

LIVING SUSTAINABLY On Trust and Integrity

The Duke
of Montrose
UK House of Lords

'I have been a spokesman for my party on environmental concerns including marine conservation and climate change. During our debates on climate change, many argued that we should not impose price disadvantage on ourselves without global agreement. But the Climate Change Act, finally achieved with complete agreement, requires all future British administrations to reduce our 1992 level of carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. The Government now faces the task of developing the practical steps to achieve this.'



As a young man, I spent time in Ghana with *Initiatives of Change* (at that time known as Moral Re-Armament). The role that I found was in talking to the youth to encourage them to feel responsible for their country and in that context the greatest need would be for a leadership of integrity who had a moral framework by which to live. The moral framework that we talked about was absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love. None of us can ever say that we have lived up to that, but it is a great help towards recognizing our failings.

Every citizen wants integrity in their leaders and all leaders would like integrity in their businessmen, trade unionists and citizens. In Britain we have just had the experience of a newspaper getting access to all sorts of details about our politicians and they have spent months taking to task those whose integrity has not matched up to the standard that our citizens expect and demand. Expensive mechanisms have now been put in place to ensure that they will in future.

Speaking as a politician, it would provide a great sense of justice if our newspapermen and other fellow citizens adopted the same. I had some years working with various MRA programs that included some of the early actions in which Rajmohan Gandhi was involved and it is a special pleasure to be able to share a platform with him again today.

One role I have had has been as an Opposition Spokesman to the legislation proposed by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. During this time we have passed some of the most up to date legislation on subjects as diverse as animal welfare, marine conservation and climate change. This in many ways fulfils the thought put forward in the discussions that have been held in this conference that there should be legislation requiring people to employ safe environmental methods. The Act requires all future British administrations to reduce our national 1992 level of carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. This policy was finally achieved with complete agreement. The rhetoric is now in

place; the task, which the present government faces, is to begin the practical steps to achieve this or even to improve on it.

As the Caux Call to Action says, there are bound to be moments when events trigger a new perspective on world affairs. Several of those who spoke yesterday made the point that many of the crises that we have seen recently would appear to signal one of those.

Coming here to Caux I remembered hearing of another such moment in May 1939, when the preparations for war made the outcome look inevitable. Frank Buchman, founder of Moral Re-Armament (MRA), the precursor of Initiatives of Change, gave a speech to the National Press Club in Washington. He said, "Three great tasks confront this generation: to keep the peace and make it permanent; to make the wealth and work of the world available for all and for the exploitation of none; and, with peace and prosperity as our servants and not our masters, to build a new world, create a new culture and change the age of gold into the Golden Age".

For all the passage of seventy years, really not much has changed. Perhaps now we want to change the age of oil into the Golden Age. But then Frank Buchman went on to give in his own words that it was "man's wisdom that has proved wanting" and the need was to find God's insight into how we solve our problems.

Of course, as we try to learn here, the same wisdom could be of use to us in our every day lives. From recent events I think we all get the impression that in addition to a failure of human wisdom, we are finding that military or violent interventions do not produce the solutions that we seek.

A couple of weeks ago I was much interested to see an article by the president of the Royal Society, our foremost scientific body. He is an astrophysicist and a proponent of the big bang theory. He described

the immensity of the universe and continued saying that right back in the first fraction of a second of that event conditions were so extreme that “we do not know what physical laws then prevailed. We must still say, in the manner of the ancient cartographers, ‘here be dragons.’” The fact that scientists reach this point is bound to be one reason why so many scientists feel the need of faith in a superior power.

One of the main arguments put forward by those who oppose initiatives to combat climate change is that our country or our economic group should not impose price disadvantage on ourselves unless the rest of the world is tied into some global agreement. That of course was the tragedy of the failure at Copenhagen. I have heard that it did not help that the main Chinese negotiator was barred by security for the first three days of the conference. Everywhere there was a sense of a lack of trust.

This then is still the specter that stalks the coming negotiations at Cancun at the end of the year. When the men who will participate are known there will be a need for the attitudes that are being developed here to be passed on. There will be the need for delegates to find in each other a sense of transparency and trust. It is in this context I find it interesting to learn some of the ideas of our new coalition Government, where a minister has said “we must work increasingly with every kind of sub-governmental, non-governmental and professional link to bring about a continuous spread of cultural diplomacy and soft power deployment throughout the globe and institutional networks. Mass connection is the new global network we have to operate.”

All of this means that the Caux Call to Action that you are proposing to issue at the end of the week will have a role to play at many of the most vital levels as well as at the local levels, at which each one of us can operate if it encourages that transparency.