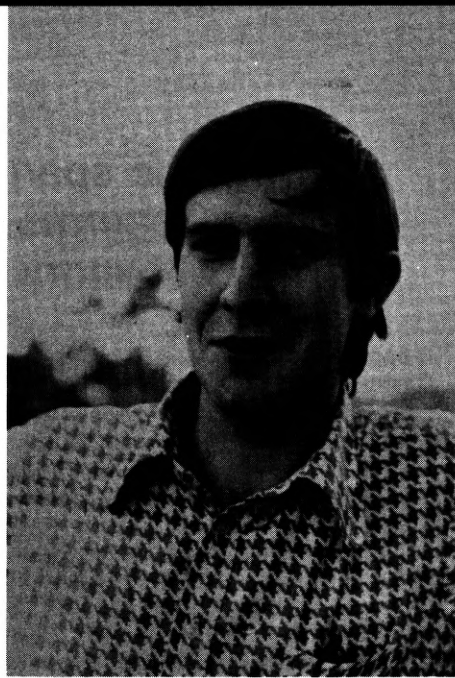
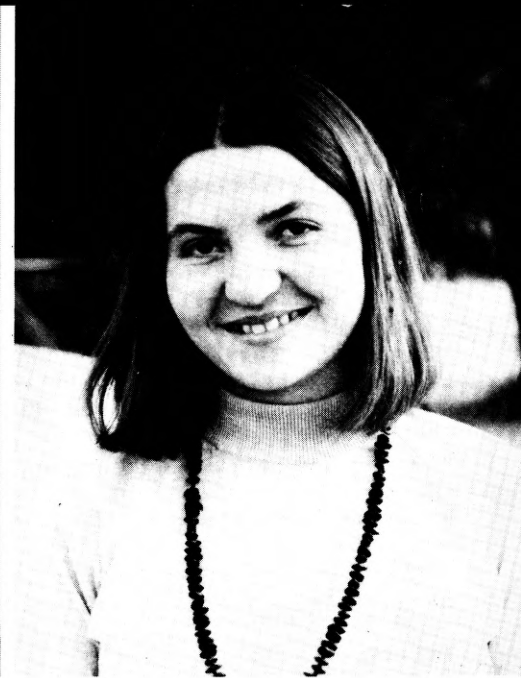




Anthony Phatudi, invitation committee



Reg Barry, invitation committee



Elmarie Payne

REPORT ON MORAL RE-ARMAMENT CONFERENCE

Which way Africa?

JOHANNESBURG APRIL 1976

Over Easter 1976, when sounds of violence echoed around the world and threats of war captured the headlines in Southern Africa, a hundred young people from all races met near Johannesburg. They came from Rhodesia, Swaziland, Ovambo and various parts of South Africa, as well as Australia, Scandinavia and Britain, to seek an Easter experience adequate for the needs of their nations.

“One of my best friends was killed last week,” said a young Rhodesian who had served in his country’s defence forces. “We are living with our nerves in our finger nails. We must find God’s answer.” “How long are we going to allow our young blood to destroy each other because we refuse to change?” asked a black South African.

The conference was not seeking political solutions but the more fundamental change in human attitudes that would make political answers possible. Delegates sought for the experiences and philosophy of life which would lead beyond the present crisis to the creation of a hate-free, fear-free, greed-free Africa.

Addresses by the Hon. Dr Malcolm Mackay, former Australian Cabinet Minister, and Dr Piet Meiring, Dutch Reformed Minister, set the tone for group discussions. “Our job is to build the new society amid the crumbling of the old,” said one speaker. “In fact we have to be the new society – a fellowship of all races and backgrounds who live as friends, equals, comrades, sharing responsibility to restore God to leadership.”

It will take more than programmes of goodwill and expenditure of money to achieve this new society. It will take a change of motive. This report gives the convictions of young Southern Africans who believe that change is possible.

New militancy

Among the delegates was a young African nationalist from Rhodesia who had been arrested for his activities. Although he was acquitted at his trial, he was detained for another month. “All I was planning to do when I got out was to square up with the whites and with some blacks by bloodshed.”

Unexpectedly he was told he was going to be released. Feeling this was an answer to his prayers, he had to reconsider whether he should carry out the intentions he had had while in detention. “I could hear a voice calling within me: ‘Be a man. Love your enemies.’ I decided to wait to see what God would send me.”

Shortly after his release, he met Moral Re-Armament. “I met white men who had changed also, white men who were prepared to share their ideas with black men. I thank God for that.”

With him at the conference was a colleague who had motivated many people to take the actions which led to their arrest. This man apologised and told the conference: “We are all, both blacks and whites, in a boat that is sinking. We have got to call for a mother ship to help us; that ship is the power of God. I’m challenging you to help me in God’s bigger revolution.”

