell to Roly. What a courageous soul he was. One of God's gentlemen.

Henry Macnicol, Edinburgh, Scotland:

You and Roly must know what you have meant to me - since 1947 - when you first welcomed a group of "The Forgotten Factor" - I knew your support, trust, and confidence and your unwavering example of living God's way.

Archie (Retired Diplomat for Britain) & Ruth McKenzie, Stirlingshire, Scotland:

A great many people all over South Africa and beyond will honour him and will go on being inspired - as we are - by memories of his words.

Europe

Kjeld & Inger Jorgensen, Tove Cooper, Denmark:

Our heartfelt greetings with gratitude for Roly and all his life has meant.

Torsten & Urte Hvidt, Copenhagen, Denmark:

... our thoughts are with your mother in deep gratitude for that old warrior and dear friend through 45 years who has now passed on to wonderful pastures - where there is always enough water for his sheep!

Viveka & Sturla Johnson, Tobis Lund-Henriksen, Methe & Anders Eskeland, Lar & Jens J Wilhelmsen, Aagot & Einar Engebretsen, Berit & John Peter Meyer, Astrid & Jens Magnus, Birgit & Knut Dale, Oslo, Norway:

We Norwegians who have had the privilege of meeting him, living in your hoime and sometimes moving with him through the Eastern Cape and other parts of the country, remember with gratitude his great qualities in caring for people and his vision for South Africa.

Count Gerard D'Hauteville (Roly's voice in the French version of the video), Annie & Claude Bourdin, Maurice & Angela Nosley, Jean-Louis & Florence Nosley-Dommel, Frederic & Nathalie Chavanne, Evelyne Seydoux, Boulogne, France.

We are grateful for his steadfast battle to move from success and profit to a concern for the land and love of the people living on it. .. he cared for people of all races who now face the task of building a new South Africa. May Roly's robust pioneering spirit inspire many for the needs of today and those of the next generation.

Pierre & Fulvia Spoerri, Caux, Switzerland:

His was a life of care and sacrifice for the people of his beloved land. Through him and Moira, we outsiders have begun to grasp what this sacrificial care meant - and that nothing can replace that. We are so grateful that in the "Promise of the Veld" Roly will be there, to be seen by so many

Christian Luthi, Lucerne, Switzerland:

Today I enter the world-spanning circle of all those who bow in thankfulness and veneration for Roly's now-fulfilled life. Under the direction of a higher power his relentless and selfless endeavours as a South African farmer and a world citizen have given freedom and purpose to a great number of people in his country and abroad. I am one of them.

Klaus Turck, Hubert Eggemann, Biberach, Germany:

We have just received news of Roly Kingwill's death. We have learnt about his activities in our work and have also shown his film to German friends.

Peter & Anna-Marie Kormann, Berne, Switzerland:

We remember Roly in deep gratitude as a dear friend and father to us and it has been a tremendous privilege to know him for so many years and to have had so many opportunities to share a few moments of his so richly blessed life in South Africa, in Caux, or even here in Berne. It was way back at Christmas 1954 when Peter visited your family for the first time - an unforgettable experience. Roly was a man of vision and courage; a man of faith and hope; a true pioneer of a new South Africa who has made a prominent contribution to peaceful change in your great nation by spreading the spirit that was decisive for this miracle which set the whole world in astonishment. It has been a most special privilege for us to translate and dub the film *Promise of the Veld*, Roly's spiritual legacy, for the German-speaking part of Europe and to be able to contribute to a market for the beautiful products of *Graaff-Reinet Kraft*.

Marcel & Theri Grandy, (Echichens), Hildi & Berti Zeller, Meieli Luthy, Rosli Fluetsch (Zurich):

How well we remember Roly - farmer, courageous initiator at a time when it was not popular to be, a true patriot, a leader of men, a true friend who carried his farm, the farming world, his country, the world on his heart! We will never forget the care so many of us received as we were guests of Roly and Moira and you all on the farm - experiences which are inspiring us to this day!

