

The honesty, purity movement of love

TO associate the word "moral" with any person, organization or idea is to invite criticism, praise, suspicion, faith, followers and detractors.

The Moral Re-armament Movement has attracted

all these in its 37-year-old history.

Today, it seems the movement has weathered the worst and capitalized on the best of the attention it has drawn, and has established itself as an organization with a growing influence throughout the world.

The aim of the movement is, depending on how one chooses to look at it, successfully vague or appealingly simple.

The object is, as the movement's name suggests, to rearm individuals morally with the traditional values of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love enshrined in the major religions.

The movement accepts that the world is generally bad and that it must be made good.

It is dedicated to the precept that to change systems, the individuals in them must be changed first.

However, the movement does not favour any par-

ticular system and, ostensibly, does not propose any alternatives or solutions.

According to its public relations director in London, Mr Michael Henderson, Moral Re-armament sets out to convert individuals to a God-based ideology, so liberating them from greed and prejudice and thereby placing them in the ideal frame for working out "the best" solution to their problems.

These attitudes have apparently remained consistent since the foundation of the movement in 1938 by an American, Dr Frank Buchman.

He collected about him a number of people who shared his view that, while the world was re-arming militarily, the next move would — or should — be for Moral Re-armament.

They travelled widely, expounding their views and became known as the Oxford Group.

The movement was initially known by this name in Southern Africa, and still is in Britain.

Moral Re-armament is a registered charity in Britain. Mr Henderson estimates that there are some 1 500 full-time workers such as himself in the world-wide movement.

None of them is paid and all rely on gifts made to them personally and not to the organization.

The organization pays only workers such as cleaners used to maintain its centres.

The centre in London is an extensive complex of offices, conference rooms, studios and includes one of the most comfortably appointed theatres in the city.

The movement has a vast library of films, and a large repertoire of plays and musicals used to convey its ideals.

Criticism of the movement has been as varied as it has been frequent. According to Mr Henderson, the movement faced accusations in World War Two that its followers were pacifists.

In India it has been accused of being Christian, in Britain of not being Christian, and in Communist countries of being

anti-communist.

The movement has also been frequently accused of being sympathetic to Rhodesia and South Africa.

The movement's philosophy espouses the removal of all conflict, including racial conflict.

Because of this the philosophy has appealed to many prominent black African leaders and several South African Bantustan politicians associated themselves with the movement during and after a Moral Re-armament conference in Pretoria a year ago.

At present in Rhodesia, Moral Re-armament has Alec Smith, the son of the Prime Minister, Mr Ian Smith, as one of the movement's full-time workers.

Moral Re-armers are preparing for an international assembly at the University of Rhodesia in Salisbury.

Dr Elliott Gaballah, as vice-president of the African National Council, spoke at the Moral Re-armament assembly in Caux, Switzerland, in 1974.

He spoke of solving the "problem of man", and said solving other problems would follow. — Herald Bureau.