Shocked and astonished

Elmarie Payne — Social Worker, Johannesburg.

I’m an Afrikaner and it is the first time I’ve come to a meeting like this with other races and people who think differently from me. I’m really astonished and shocked because I didn’t know that there were people who regarded me as their enemy. I thought we were living in a country where all was going well. I believed we were united, but didn’t realise there was such a great gap between us. For the first time I began to see I was part of the problem. I feel I can go to my Afrikaans friends and give them a message from God, because I believe He wants our nation to be united.

Black consciousness

Matthews Mpfu — Teacher, Mabopane

I strongly believe and maintain that it’s right to be proud of being a black person — but is black consciousness and black solidarity the ultimate end? Is white consciousness the ultimate end? Must we resort to arms or can we together move in a God-guided direction? I have decided to give up two weeks of my leave in the coming vacation to help bring this idea — that we can find God’s plan for ourselves and our countries — to Southern Africa.

Answer from within

David Hlatshwayo — Student, Swaziland

I believe that the answer for Africa will come not from West or East but from the people who live in Africa.

Not leaving
Jan Horn — TV Producer, Johannesburg

Racial conflict is a worldwide problem. Is it possible to find an answer to this problem here in Southern Africa and export it to the world? I think it is.

There are some people who are leaving the country. Some leave so as to fight the problem with arms from outside — others because they think they can escape from the problems.

Solutions will not be found that way. One does not escape the problem by leaving, one only forfeits one's chance in life to solve it.

That is why my wife and I with our three small sons have decided to stay.

Act now
Anthony Phatudi — Teacher, Lebowa

We are moving towards a deadline, and it's not for us to wait until we reach it, but to act now. It's high time we put right the wrong we have done.

I want to apologise to all whites. I thought you were the people who were causing all the evil that came my way. I thought I'd never in my life greet or talk to a white man. When a white family entertained and cared for me in their home, I started to view life differently.

Responsibility
Thelma Mosupye — Nursing sister, Pretoria

I have decided to demand of myself as a young person the maturity of motive and moral responsibility that I so look for in my leaders.

Frustration, families and freedom

The brother who left

"I have learnt to love this country — the Afrikaner family, the English family, the black and the Indian family."

Mr Subbiah Kistasamy, a South African born Indian now teaching in London told the conference how he had left the country 18 years ago determined never to return. He had arrived in London embittered by the situation in his home country.

"I was a convinced atheist because I saw too many injustices in the world, but when somebody challenged me to listen to God I tried the experiment. I didn't get ideas about race, international relations or politics, but simply to stop dominating my family. The atmosphere in my home changed dramatically."

"Our family had become united, and we had found a faith in God. The next question was, what was our role in Britain? I realised that in Britain too there were people of many different races. We decided to open the doors of our house and share our experiences of change, and freedom from hate and racial division. Since then several thousand people have come through our small house in London."

It begins at home
Cashier in a Salisbury Supermarket

For four years I lived in a hostel where five people shared a room and a hundred shared one toilet.

I used to criticise the whites for their attitude of superiority to and oppression of the black man in Rhodesia. When I looked into my own life I found that I had oppressed and felt superior to my younger brothers.

Since I realised this, God has shown me ways to change the attitudes of the white people and black people I meet through my work and at home.



Jan Horn and his family

Faith and society
Alec Smith — Photographer, Salisbury

Let's not pretend that there's nothing wrong in our countries or that because we're not involved in doing what's wrong, it's not our business. I get frustrated when I think of people who act and live as I used to, sitting down and believing that if you close your eyes the world's going to pass you by.

My life was in a mess when I was faced with the absolute truth of Christ which challenged me directly to give my life to God. This experience transformed my life, gave me a fresh reason for living and a new direction.

Yet the people around me were still the same. I tried to relate my Christian experience to society and to the war that had just broken out on our North-Eastern border. When I met the force of Moral Re-Armament in Salisbury I saw the key. Here was a group of committed Christians who were actively trying to change what was wrong in society.

I began to realise that I didn't really know the people in my own country — their longings and aspirations. The challenge to me was to live my faith in such a way that it was relevant for every person in my country.

I want to be cleansed from anything that is going to divide me from my fellow countrymen.



Lulama Basini

New relationships are possible
Quentin Volkwyn — Sales representative, Johannesburg

I'm the only Coloured person working in an Afrikaans firm. Recently they sent me into a remote country area. Here I met prejudice against me because of my colour. I was sometimes unable to find accommodation although I knew there were beds available. I had to sleep in my car.

This made me bitter and resentful towards the Afrikaners. Since I realised that my attitude of hatred was wrong and apologised for it, I've found a love for the Afrikaner people.

The sparks are glowing for a national fire of the Holy Spirit. Generate that kind of fire in Southern Africa and this will be a turning point of history in this continent.

