The Transformers

Continuity and Change in the European Campaigns of American Evangelists Frank Buchman and Billy Graham, 1920–1960

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Abstract

This article compares two leading American evangelists Frank Buchman and Billy Graham as to the innovations they made in the transatlantic religious regimes before and after World War II. Differences in personality, in message and audience, in religious allies, in political expectations, and the changing conditions of European Protestantism explain their successive popularity. Buchman operated in the holiness tradition, Graham in the revivalist framework. Both offered persuasive examples of personal change that enabled European Protestants to find alternatives to the established relationship between public and private religion.

Keywords

1   Introduction

In the spring of 1946, two prominent American evangelists embarked on two separate tours of Europe. On March 18 of that year, 28 year old Billy Graham and three other members of the Youth for Christ team of evangelists boarded the first commercial flight to Europe at a Chicago airfield. Sent off with much fanfare, they called at European capitals, holding rallies in churches and auditoriums to bring the gospel to the youth of the United Kingdom and the Continent. A month later, on April 24, 1946, 68 year old Frank Buchman and 110 Moral Rearmament supporters sailed on the *Queen Mary* from New York to Southampton. While

Graham quickly hopped from capital to capital to lay the basis for a postwar revival, Buchman visited rural sites and retired early each evening because of poor health. He traveled in Europe to promote the play *The Forgotten Factor* which presented the theme of healing tensions in the family and in labor relations if only one followed Buchman's instructions on inner change.[1]

Whatever the ostensible contrast between the lively, youthful Graham and the invalid, worn Buchman, both were representatives of a longstanding American cultural export to Europe. They followed in the footsteps of popular American protestant clergy ranging from Dwight Moody in the 1870s, to R.A. Torrey in the early 1900s. Robert Schuller of the *Hour of Power* in the 1990s also belongs in this tradition. These preachers advocated wholesome universal spiritual values made, or remade, in America. Buchman had his best moments in the mass meetings he held in Europe between 1934–37. Graham's apex came twenty years later in 1954–57. A comparison of Graham and Buchman, the two leading American evangelists operating in Europe, answers the question: Which elements of their messages were part of a continuous transatlantic flow from West to East and what was new in the transatlantic religious regimes after World War II? A European perspective offers a sharper profile than merely observing from the American side, because it shows that their international appeal did not necessarily correspond to their domestic appeal. Frank Buchman, for example, was much more popular outside the United States than he was at home. The European view also helps to trace the channels of religious exchange between the two continents. The work of both evangelists illustrates the important role played by informal networks outside the established churches in the development of transatlantic religious relations.

After a brief description of the intentions of the major characters, a comparison of their ministries in Europe will show that despite their many similarities, they represent two distinct American currents in religious practice: the tradition of holiness thinking and the practice of revivalistic methods. The change in Europe's response to American offers of universal action plans marked the birth of new religious connections that tied Protestants on both sides of the Atlantic even closer together than they had been before the war.[2]

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1 Philip Boobbyer, *The Spiritual Vision of Frank Buchman* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2013); Garth Lean, *Frank Buchman: A Life* (London: Constable, 1985), 336. William Martin, *A Prophet with Honor: The Billy Graham Story* (New York: Morrow, 1991), 94–6.

2 Mark Hutchinson and John Wolffe, *A Short History of Global Evangelicalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 146–78.

2   Frank Buchman

One of the most prolific transatlantic travelers was Frank Buchman, whose movement adopted an explicitly European name, the Oxford Movement. Franklin Nathaniel Daniel Buchman was born in 1878. He grew up in a Pennsylvania German Lutheran family, and was educated at a Lutheran Reformed Seminary in Philadelphia. After graduation he worked in a settlement house in that city, became a victim of his own overwhelming drive to rescue the dissolute, broke down his health, and made a trip to Europe to recuperate. He ended up at a religious conference in Keswick in the British Lake District, where he experienced inner healing and was introduced to the notion of embracing a "victorious Christian life." He made his personal experience with God the basis for his own attempt to lead a more holy life. This experience linked his serious Lutheran pietism with the holiness tradition. These two together promised victory over personal sin if one took time to listen to God, confessed one's sins, took initiative to repair the damage done by iniquitous acts, and went on to tell others about the experience. He applied this approach in his counseling of young men at Pennsylvania State College in service of the YMCA.[3] There he developed a program of personal attention to students called 'soul surgery,' which soon spread to other colleges and universities.