Australasia

John Bond, Hughes, Australian Capital Territory, Australia

News has just come of the death of Roland. What a role he has played in giving South Africa the chance to shape a co-operative multiracial future. And not just South Africa. We are in the midst of a struggle to heal the effects of our callousness towards Aboriginal Australians and his example has taught us much. I have seen *Promise of the Veld* provoke new thinking in many situations: In Melbourne a church congregation was deeply divided; a showing of that video was the catalyst for a solution and renewed unity.

Gordon & Marjorie Ashman, West Leederville, Western Australia:

If ever there were real pioneers it was you (Moira) and Roly. In the family, on the farm, and growing out to the nation and way beyond, you joined the wonders of God's ways the everyday. How thankful we are that that film was made.

Jonathan Phillips, Eastwood, NSW, Australia:

Thanks to God for beloved Roly's wonderful life

Dr Basil Moring, Auckland, New Zealand:

He led the way for others of all races to follow.

Pieter & Meryl Horn and family, Mosman, Australia:

We think with great gratitude of Oom Roly with all that he pioneered, his courage to obey the whispers of the God he so loved and served, his passion to see healing change in people and in our country. His intense interest always in all that was happening in the country was indeed an inspiration and a challenge.

Lou Abraham, Victoria, Australia:

He has left a beautiful memory and a great challenge. He went on challenging the country to the end.

Suresh Katri, Fiji

Just to let you know that we have used the video on him quite effectively in Fiji. We are very grateful for Roly's life and the message that he allowed Destiny to work out through him for not just Africa but way beyond the seven seas.

The Americas

Phyllis, Bill, Jenny & John Boccock, Wilma & Vern Gleddie, Alberta, Canada

Roly pioneered a new relationship with the land and the people he worked with. His example is valid world wide.

John & Louise Morrison, Jesse & Ann Williams, Steve Dickinson, Gladstone & Brenda Natala:

We remember with great gratitude when he, Moira, and Janet came to the U.S. He reached out to all with a clear message of truth, the real thing. His life was a great example and we feel privileged to have known him.

Harry & Bev Almond, Connecticut:

He was an inspired farmer and a global patriot - what a rich life!

Dick & Randy Ruffin, Virginia:

What a very remarkable life and so great a legacy is left to all of us privileged to know him. "The Christianity of Obedience" is forever embedded in our minds because of his example. Our memories are vivid and alive, perhaps because his message and his life were so transparently congruent!

THE FUNERAL SERVICE

The Memorial service took place in the Methodist Church Graaff-Reinet, with John Harmon, long a friend of RBK, the minister presiding. Pall-bearers were Colin and Neville Kingwill (sons of his brothers Keith and Con), Andrew and Christopher Gladwin (sons of daughter Janet), Howard Sheard (son of daughter Clare) and Isaac Memani¹, farmworker.

John Harmon, long time friend and pastor of the Methodist church for the past 8 or more years, read the Bible passage: *2 Corinthians, 2: 14 -16* (Eugene Peterson version, "The Message"):

In the Messiah, in Christ, God leads us from place to place in one perpetual victory parade. Through us he brings knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, people breathe in the exquisite fragrance. Because of Christ, we give off a sweet scent rising to God, which is recognised by those on the way of salvation - an aroma redolent with life."

After singing the Hymn, 898, "*Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide..*", Isaac Memani was asked to say a few words in Afrikaans. Loosely translated, he said:

I grew up under this "Oubaas²". I was a *Kwedien*³ and well remember how he used to twist our ears when we were naughty. Now I want to thank God for his life. For his life on this earth. God made him a wonderful man. He was a man you could touch, this man that lies here. When there was a problem, he would say, "*Come let us be quiet and hear what God has to say about this.*" Many times I came to him with problems. He would suggest we pray and then be quiet and listen. Then he would ask me what I thought God had told me.

On that farm, all of us, from my father down, were under his care. We did things together. We worked hard together. Everything we did together. We worked as a team. So it was a great shock for me to hear that he had died. Then I knew God needed him. We on earth are borrowed people. Someday we must all go back home. So I want to say thank you for his life.