The Hon. Dr Malcolm Mackay

Bread winner
A young Rhodesian woman who works in a clothing factory

I have been the breadwinner for my family since my father died six years ago. But I was cheating my mother. She thought I was giving her all my pay, but in fact I only gave her three quarters of it and kept the rest for myself. If she asked me about money I told her I didn't have any.

Last year I went to a meeting where people talked about absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute love and absolute unselfishness. These standards were a shock to me because while I knew what they meant, I was not following them.

I went home and decided to speak to my mother. I told her that I had been keeping money back from her, and about the meeting I had been to. She was very grateful for the change in me.



Daniel Lephoto, invitation committee

Co-existence or change
Renske Wanrooij — Gwelo

I was born in South Africa but have lived most of my life in Rhodesia. I grew up to believe that I was better than anyone else. I was used to servants and a comfortable way of life. When I visited Britain I began to realise that my superiority had nothing to do with colour, because I even felt superior to the friends I was working with. If an arrogant person like me can be different, anyone can be different.

While overseas I met Dr William Nkomo, the great South African leader.

He said, "There was a time when we wanted to drive the white man into the sea, but now we are fighting for a new type of white person with whom we can work to remake our continent. Are you that kind of person?" I knew I wasn't the sort of person Nkomo talked about and only then did I realise that our help was needed in the task he had taken on.

I was challenged when Dr Nkomo said "If blacks and whites can live together not just on a basis of co-existence and tolerance, but on a basis of moral change, we shall change Southern Africa." I have decided to give my life so that my country and the world will be different.

Cash and conscience
Don Barnett — Accountant, Salisbury

We have an aim that our children can grow up in a country where colour and race needn't matter.

The following of absolute standards takes a tremendous weight off one's shoulders. I considered overstating a medical aid claim but immediately the feeling of uneasiness and thought of the effort needed to cover up made me choose the easier way to be completely honest.

Friendship ends fear
Penny Barnett — Housewife, Salisbury

A year ago I went from tea party to tea party. Up to two weeks ago we had never entertained an African in our home. Recently I have come to know a number of Africans and I have made some real friends. Because of that I have completely lost my fear. I feel that if in South Africa and Rhodesia we can get to know each other as people, colour aside, we will lose our fear and learn to respect and care for each other.



Don and Penny Barnett and their sons

Practical concern
Suzan Daneel — Pretoria

I've passed through stages where I felt nothing for my country and then felt very concerned for it politically. Now although I'm still concerned for it, I know that unless I have an answer to division in my own life I can forget about an answer coming for the whole country.

Start with yourself
Reg Barry — Pretoria University

As a student at University I was keen on seeing change, but while I spoke about it very little happened. I then met people who said that if you want to see change in your society, the best place to start is with yourself and that if you listened, God would tell you what to do.

One of the thoughts I had was to be honest with my professor about a project in which I had cheated.

As young people I feel that under God we can create a new society if we start by putting right what is wrong in our own lives.

Uniters not Dividers

June Chabaku — Social Worker, Soweto

The need for today is to accept the challenge to be personally responsible for whatever happens in your country.

Moral Re-Armament is not out to make good people. It is out to change people to change society. This idea has given me wider vision and passion to stand for what is right no matter what it costs.

I have been part of the problem. But let us all begin to be part of the answer. Hatred, jealousy, superiority, racism — these are the things that divide us. Look at them as an individual and aim to answer them in yourself and in the nation.

We hate each other. Hate is a dirty thing. Let's be absolutely honest about it. But we can use it positively if we start hating sin and stop hating people.

I was born a Christian, brought up as one, lived in a Christian home, but became bitter when I saw how Christians lived in a country that is supposed to be Christian — where people live only for material comforts and all the luxuries they can get. I saw poor whites but had no sympathy for them because they had opportunities which they did not use. I thought it was a colour issue. Today I know it is not, because poverty knows no colour. Poor people must know that they have dignity because it is also their job to put right what is wrong in society.

I have a deep concern for my country. Yet, while I talked about unity, I was not united at home. I've had hurts, insults, and when one is misunderstood one feels bitter and sometimes wants to pay back. These are the things that destroy us.

At Johannesburg station I saw young white blood preparing to go to the border. I wondered who they were going to fight. It hurts me so much because I have begun to love my countrymen and I also thought of the young blacks who get out of the country. They join forces outside to bring change and brother fights brother and they are all South Africans. How long are we going to let our young blood destroy each other because we refuse to change? Can't the country change peacefully from inside? We need these people back. You and I can be the answer if we take a personal responsibility for the future of this country. We need uniters not dividers.

I want to spend the next year working without salary to help make this vision a reality.