The missionary excitement of the early-twentieth century evangelical subculture raging in organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association and the Student Volunteer Movement brought him to India and China. His activities fit within existing campaigns to restrict alcohol and improve moral behavior by raising the level of education and passing labor laws. Inspired by this Progressive ethos, he expanded his method from creating an individual experience with God to a broader vision of achieving harmonious relations in society as a whole. Drawing on the high expectations of science, Buchman defined four absolute principles: honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. He designed a five-step method so that initiates could take part in the process of advancing this harmony: Confidence (in the messenger), Confession, Conviction, Conversion, and Continuance.[4] In Buchman's view this order of things would guarantee a dynamic change, especially if it targeted the leaders of the next generation and thus he singled out students at Ivy League schools. This approach echoed the Lutheran Two Kingdoms tradition which discouraged mixing church and state. It maintained a distance from direct

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3   Lean, *Buchman,* 73.

4   The Layman With a Notebook, *What is the Oxford Group*? (London: Oxford University Press, 1933). This record is an anonymous self-description of the movement.

involvement in politics while hoping for the preservation of the status quo. His emphasis on subjective experience over dogma helped him to open conversations with people of different backgrounds and to avoid getting entangled in the emerging modernist-fundamentalist debate.[5]

Buchman's inner circle described him as "an ebullient person," always surrounded by other people and with very little privacy. He was self-assured, impulsive and paternalistic. A plausible explanation for his intense interest in personal change, his emphasis on sexual morality, and his evasiveness about his own personal life is that he had a homosexual orientation. He was never romantically linked with women. Such an analysis of his sexual orientation could explain the personalist emphasis Buchman had, investing so much in individual change through intimate confession leading to moral liberation and inviting others to do the same. When he pried too vigorously into students' private lives at Princeton, where Buchman encouraged the confession of sexual sins, the school's authorities stopped this invasion of privacy and kicked him out.[6]

This did not prevent people from being drawn to him and eventually his wide following persuaded him that personal empowerment through individual guidance by the Spirit was much more effective than any institution. The

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5   Buchman was raised in a mixed Lutheran and German Evangelical subculture, which should warn us not too overemphasize the Two Kingdom motive in his plans. Buchman's subjectivism moved him away from the Bible to meditation and writing down revelations. This was what put off the evangelicals in the UK, who had welcomed Buchman first. See Oliver R. Barclay, *Whatever Happened to the Jesus Lane Lot?* (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977), 98–100. This is exactly what Harry A. Ironside, the influential minister of Moody Memorial Church in Chicago, preached. In a sermon *The Oxford Group Movement: Is It Scriptural?* (4th ed. 1943) Ironside denied the Biblical basis for the Oxford Group, because it soft pedaled the doctrine of atonement by the blood of Jesus. The main question was not confession of all kinds of sins, but of the sin of rejection the Lord Jesus Christ. Electronic version at http://www .orange-papers.org/orange-Ironside.html (accessed 2 July 2014). He did not condemn the movement completely, but he had great reservations. Since Ironside began his ministry in 1929, it is likely a sermon from the early 1930s. See for similar fundamentalist criticism in Canada see Kevin Kee, *Revivalists: Marketing the Gospel in English Canada, 1884–1957* (Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 136. And for Norway: Steward D. Govig, "Ronald Fangen and the Oxford Group Movement in Norway," (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1966), 59–60 (a Gospel without the Cross).

6   David P. Setran, *The College 'Y': Student Religion in the Era of Secularization* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 180–81. Sympathetic authors doubt the rumors about Buchman's homosexual orientation (Boobbyer, *Spiritual Vision*, 29). This orientation is strongly suggested by his intimacy with young men and the absence of serious romantic engagements with women (despite a few efforts in his young adulthood) and the taboo on openly discussing and accepting homosexual feelings.

inner voice heard by an individual became his compass and his main message. In 1921, his inner voice told him that he had a worldwide mission, and he began to focus gradually more on Europe, the springboard for his global project. He resigned from his paid position and supported himself with the generous donations of wealthy backers, never again to submit to a formal organization. In 1924, he began a world tour that ended in Europe. Travelling first class and staying in top hotels allowed him to rub shoulders with the European elite. His early contact with the Greek royal family opened doors to the interconnected family networks of European royalty and its aristocracy. Though he tried to link up with the working class, his priority connection was always with the elite.[7]