He taught me how to work. All sorts of work - fencing, spade work - but he made a man of me. When he went away from the farm for a few days, I knew I had to take responsibility for the farm in his absence. When he came back - (later it was Robert or David who were to do the same) - he must see that things are just

¹ Isaac Memani was born at *Gordonville*. His father, Benjamin, born on a neighbouring farm had worked for Pannell Kingwill as a young man. When RBK took over in 1946, Benjamin was one of the staff he 'inherited' with the farm. The family, we understand, descended from a minor Xhosa chieftain. Isaac grew up on the farm, in the farm school, married a girl from a nearby farm, & worked on *Gordonville* most of his adult life. Both he & younger brother, Shadrak, were foreman on the farms - Isaac with Robert, Shadrak with David.

² *Oubaas* = "Old Man, Old Master"

³ *Kwedien* = Little boy, Urchin, uncircumcised youth

as he had left it. I remember well when Robert went away to Europe for three months. I had to run the farm in his absence for those three months. Had it not been for the *Ouseer*⁴ I could not have done it. He was a man who supported me in all I did. If there was anything to be done, we would get together and decide on a plan of action. Today I say thank you. Let him rest now in peace.

After Isaac, David, RBK's eldest son offered his eulogy:

He rests - at last, Dad rests! His life of selfless Christian care has ended.
We are especially grateful that Mom was able to care for him to the last;
Herself over 90 years old, her daily, constant attention is an example and
inspiration to us all;

We grieve with her - but also triumph with her for his life.
The truths for which he stood are endless
The battles that he fought rage on -
Against the hate and fear and greed of Man,
Against the selfish killing of our land; the Destruction of its Soil;
Against the mindless killing of our people; the Destruction of its Soul.
Dad was ever positive: *The path ahead had hope;*
He was ever confident: *God's answer was perfect;*
He was always optimistic - *change was not only possible but inevitable.*

A full life, an interesting life, a rewarding life,
He has seen transport change from Cart and Horse to Interstellar Craft;
Communication grow from Morse Code to pocket telephone and instant E-Mail ;
He has seen Conservation grow from derision to a Globally accepted concept;
He has seen South Africa change from a land of despair to one of hope & glory;

He has made friends throughout the world -
From coalminers in the *Ruhrgebiet* of Germany, to farmers in Canada,
From dockworkers in Brazil to International Tycoons in Holland;
From lowly farmhands and beggars to Kings and Queens and persons of power: -
Every one he treated exactly the same:- *a child of God, precious;*
A person loved, in need of God's grace, and capable of greatness.

While we grieve for his loss, we glory in his victory!
We are peaceful in the knowledge that he rests today with his Jesus.
It seems that God has needed some new seraphs this past week -
He has gathered unto Himself Princess Diana, Mother Teresa, and now Dad.
As a family we are grateful for the principles for which he fought;
(Though, as a son, I have not always followed those paths, I well know if I stray!)

When I walk the beautiful *Gordonville* mountains and valleys
When I see the healed scars and the recovered sward,
When I meet the many whose lives he touched & to whom he made a difference,
I think of the words that were written about another great soul:
"If you would seek his Monument, look around you . . ."

⁴ *Ouseer* = "Old Sir", perhaps from "M'sieur"

To those who have come to join us today, we say thank you.
Thank you for caring enough to take the time to be with him at this moment;
There are so many others from around this country who cannot be here
And from every continent around the world who have been in touch -
They have let us know that their hearts are with us,
Let it not be a time of grieving but of triumph;
We give thanks for a father, a Grandfather, a loving Husband.
A time of gratitude for a life well lived as we pay our respects to a man of Honour.

After singing the Hymn "*The Lord is my Shepherd*", Rev. Harmon gave his address:

Can you, like me, this morning, here in this church breathe in an exquisite fragrance? The fragrance of a life that leaves behind it a beautiful aroma that will not fade with time. It is a sweet fragrance that has wafted into many, many lives. And that fragrance is the life of Roland Brent Kingwill.

