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"THERE IS NOTHING NEW IN MRA." IS THIS TRUE OR FALSE? GIVE YOUR REASONS.

"Why, there's nothing new in MRA", says the good Christian (and implies, "Why don't you all pack up and go home?") Another man speaks for half an hour from the platform at Caux to prove that there is nothing new in MRA and to imply that if this is true, we ought all to accept it. Both come to the same conclusion, but are they right or wrong? To help both of them to see the real significance of MRA we need to know the answer to this question. The principles which lie behind MRA are certainly not new and can all be found in history. But the world today is different from what it has been at any other time in history. There may be similarities with other ages, but there never has been exactly the same situation. MRA meets the need of this ideological age - it has been prepared for this particular moment in history. Its basic truths are found all through history, but they form today a world ideology. Perhaps the newness of MRA might be summed up by saying that the truths on which it is based have never before been put all together as a universal ideology as they are in Moral Re-Armament.

Frank Buchman has said of MRA: "It is the full message of Jesus Christ. It is putting the message in a way that the world will understand." Seeing the same Christian truths practiced through history, we can feel confidence that MRA is not a dreamed-up theory but is based on principles known to man for many centuries.

It recognizes the ills of the world today not as economic or political or social but as moral - in other words, sin. It is not economic injustice or social inequalities or lack of education that is the root of the evil, but materialism in every man, whether that materialism is organized or unorganized. The prophets of the Old Testament saw the same thing in their people and pleaded with them to turn back to God before it was too late. John Wesley did the same thing for England at the time of the Industrial Revolution. These men called people back to the same truths on which MRA is based. What are some of these principles?

Take first absolute moral standards. We think immediately of Moses and the Ten Commandments - absolute standards which God gave to His chosen people. The four standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love are found in the Sermon on the Mount. These same standards, expressed perhaps in different words, are found in other religions of the world. Then there is the guidance of God. Again this is an idea which has come down through history. God spoke to Abraham, to Joseph, to the prophets. The opening words of the Koran say, "Guide us to the Good Road." Great world leaders have listened to God. Abraham Lincoln said that he was confident that when the Almighty wanted him to do a thing, He found a way of letting him know. If this is true for the great leaders, why not for the millions of ordinary men? An ordinary teen-age peasant girl, Joan of Arc, through obeying what God told her to do, was able to unite France, drive out the invader and save the country.

Next is change, the heart of the Christian message. MRA calls for the full dimension of change - social, economic, national and international change, all based on personal change. Through this personal change, in which the past

is forgiven, we put our will under the will of God and He makes a new man, will come all the other change. Change is a fact in history. One of the most dramatic instances of change is the story of Paul on the Road to Damascus. Another time a gay, wealthy young man in Italy got change and built up around him a group of men who vowed to live in poverty and obedience and devote their lives to the service of God. That man we know as St. Francis of Assisi. Countless others have fought for social, economic, national or international change, with or without the change in human nature to go with it. William Wilberforce, through a personal experience of change, devoted his life to fighting against the slave trade in England. Karl Marx flamed with a passion to bring about economic change. We think of Woodrow Wilson with his vision of international peace, which led to the League of Nations.

Through force or through change we get teamwork. Men have found all through history that they could get much more done when several people worked together than when there was just one alone, both through all contributing creative ideas or all pitching in to do a job. The cathedrals of Europe are certainly, among other things, great monuments to teamwork. The countries of Europe today are facing the fact that more unity between them may be the only solution to their economic ills.

Change, absolute moral standards, the guidance of God, teamwork - these are some of the basic principles of MRA. As Frank Buchman has said, "You will find here the old fundamental truths - but you get them with a mighty moving crescendo." "We are in a global effort to win the world to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. . . There is your ideology." If these ideas are found all through history, what then is new about MRA? Moral Re-Armament is a universal ideology. Let us examine these two elements - "universal" and "ideology".

