

EDUCATION

'Japan can be lighthouse of the world'

By MICHAEL HENDERSON

Japan is meant to be the lighthouse of Asia. This was the deeply held conviction of a great American, Frank Buchman, who was decorated by the Japanese government for his services to the country. Fifty years ago this year he launched an idea which caught and held the imagination of millions — Moral Re-Armament.

It was the simple concept that hand in hand with the social, racial, and economic changes which the world needed must go a change in the way people live. His challenge, as a church leader once put it, was like a crack of the whip to Christians who had forgotten their mission and a new ideal for sincere Marxists. Toyohiko Kagawa, a friend of Buchman over 40 years, saw it as "the work of the spirit of God which nothing can hinder or stop."

Buchman emphasized the need for absolute moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love as guidelines for public and private life and for taking time in busy lives to seek the direction of God. His message, as he once expressed it to leaders of the Seinenan who were

interdependence of nations and the need to secure stability. It stated, "The key to a spirit of reconciliation and cooperation will be a heart which is open wide enough to accept, understand, and learn from each other of different backgrounds."

When Buchman launched his concept of moral and spiritual rearmament in 1938 it was too late to prevent the onset of World War II. But the influence of his trained teams meant that after the war there was increased receptiveness to the idea of reconciliation. This was particularly evident at the Moral Re-Armament conference center established in neutral Switzerland at Caux above the Lake of Geneva.

To that conference in 1950 came 70 Japanese, including Diet members, governors and mayors. Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida predicted that just as national life had been changed after the visit of Japanese to Europe in 1870 so this group, too, would open a new page in Japanese history.

A recently published book "Japan's Decisive Decade" by Basil Entwistle indicates that this actually happened. And in a message to the 40th anniversary of Caux, then



Michael Henderson DENNIS
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nation admitting that it could be mistaken has a refreshing impact. Perhaps even Americans could think up a few past occasions of which it could safely be said, "We certainly fouled things up that time."

A biography of Buchman published this summer — "On the Tail of a Comet" by Garth Lean — quotes a spokesman for the Japanese government in 1958, then Parliamentary Minister of Foreign Affairs, Takizo Matsumoto, who listed six areas in which Moral Re-Armament helped Japan gain the respect of other nations and establish diplomatic

breakthroughs in negotiations. When President Garcia of the Philippines visited Japan two years later he stated, "The bitterness of former years is being washed away by compassion and forgiveness."

Meanwhile, this work of reconciliation and the outreach of Caux was felt and continues to be felt in many other areas in the world. Over the years more than 200,000 people have attended the Caux conferences. Cardinal Koenig, former Archbishop of Vienna, says, "Even a small part of the story of Caux reveals an astonishing number of political, racial and social problems which have been both confronted and resolved. The movement of the spirit which radiates from Caux is one of the most significant developments of our time."

The 1988 summer sessions in Caux, with Japanese again playing a central role, have as their theme "Time for a moral and spiritual change." The industrial "Round Table," a followup to the recent American meetings, is concentrating on three areas — how to achieve a better balance in world trade and reduce fric-

tion, how to find agreement on the concept of "fairness," and how to develop more joint Japanese, American and European initiatives to assist Third World countries.

This 50th anniversary year is being marked globally in varying ways — from a "yatra" or pilgrimage in India focusing on the true meaning of liberation to an action bringing Christians and Moslems together in northern Nigeria; from an international conference in Korea with the theme "The creation of a world ruled by conscience" to a service of re-dedication, in French, German, and English, in the crypt of Strasbourg Cathedral.

Across the world, as in Japan, there is a network of people, young and old, of all races, some with position, some without, who are working, sometimes together, sometimes alone, to further the moral rearmament of our planet. Some are active in their church, or mosque, or shrine, or synagogue. Some shun any religious affiliation.

But all believe that if we are to have a better world we will have to start by putting things right in our own lives and then

live by the same standards we expect of our leaders. Fifty years of experience in every part of the world would indicate that it is an idea that might be worth trying.

Japan is astonishing the world with breadth of its thinking — with everything from ideas for a global infrastructure fund to the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency; with the way it has become a foremost world economic power; with the quality of its products.

Perhaps it will surprise the world even more with the knowledge of how we are meant to live together.

As Peter Howard, who was responsible for Moral Re-Armament, told the students at Waseda University 25 years ago, "Japan can teach all men everywhere, East and West, the art of social justice, economic growth and lasting peace. Japan, the lighthouse of Asia. If you undertake that amazing, fascinating task then the children of the centuries, yellow, black, white and brown will rise up and call your country blessed."

Michael Henderson is an English journalist living in the United States. His latest book "On History's Coattails" will be published in October.