Before I came to Graaff-Reinet eight-and-a-half years ago - even before I really knew where Graaff-Reinet was on the map, I was already aware of who Roly Kingwill was. I had seen the marvellous video, "Promise of the Veld", not once but several times, and was greatly impressed. So when I heard that I was to come to Graaff-Reinet, he and Moira were the ones I wanted to meet. And not only that, I was anxious to discover what kind of community had produced this giant of a man.

For he was a giant. I hope this community is aware of just how much larger than life he was and is. Roly would be the first to admit, in his own humble way, that this was not his doing at all. In fact, were he able to today, he would probably argue that I was overstating the case. But the truth is that Roly understood the simple formula: that Roly Kingwill plus God, equals everything you'll ever need. For Roly was a man who listened to God. But that's not all, listening is one thing, but he obeyed, and that's where so many of us fall down. Do you know that he took time *every single day* to spend time alone with God, to listen and respond - and he did this right to the end!

To speak about his faithfulness is a very emotional thing for me. For I have never met anyone whose faithfulness quite matched his. Whether it was in terms of his attendance at church, or his church duties, or for that matter what he did for the community at large, his faithfulness was incomparable. In fact - just to illustrate the point - this last Saturday, the day before he died, he arrived at our⁵ Mens' Breakfast to share in fellowship at 7 in the morning. It means he had had to get up at about half-past-five to struggle to get ready, and he had not been feeling very well. What an incredible witness it was to us all, where many of us, I think, were a little put out at having to get up so early on a Saturday morning!

Roly was a man who brought unbelievable encouragement and example to people and I speak personally here. He and Moira and Janet have been such a support in mine and Maria's life. And I'm not exaggerating when I say that I feel a deep sense of loss and a little fearful of the future without him around.

⁵ *Methodist Mens' Fellowship* have a special Breakfast every Saturday morning

Roly was a man with a message. A message which this world needs to hear again and again. He was a living message telling the story of what God can do in an individual's life and through the individual's life into community life and National Life. He was a man with the heart of Jesus and, yes, like Jesus, people took advantage of him. But he hardly ever complained. He saw it differently to most of us. For he had Jesus in his heart, and there was no condemnation. Jesus had given him a task to do and a life to live and he didn't falter. You know, when I think about it, I don't think I ever heard him criticise anyone!

I started off by talking about the fragrance of his life. I am reminded of a part of a verse of one of our hymns, in which, speaking of Jesus, goes like this:

His reign shall know no end,

And round his pierce'd feet

Fair flowers of paradise extend

Their fragrance ever sweet. (Verse 3, Hymn 271, Methodist Hymnbook)

Roly is inhaling the sweet aroma of those flowers of paradise at this very moment and we praise God and thank him for the life of one through whom we have had a foretaste of that incomparable aroma. A fragrance that will linger for all time with all of our remembrance of him. **AMEN**

The final Hymn was "*Onward Christian Soldiers*", (the "*Kingwill Family Hymn*")

An interesting comment was made to David after the service. Richard Rubidge, (of *Wellwood Farm*) while giving his condolences and congratulations, said to David: "*In spite of all the fine and wonderful things said about Roly, I missed the word that sums him in my mind: Integrity. When I think of him, that is the most lasting impression: a man of utter Integrity.*"

Then we moved the 76 Km, northwards towards the mountains - a very different trip to that which he had travelled as a baby nearly 92 years earlier!

The family graveyard at *Gordonville* lies east of the main homestead, on a slope facing across the valley to the *Sneeuberg* mountains. RBK had chosen it when his own father died in 1956, and, subsequently, quite a few members of his family are now buried there. Even non-members, for there were those whose memories of the times spent on the farm were so poignant, that they had asked to be buried there

And it is a beautiful view! One looks across the willow-trees and shallow dam to the majestic homestead and garden with its varied trees. For some of us, it was almost as if RBK had chosen a special time to go home - for the trees were green with new leaves or in full, glorious blossom with Spring in full cry after Winter.

At the Graveside that afternoon, John Harmon read a passage as a prayer, and then Robert, younger son of RBK, addressed the group. He thanked Neville (Kingwill) and his men who had come to help to prepare the grave, and sister Janet especially for her caring guardianship of RBK over the past years.