First, MRA is universal. It is for everyone, everywhere. Frank Buchman calls it "the superior ideology" "above party, race, class, creed, point of view or personal advantage." The materialist ideologies are built on the divisive things in man's nature such as hate or greed. Therefore they have never achieved this universality. Communism is for one class and would liquidate those who stand in its way. Hitler's ideology proclaimed the superiority of one race. MRA builds on the positive qualities in men which can unite them. It is Christianity as a world ideology. You may think of that old hymn: "In Christ there is no East or West, In Him no South or North." We Christians today often think we are a universal faith, that anyone is welcome to have a part. But we have not thought of it as our job to give an ideology to the whole world, Christian and non-Christian, every class and race. Perhaps St. Paul and the early Christians came closest to this. Their fellowship included noblemen and slaves, men of all races. Paul said, "There is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all." He thought of Christianity as for everyone everywhere. But as far as we know, he thought in terms of converting everybody to Christianity. He didn't think of Christianity as giving a uniting idea in which all faiths could have a part immediately. The world that St. Paul knew was much smaller than ours of today and that conversion may have been possible as far as he knew. But today we need to enlist the millions of all religions in the fight for a positive ideology. It may be that they will not understand right away the Christian heart of MRA, but they certainly can grasp the idea of the four standards and the guidance of God and find a basis for it in their religion. Caux has furnished proof of this. A leading Burmese editor said at Caux that "Moral Re-Armament reflects the teachings of the Buddha". "If Confucius were alive

today, he would be here," said Dr. Chen Li-fu at an MRA World Assembly at Los Angeles. We have mentioned earlier what leading Muslims have told us the Koran says about the Good Road. In another place it says that God will never change circumstances till people themselves change. Every man and every nation has a part to play in MRA.

That is MRA - "universal". What about MRA as the Christian ideology? What new things do we find? If an ideology is made up of a philosophy, a passion and a plan, we must look for all these three elements together to find the times when Christianity has been lived as an ideology. We certainly could not say that of Christianity as it is usually known today. Perhaps the early Christian era mentioned above is the best example of this. They certainly had all three elements in their life together, and the result was a tremendous force and life-changing power which swept across Europe.

What about the Middle Ages? We know that at that time the Church wielded tremendous, even dictatorial, power in the lives of the people. Its influence was felt strongly in every phase of life - education, politics, government, home life. Instead of the national feeling we know today, there was a real sense of one great Christian family. And yet eventually the whole thing fell apart. Why was this? Did people find that Christianity was no good as an ideology? Or did they stop living it as an ideology? We know that as the Church got more and more power, many of its representatives lost their passion and life-changing power. They couldn't change the kings and other secular rulers because they themselves stopped living what they talked about. Christianity ceased to be lived as an ideology. The philosophy was still there, but the passion and plan had gone out of it. In MRA Christianity again becomes a living force in people and nations.

We said earlier that the world situation has never been exactly the same before and that we need an answer for this particular moment in history. Today we must think in terms of the millions of the world. MRA says that through personal change, we will have economic change as well. An age of abundance will be possible. This is another new conception found in MRA - that Christianity as an ideology must be responsible for the economic needs of the millions and show how an age of abundance for all can come about.

In our age man's knowledge has been built up to a point where no one man could possibly know or do adequately all that goes into any particular job of leadership, such as running a government or industry. He may still run things, but he must work with a team. MRA believes that more and more leadership must go to a team of men rather than just to one man alone. One of the great accomplishments of Frank Buchman's life has been the building up of a team around him in which leadership goes to the spiritually fit. He always thinks and talks in terms of "we". The same principle of teamwork has already been applied very much in science, especially during the war, and will be applied to the creative arts as well. The widest application of teamwork is something made necessary by the age in which we live and something not seen before in history on such a scale or in so many phases of life.

So we see Moral Re-Armament - a universal ideology based on century-old principles applied on a world scale. Our friends who say there is nothing new in MRA have not yet grasped the true significance of this answer which God has raised up for our age to answer materialism and lead men and nations to the new world.