

"GATEWAY TO THE HOPE AND SAFETY OF AFRICA"

NEW YEAR ASSEMBLY FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT

Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia

December 30, 1957 - January 7, 1958

From: P.O. Box 10144, Johannesburg, South Africa.

"GATEWAY TO THE HOPE AND SAFETY OF AFRICA"

"As we meet here there is an Afro-Asian conference meeting in Cairo, and events are taking place in Indonesia and other parts of the world which indicate that there is an urgent need for the world to find something superior. It is the age of the Sputniks, when man is intoxicated by his material advance. At this stage man must find some spiritual basis. The world has got to be brought back to sanity. When I view this conference in that light, I regard it as one of the most historic conferences ever held on this continent."

With these words, Dr. William Nkomo, co-founder and first President of the African National Congress Youth League of South Africa, gave the setting for the Assembly for Moral Re-Armament which took place in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, over the New Year. There for eight days 250 people of all races from South Africa, the Rhodesias and Kenya met with the purpose of finding together how to take an answering ideology to a continent and the world.

Among them were men from South Africa and the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland who mould the destiny of millions of people. From Northern Rhodesia came Mr. Lawrence Katilungu, President-General of the Northern Rhodesia African Mineworkers' Trade Union, and Mr. Godwin Lewanika, President of the Northern Rhodesia Mines African Salaried Staff Association and son of the great Paramount Chief Lewanika of Barotseland. They brought with them members of their families and of their union executives. They came from a critical situation on the Copperbelt where the serious fall in the price of copper is causing unemployment and affecting the economy of the Federation.

Dr. Nkomo continued:

"Today the West, represented by America, is at the peak of materialistic advancement and the East, represented by Russia, is also at the peak of materialistic development. On one side, Western democracy gives lip service to God, and on the other side, godless materialism challenges democracy. Unless we find the third way now there will be no world for my son, my daughters, my friends, and your children to live in. I believe MRA is the one idea which can bring sanity to man at this time, which can bring us the answer we need. We have so to change that we become a united force, powerful enough to give Africa and the world that new dynamic which alone can bring lasting peace to the world."

South Africa

A hundred South Africans travelled to be present at the Assembly. Among them were five African Directors of the new Consolidated African Commercial Enterprises, the first African wholesale company to be formed in South Africa. One of them, Mr. B. J. Mabuza, is the pioneer of African business in Johannesburg since he first opened his shop in Market Street many years ago. Another of them, Mr. Llewellyn Ncwana, business director and insurance supervisor, spoke of the unity that MRA had brought to his family. He said:

"If there is no unity in your family, there is no unity in the nation. I wrote an apology to all the members of my family. Over Christmas for the first time members of my family came to my home from all over South Africa, even those I had not seen for ten years. For the first time in my life, I know my family and they know me."

Mr. Cyril Pearce, General Manager of John Dickinson (Africa) Ltd., told the Assembly:

"MRA must be fundamental to all that we think and do. As I am, so is South Africa. The sins of South Africa are the result of thousands of men of every race living the sort of life I have lived. I can never expect my country to find an answer unless I live that answer myself. I long to see unity in this continent and the world. Personal change must issue in taking responsibility for my nation."

Among the clergy who attended the Assembly were the Reverend S. S. Tema of Pretoria, Assistant Moderator of the Transvaal Dutch Reformed Mission Church, and Bishop Ball of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Sophiatown

Miracles of reconciliation took place daily at the Assembly. Two African political leaders, organisers of boycott and protest meetings in Sophiatown, spoke together. One, a youth leader, described how he had organised an attack on the life of the other man after which he had to be taken to hospital. The man who had been attacked responded: "All is well between us now. I know what a fighter my friend is, and I am glad to fight shoulder to shoulder with him in MRA."

Mr. P. Q. Vundla, Chairman of the Western Native Township Advisory Board, Johannesburg, said:

"All eyes are on South Africa and particularly Johannesburg, which is the centre of African politics. I used to be a very heated politician. I was blind with hatred. I didn't give way

to any white man I met in the street. I would bump my way through the streets of Johannesburg because I felt I was a son of the soil and more entitled than they were to all the things in Africa. Miracles have been happening at this Assembly. Men from the north and the south have met here and decided to be guided by God, which is a great achievement. Moral Re-Armament is for everybody everywhere. I am happy to stand here with my wife and son. I pledge myself to be with this force always, and there is no turning back."

Mrs. Vundla said:

"I have decided to ask God to show me the way to be a guided mother for my nation. As a woman I will play the right part as long as I am guided by God. When I get back I have decided to put things right with all the people I have been bitter against and to fight shoulder to shoulder with my husband."

Mr. Nico Ferreira, a former official of the Native Affairs Department in Pretoria, followed Mr. and Mrs. Vundla:

"I believe that the future of millions depends on whether people like Mr. Vundla and myself find unity. Mr. Vundla, one of the greatest African leaders on this continent, was planning the last day of people like me in Africa. I grew up in South Africa in an Afrikaans home and went to an Afrikaans university. I was a Nationalist and I wanted South Africa for us. We had to find the answer to the things that divided us. In me it was superiority and selfishness, fear of the Africans and bitterness against the English-speaking people. I found the answer when I accepted absolute moral standards and God's guidance for my life. We in Africa have to find unity, not just so that we can live happily but so that we together can take an answer to the world that desperately needs it."