He then thanked those present for their concern in coming all the way to the farm, some from as far away as Zimbabwe, Pretoria, Cape Town, and East London.

I want to tell you how proud we are of our father - and how lucky we feel to have been with him. All he did for us - not only as a farmer - leaving us land for our generation and to the next generation, but the faith and purpose he found through God as a Christian gentleman. His wisdom, his humility, his love saw us through the difficult times. It gave us the will to win.

I especially have been fortunate to spend time farming with him. When I left school, instead of going to college or university, Dad invited me to return to work as a farmer. I learnt a lot because he was a marvellous teacher - especially with my hearing difficulties. He helped me understand the sense of right and wrong, the priorities of daily life on the farm - how to grow and develop with fun and humour, and how to enjoy sport.

I noticed his own discipline and obedience. I saw him making constructive plans - building bridges between people, caring for people who came to the farm. We were privileged to see the things that he developed - like the soil conservation policies that he pioneered, education for underprivileged children, creation of job opportunities and so on.

He lies here now, facing the Sneeuberg, the Karroo, and the farm he built on after Oupa Robert Pannell [Kingwill]. This place is his monument.

We need to feel comforted and not be downhearted, but continue to develop and grow to the exciting and positive times ahead. He is happy to see us continue with his work and faith. He left us the path - we are free to decide. We will never forget him.

He asked Doe, his eldest daughter to take over. She introduced RBK's grandson Andrew Gladwin who read some extracts from the telefaxes we had received¹, with a list of the countries from which they had come.

His brother, Christopher, then read the following verses from an old friend of RBK, Bill Page, originally from Ireland, now living in Cape Town, S.A.

To Roly

A prophet and a pioneer
Who saw his country's needs,
Responded not in words alone
But matched them with his deeds.

He sacrificed the instant gain
For plans to save the soil,
And lived to see the earth renewed
By all his years of toil.

¹ These appear earlier in this chapter with other tributes that came in from all over the world

But out beyond the farming world
A vision stirred his heart:
To seek an answer for the strife
That tears Mankind apart.

He found it not in laws or creeds
But with himself to start,
And "sorry" proved the magic word
That opened every heart.

Each day he lived with one intent,
To find God's plan and follow.
It led him to the statesman and
The ordinary fellow.

Across the land his words still ring,
Challenging our greed,
That every single citizen
Will think for others' need.

Doe, then read her own tribute: For my Oupa - when we buried him:

The great pear tree in the lands is in full bloom. The one near the river that Oupa so loved. The tree is like a temple, the way its branches arch up and round to an enclosure, full of white blossoms like confetti at a wedding. Today is his funeral. A graduation ceremony, not a death. 91 years of living and hardly a moment wasted. Discipline in all that time and space for only clarity, an effort not to allow a moment of unconsciousness. Reaching out and thinking big. Thinking for the whole. For the whole world in God consciousness.

And the thing I admired about him the most was his silence; although he was shy, he was tuned in to the great silence of the Karroo, and the great silence of God. He believed that "*If you listen, God speaks*" and just imagine what a better place the world would be if everyone thought like that! The world is so full of childlike beings, all shouting for attention, and not enough wise old beings, listening with wisdom and in peaceful silent thoughtfulness.

To waste not time nor words, and to be sharp and on the ball with a few well chosen words of wisdom. "*You know where the road is,*" was the last thing he said to me. "*The road is long*" was my reply, (for I knew it was time to say goodbye).

Now can I borrow your shoes Oupa, so that I can walk in your footsteps? No! I know how you thought, so I can just keep that consciousness in everyday, and carry it with me lightly. Then you are always with me. We have such big things to do, one step at a time. It's an effort to be awake, to be responsible, a huge challenge. You have led us. Now I know you are so much lighter, and so you have lifted us all up a little to Heaven with you.

Fly now Oupa, we will be a rainbow with you. An Arch-Angel over the whole Karroo.

