

NEWSLETTER

STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT *Lakehead College*



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Editorial

MORAL RE-ARMAMENT

This article is mainly for the benefit of those who went to Monday's revival meeting and left still wondering what Moral Re-Armament was all about. Since getting a straight answer out of those boys was like trying to get blood out of a stone, I decided to look up a little information on the 'movement' and discovered the following:

The program of moral re-armament was launched in 1938 by Dr. Frank Buchman, who meant MRA to be a "God-guided campaign to prevent war by moral and spiritual awakening." Followers had to dedicate themselves to the four absolutes: Absolute Honesty, Absolute Purity, Absolute Unselfishness, and Absolute Love. Their contention is that once all the leaders of the world have adopted these standards, the world will be saved.

The movement failed to prevent war, however, and it earned considerable censure for seeming to rely heavily on "changing" dictators; Buchman had the misfortune to exclaim publicly, "I thank heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler." After World War II MRA turned to attacking communism. Their technique for fighting the Reds is still that of changing the world by a "god-guided" elite—a program that has little endorsement these days from the clergy. The movement has been repeatedly attacked by Roman Catholic leaders as a kind of fake religion. Moral Re-Armament has also been condemned for, among other things, its "hectic heartiness, its mass gaiety, and its reiterated slogans as a colossal drive of escapism from...responsible living." It has also been referred to as a kind of "Salvation Army for the middle classes."

Such attacks have not kept MRA from prospering. For a U.S. headquarters, it has built a multi-million dollar establishment on Michigan's Mackinac Island, with room for 1,000 visitors. This kind of luxury has always brought criticism, but Frank Buchman had an answer. "Isn't God a millionaire?" he would ask.

It must be conceded to the movement that, while the over-intensive pressure tactics of some of its zealots have often caused irritation and antagonism, it has never failed to attract its quota of distinguished and useful persons. Like any other movement—legitimately enough—MRA seeks to capture the young, and especially those at universities.

The New Statesman concludes that MRA is but a morale building and propagandist instrument in the Cold War.

The Spectator states that moral re-armament is not all harm. The full-time workers spend a certain amount of their time in visiting the scenes of industrial, civil or international disputes and in trying to persuade the leaders involved to enter into reasonable negotiation with the other side. MRA undoubtedly exaggerates the number of its successes in this field, but any success at all is well worth while, and nobody can say these activities are likely to do harm.

The harm is all on the personal level. They fail to see that those virtues they profess can never be the norm for any community larger than a monastery. This is the great and obvious fallacy in the MRA programme. To convert the industrial and political leaders of the world to early Christian principles and to keep them working along such lines, would be like counting grains of sand in a high wind. The dichotomy is evident even in the organization of MRA itself, which, in its penchant for lavish living and its dubious methods of publicity, has failed to live up to the virtues professed by its individual members. MRA's cry is that the present choice is between Moral Re-Armament and Communism. But if MRA ever achieved real power, nonconformists might find all too little to choose between the two regimes.

...Jack Reynolds

The following were received in reply to an article which appeared in last week's Newsletter:

To the Editor:

We, the members of Xi Upsilon Chapter, Beta Sigma Phi, feel you have made a most unfair and incorrect reference to us in your March 11th copy of the Newsletter.

The prime reason for three hundred people playing bridge at the University Centre on March 4th was to raise a scholarship for a student attending your college.

You neglected any mention of the scholarship. We found your article too biased to believe that the majority of students take this attitude.

We are not a service group. As an international organization of young women, we aim to improve ourselves socially and culturally. However, we do sponsor one annual service project of our own choice. For the past nine years, this choice has been the Scholarship Bridge. This project entails several weeks of organization, to which our girls give wholeheartedly of their time and effort, so you can understand why we did not appreciate the manner in which your article was written.

...Bridge Chairman

To the Editor:

In consideration of a complaint launched last week by one of our students against the playing of bridge in the cafeteria, I felt that it was necessary to present a few facts on the matter. The writer, out of sheer ignorance, and lack of initiative, failed to seek out the facts for himself.