Students

Students from five universities and from training colleges in Rhodesia and South Africa, some travelling over Christmas, gave their holidays to prepare for the Assembly and to get training in the ideology of Moral Re-Armament. Two of them, an African and a European, assessed the Assembly. Mr. Temba Maboep of Port Elizabeth said:

"You know what type of young men and women are bred from universities and colleges in our days. I was a typical student from one of those colleges. I have been bred with

the belief that the best idea was that of Moscow. Coming to this conference has made me realise that there is an idea that encompasses not only Moscow and not only Washington but the world at large. I am part of this revolution and I am prepared to fight with all the powers at my disposal to the end of my life."

Mr. Richard Rosenthal, a law student of Cape Town University, said:

"I was the sort of person who advertised himself as a Liberal. I wrote furious letters to the press, made loud comments in the train and argued with all my friends. I thought I was clever, brave and 'up to the moment' in damning the Government and the Afrikaans people. But in my daily relationship with the Africans and Coloured people, I behaved in a falsely patronising way. I regarded the African as infinitely inferior. For all this I am deeply ashamed and ask forgiveness.

"To me this conference has been a real eye-opener into how serious the threat of Communism is to my country, South Africa; what a lead they have on us, and how short is the time we have left. It has been a revelation into the sort of life I have been leading and the shocking decadence of our age. It has shown me that the moral re-armament of individuals and nations is the only possible hope for the world and to this I am committed."

Afrikaans Nationalist

Mrs. Marie van Selm of South Africa said:

"I am a Nationalist; I am Afrikaans-speaking. It is a miracle for me to stand together here with African women and to fight for the one big thing we see - that is to rebuild the world. I am typical of my race. I lived with tremendous bitterness and criticism of the British, and with arrogance towards the African people. I often spoke of how much I loved South Africa, but I lived as I pleased with my time and my money. It was when I met MRA and began to have guidance from God that I faced absolute moral standards. That made me see I needed to make restitution to races I had exploited. I know today that no one race can do it. We have to do it together on the basis of rebuilding the world."

English-speaking farmer

Mr. Roland Kingwill, sheep farmer from the Karroo, South Africa, speaking with his family, said:

"The first thing I want to say as a European farmer is that I realise I come from the most privileged people of South Africa. I want to apologise to everyone here for the many years I lived selfishly, thinking only of myself and what I could get out of the land. We want to live for the rest of our lives not only to make up for the past but for what this idea can mean in the future. I believe Africa can decide the future, because Africa's voice can speak to both East and West with something completely new, and both will respond. Africa can give the world the new lead she is looking for."

Rhodesia

Among the Rhodesian African leaders at the Assembly were Mr. Isaac Samuriwo, Chairman of the Southern Rhodesia African Association; Mr. Aidan Mwamuka, Chairman of the Southern Rhodesia African Chamber of Commerce; Mr. J. Z. Savanhu, African Federal Member of Parliament; Mr. T. G. C. Cigomah, Senior African Welfare Worker, Harare, Salisbury; Chief Mangwende and Chief Chiota of the Salisbury District, and Chief Sigola of the Bulawayo District.

Mr. Mwamuka, who was one of the hosts of the Assembly, said:

"This is a momentous year for Central Africa, with new franchise proposals coming before Parliament. I believe this conference will play a very important part in helping us to make the right decisions. With the Holy Spirit working amongst us, we can become a vital factor in helping this country to move along the right road. For years I have tried to assess one force that is likely to decide and help to solve the racial and personal difficulties in this country. I find no other force. I think the answer is found in Moral Re-Armament."

A European miner from the Copperbelt, Mr. Peter Hosken, spoke of the effect of Moral Re-Armament underground at the well-known Roan Antelope Mine:

"I have been in Rhodesia all my life. Nothing less than MRA is going to answer the problems in this country and the rest of the world. I realised how fruitless my superiority was and one day when I went underground I gathered together the men who were working with me and apologised to them. We started to fight for what was

right, not who was right. Underground the people became real. I want to make the same sacrifices as the Africans made for the world through the film 'Freedom'. I am giving 20% of my salary to the work of Moral Re-Armament."

The Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Native Affairs of Southern Rhodesia received a delegation of Africans and Europeans from the Assembly.

The cost of the Assembly was covered by people of all races, often at great sacrifice. Two people, one a nurse, sold their life insurances and gave the proceeds. African schoolmasters gave a percentage of their salaries. Contractors lent lorries for transport and many others contributed gifts in kind and money.

"Freedom"

The film "Freedom" was shown several times during the Assembly. At a special showing immediately afterwards a member of the Federal Cabinet and five Federal Members of Parliament were among the audience. Speaking after seeing "Freedom", Mr. Godwin Lewanika, who is also the founder of the African National Congress of Northern Rhodesia, said:

"I believe this conference to be the gateway to the hope and safety of Africa. I do not think we are too late to unite the races. Something has begun in Africa, something that will save Africa. I dedicate myself without reservation to all that MRA stands for. After seeing the film 'Freedom', the policy of partnership has become more real to me than ever before. I am confident that what Dr. Frank Buchman has started will pave the way for world peace and happiness. If everyone can start with himself, his example will impress others and he will be a torchlight in whatever corner of the world he may be."

Mr. C. H. Burns of Johannesburg, summing up the conference, said:

"We have seen at work an idea big enough to set men of bitterness and prejudice free to be guided by God. We have seen God's plan for the continent being worked out in terms of character, not colour. We have seen trained revolutionary minds yielding to a greater revolution. We have seen men moving from confusion to clarity, and a new leadership being born. We have seen a force grow from diverse elements. We have seen the Holy Spirit at work transforming men and situations, when the desire for human domination goes."