Paula, her sister, then read the poem that RBK had written on Ascension Day, 41 years earlier when he had buried his own father, Pannell, at that same site:

HOME IS THE FARMER

Home is the farmer, home from his field
Sleep in the soil which you taught to yield
Rest in the land where you lived and rejoiced
Sweated and sorrowed, yet always you voiced
The faith that all would be well in the end
If any were struggling, a hand you would lend
Great hearted, for always of others you thought!
Peacefully rest, honest, true, noble soul
You lived simply the life you believed was your role.
We'll e'er feel the love your great generous heart;
Of us all and of *Gordonville*, you'll e'er be a part.

The Farm staff (from various farms) sang in Xhosa to the tune of "*O God of Bethel*" as the coffin was slowly lowered and the first sods of soil were shovelled onto it by his sons, grandsons and nephews. Then all filed slowly back to enjoy a cup of soup and sandwiches in the big dining room.

For all present, I believe, it had been a day of triumph and rejoicing. One of God's most precious beings had gone home.

Perhaps the final word should be by someone who saw RBK from an entirely different angle - a gentleman barely known to the family, but who had clearly been touched by RBK's life. *The Graaff-Reinet Advertiser* of Thursday 18th September 1997 carried a letter from a Mr Thembanani Pantsi². Perhaps he spoke for many in the Township who had known RBK's commitment to bring change, and been touched by his care.

Through your newspaper, allow me to pay tribute to one of the greatest sons of the Karoo, the late Mr Roland Kingwill. Mr Kingwill was not only a philanthropist but also a humanist. The *Moral Re-Armament Movement* he represented was a voice of reason that constantly reminded us of the purpose of human existence - to love one another to consider moral virtues as the basis of social development.

The great Biblical teaching of "*Do unto others as you would like to be done unto you*" was their motto. The Movement (*MRA*) had produced many outstanding personalities. Among them the late Dr William Nkomo, who was an inspiration to the community of Pretoria. Had the leaders of yesteryear listened to the prophetic voices of *MRA*, the tortuous path our country has had to traverse could have been avoided.

² An activist in the ANC during the struggle against *Apartheid*, he knew many of the leadership of the Black Community, locally as well as country-wide

Members of the MRA not only preached morality but lived it. The treatment they gave their fellow humans was as they said it should be. The late Mr Roland Kingwill epitomised this. When conditions for farm workers were appalling and akin to slavery³, his [workers] lived a life better than any worker in urban townships. Many of us envied them for luxuries they had, e.g. electricity in their homes.

Through his initiative, some black pupils received financial support to enable them to pursue their education. This humanitarian act saved many young men and women from being trapped in the cycle of semi-literacy and illiteracy with its concomitant results of poverty and ignorance. I still cherish a photograph of his wife handing over to me a gift of a book during my final year at the *Graaff-Reinet Bantu Secondary School*.

Mr Kingwill truly lived in the New South Africa. The roads of reconciliation and *Masakhane*⁴ are paths he built with MRA. The community of Graaff-Reinet and District, as they grapple with the changes all around them, such as the changed Basic Conditions of Employment, Labour Relations Act for farm workers, to give them proper ownership etc, should take note from Mr Kingwill's life experience.

I pay homage to a man who lived his life with the motto that "combating soul erosion would eventually combat soil erosion". I conclude by quoting Nikolei Ostrovsky, who wrote: "*Man's dearest possession is life. It is given to him but once in order to live it to its fullest. For him to look at the deeds of his life and to say, 'all my life, all my work is dedicated to the betterment of Mankind'*"

[Compiler's Note: We children knew that Dad had been special - but we were not always as aware as we might have been. As his son, it has been a great honour and challenge to be able to see Dad's life through the eyes of others.]

³ *Slavery* seems a very harsh word to use in terms of farm workers in South Africa at any time but that of the early 19th Century! Yet we must realise that this as it was perceived by many

⁴ *Masakhane* - "*Let's Pull Together*" the effort to get all involved in building a new South Africa





1975, with King Michael (centre) and Queen Anne of Romania (holding Gretchen). Robert is sitting on the front step and back right is Ds. George Danéel, famous Rugby Springbok of 1928 - 1932.