Here is what I have discovered after discussing the matter with the Administrator of the University Centre, the Vice-Principal, and the Chairman of the Sorority which sponsored the bridge:

1. Some groups have been refused the use of this building for bridge tournaments, etc., but this Sorority was allowed the use of the cafeteria, rent-free, because of the work it has been doing for eight years to present a scholarship to a student of Lakehead College each year.
2. The group was informed that coat-rooms would be available, but, on their arrival here found none, and were forced to use the games room as a coat-room.
3. Students were notified one month in advance that this event was being held here and what the receipts were to be used for.
4. The building is a University Centre, not a Students' Union Building.
5. The exaggerations regarding stags, rummage sales, fireman's ball, carpenter's union, etc., were ridiculous, to say the least.
6. The prime importance of this University is in the capacity of education, and, incidentally, the use of those smaller corners in the library can often prove stimulating academically.
7. Regarding maturity and standards, there seems to be ample evidence that many students in this University are not mature, or capable of living up to high standards. For example, a look at the defaced bulletins, the sloppy mess in the games room, the students lying with feet up on the tables in the upper lounge, the horseplay (throwing of books) in the upper lounge, the broken tile in the auditorium, and letters such as the one I am referring to are only a few indications of lack of maturity.
8. For many of the above reasons, rooms had to be locked so that they might be kept in good condition for use as meeting rooms and seminar rooms. Until such a time as students show some responsibility, I imagine the rooms will stay locked to keep them from looking like the games room.
9. The upper lounge will have some type of art display in it almost all of the time, as this is the purpose of that area. Besides, this is culture, and it does not prevent anyone from using the furniture while they enjoy the exhibits.
10. The suggestions offered by the writer were considered long ago by the administration, and had he inquired, he would have found out for himself how the building is being operated and why it is being done the way it is.

I hope that in future, we will be tolerant of activities going on in the University Centre. The Cambrian Players are hoping to establish a student membership in the fall, so that we may take part in their activities,

and the Lakehead Art Society has already published their student rate. These people are genuinely interested in seeing the students take part in their groups.

The writer's answer to Mrs. Campling included the following—"this building was built to be a cultural centre and I believe that it can never have this dignity if we continue to hold bridge tournaments, no matter what the purpose." I'm quite sure there will be many irate students here the day that someone tries to make them quit playing bridge.

It seemed ironic to me that in the same Newsletter, at the bottom of page two, there appeared an advertisement for a Chess Tournament to be held in the University Centre with "outsiders" attending. Where does culture end?

...Robert W. Piper

EVOLUTION AND CREATION

Man is not in the habit of measuring his status against the universe. For he has status, in any tangible way, only as he considers himself as a part of the world immediately around him. And man seems to assume—almost instinctively—that the world exists for his use, his satisfaction. This feeling is seen first in the cries, the demands, of the newborn baby; and it is carried into maturity. "The world is obviously here for us!" We never seem to outgrow this feeling of possessiveness.

Yet the last several centuries of development in scientific thought have given a series of stiff rebukes to man's natural habit of placing himself at the centre of things. Much of present-day science claims to have established that the universe is a self-running "mechanism," cold, heartless, meaningless. Man is but a product of blind forces: variation upon variation in the process of evolution has led to more complex, more self-conscious forms of life. And man is presently at the apex of this continuing process: an accidental resident in a universe which has no concern for its "reasoning" offspring.

In spite of this, a large segment of modern Christianity is able to hold to a doctrine of creation, to argue that it conveys a deep truth about the nature of things; and at the same time to accept a modified version of the theory of evolution.

Today at 12:15, the S.C.M. Lecture Series presents a discussion of this problem: Mr. David Marsh of P.A.C.I. (M.Sc.-McGill) and Rev. A. G. Von Eck of the Fort William Dutch Reformed Church (European educated) will set out its conflicting aspects and will answer any questions raised.

Everyone welcome.

Congratulations to the LAKEHEAD COLLEGE MUSTANGS who last night won the Lakehead Junior Basketball Championship with a 59-57 victory over Westfort. High scorer in the game was Bob Elvin with 21 points.