Whites will follow
Lulama Basini — Teacher, Swaziland

People talk about the whites' attitude of superiority. I realise that I've been proud and class conscious. I feel I should start to treat my own black people in the right way first. Then the white man will see what happens between myself and my fellowman.

No soft option



Les Dennison

I come from England where I am a building trade worker; we have a hell of a fight going on there. But what is happening here in Southern Africa is imperative and urgent. Which way Africa? It's important, because the way Africa goes, the world will go.

I am an ex-Communist and have seen a more positive, revolutionary idea that bridges classwar. People are so concerned with their own little thing that they allow the Marxists who have a world vision, passion and commitment, to get on with what they are doing.

As a Marxist I was trained in 1947-48 on the role of Africa in the world. Here Marxism was not out to exploit the classwar as in Europe, but rather the effects of the colonial period on the divisions between black and white to control the vast mineral resources there.

Burned at injustice

I was brought up in a working class area. My father was a miner and I was the eldest of six. I remember the days when things were tough. I grew up to be aware of certain contradictions in society. I burned and hated the poverty and injustices that stemmed from a system where people suffered. The vast majority of people, when they become aware of the contradictions in society tend to take the soft option. You begin to blame the other fellow, class or nation — and that absolves you from blame. You deaden your conscience so you can live with it. I could not deaden mine so I became trained as a Marxist. I believed in the inevitability of the classwar.

But in the process I destroyed many things, most of all my own family.

Alternative discipline

Then I met a force of men who presented me with an alternative — a superior ideology — it was to do with faith.

Now I didn't believe in God. You cannot feed on a diet of dialectical materialism and Marxism without completely rejecting the concept of God and the Holy Spirit.

But these men spelled out a vision and a plan that didn't just include the working class, but included all classes. Someone talked about a discipline based on absolute moral standards — honesty, purity, unselfishness and love — and that of listening to God and drawing upon His wisdom. They said that if we obey these disciplines we can affect situations around us, in our families, industries, nations. I said that was pious claptrap, impossible. This man was honest enough to say that the discipline he lived by was humanly impossible.

For the first time I met someone who actually believed in God, who did not go to great lengths to push God down my throat. These people told me to listen to the deepest thing in my heart — my conscience, and to measure the thoughts I got by those four absolute moral standards.

From family to factory

I thought this was rather naive, but I had nothing to lose so I tried it. I had to face things in my family. My eldest I kicked out when he was nineteen, my second son who left home called it a hell-hole. My wife, after being married twenty-five years, said "You Dennison, you talk about unity, peace and brotherhood, but you are the biggest blasted dictator who ever lived in a home." I went and apologised to my eldest son. My second son came back home. My wife, Vera, and I were married in a church, Reconciliation began. Here was something I couldn't deny.

I took it to industry. I applied these disciplined ideas — a man who did not believe in God. There began a set of coincidences by which I was brought to the truth of God.

Faith in perspective

This is the real dignity that all ordinary men and women need to find and I believe can find. When we get this dignity, this authority, then I believe we can go to our leadership without hate or bitterness. It's this simple thing where we get God's authority, through putting straight the things that are wrong in our lives.

I pray and long that people will experience what Jesus Christ is all about — and then relate it ideologically, so that what you do in Africa is relevant to Britain and Europe.

Les Dennison

Immediate action

Delegates left the conference determined to bring a new spirit to their families, friends, jobs, universities and countries.

As an immediate practical step, the fourteen delegates from Rhodesia, both black and white, outlined their plans to form a mobile force to take their experiences of an answer to bitterness, frustration and arrogance to the hot spots of the country. Films, plays and books would be amongst the weapons used. Matthews Mpofo, a teacher from Mabo-pane and Dan Lephoto, an information host from Johannesburg and several other South Africans pledged themselves to come and help. The mobile force has already been invited to Salisbury, Que Que, Gwelo and Bulawayo.

Delegates from Swaziland and parts of South Africa also planned similar programmes in their areas.



"Before a God-led unity every last problem will be solved. Hands will be filled with work, stomachs with food, and empty hearts with an ideology that really satisfies. That is what Moral Re-Armament is out for. It gives faith to the faithless, but also helps men of faith to live so compellingly that cities and nations change. A nation where everyone cares enough and everyone shares enough, so that everyone has enough, will pattern a new social and economic order for this and all future generations. A nation at peace within itself will bring peace to the world.

"Until we deal with human nature thoroughly and drastically on a national scale, nations must still follow their historic road to violence and destruction."
Dr Frank Buchman

This challenge is more crucial today than ever before. The decision is ours.

For further information write to P.O. Box 10144, Johannesburg 2000; or 3 Lawley Road, Westcliff, Johannesburg 2193. Phone 41-4829, 23-1697.

This report is also available in Afrikaans. Further copies can be ordered. 15c per copy.