This generational and geographic move (from students to adults and from the U.S. to Europe) stimulated Buchman's shift from life change to world change, from personal sharing as a goal, to changing individuals in order to bring about global political reform. In 1934, he announced a world-wide "Christian Revolution."[8] This emphasis as such was not revolutionary. But he was so convinced that his personal approach could change people and the course of history that he did away with all distinctions between political systems (democracies or dictatorships) as long as the leaders were God-directed. Thus he ignored the presence of injustice in political structures and in the Christian democratic parties that covered Europe's political landscape and were the transfer point for religion into politics.[9] While this political naivety was shared by many Protestants in the U.S., its appeal waned during and after World War II.[10]

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7   Daniel Sack, *Moral Re-Armament: The Reinventions of an American Religious Movement* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 55; See the characterization by John M. Versteeg as "a holiness movement for the socially favored," *Christian Century* (23 January 1935). Boobbyer, *The Spiritual Vision*, 42–45.

8   Kee, *Revivalists*, 138–39. Frank D. Buchman, *Remaking the World: The Speeches of Frank N.D. Buchman* (London: Blandford Press, 1947), 4 (address in Oxford in July 1934).

9   He complimented Hitler for resisting communism in an interview in the August 26, 1936 *New York World Telegram.* This interview would haunt and discredit him as a fascist sympathizer.

10   The *Christian Century Pulpit* a mainline magazine with current sermons, emphasized in the 1930s: "Society may be saved only by changing the hearts and minds of individuals. Change in individuals must precede any change in the system of relationships." Samuel C. Kincheloe, *Research Memorandum on Religion in the Depression* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1937; repr. 1972), 86. More than fascism, Buchman identified Communism and materialism (which he called "moral Bolshevism") as anti-Christian forces (Lean, *Buchman*, 147–48).

Meanwhile his campaigns in the UK and South Africa gave 'Buchmanism' a new name. The term 'Oxford Group' was coined, suggesting respectability and a strong European base. Oxford equaled America's Ivy League colleges as a concentration point of the powerful. In the 1930s Europe became the venue for the formation of similar informal church groups, which were subsequently incorporated in the Oxford Group by international teams led by Buchman. This absorption paved the way for mass meetings in Oslo (1934), Copenhagen (1935), Oxford (1936), and Utrecht (1937). *Rising Tide*—a slogan and the title of a publication in his comprehensive PR campaign to save the nations, captured the excitement of Buchman's movement. This wave of public success persuaded Buchman that he could reach an even wider audience with the message that personal moral attitudes had caused the world's problems, and that he had found a cure for them. In early December 1939, he pressed for national demonstrations in Europe dressed up with flags, drums, and people marching, and covered by a globally broadcasted radio message in order to reach larger audiences. The expanded mission required a new name. The Oxford Group became a cause: Moral Rearmament (MRA). Evangelistic personalism gave way to social personalism, as Swedish historian, Anders Jarlert, has summarized. Yet, the masses were less interested in saving the world than in saving themselves. After years of war and patriotic boosterism in the U.S., the MRA once again set out to change the world by presenting itself as an ideology for all peoples and as a serious competitor among the world ideologies. In this process it shed its explicit Christian features.[11]

Buchman charmed Europeans even more than he had Americans with his simple and direct call for change, and with his pragmatic proof that personal change reconciled diehard adversaries such as Boer and Brit, Dane and Norwegian, prince and pauper, CEO and striker. 'Change' did not require much more than the personal courage to confess mistakes and seek redress. The message was simple. For Buchman the moment of change came when one made a confession. But this method worked only in so far as people were familiar with faith and church, already subscribed to these values, and needed only to be activated. This is well put by Norwegian author, Ronald Fangen: "I had to admit I had lived a dishonest life… All my life I have thought as a Christian and had Christian ideas, but I did not want to live as a Christian."[12]

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11   Jarlert Anders, *The Oxford Group, Group Revivalism, and the Churches in Northern Europe, 1930–1945, with Special Reference to Scandinavia and Germany* (Lund: Lund University Press 1995), 49. Sack, *Moral*, 100–01, 143–52. Roger Griffin, *Fascism, Totalitarianism, and Political Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

12   Govig, "Ronald Fangen," 47, quoting the Oslo *Dagbladet*, 8 Nov. 1934.

Participation in the movement promised a high return: a sense of moral superiority, a confirmation of individual autonomy through direct access to God's intentions, and the prospect of contributing to the improvement of the world.[13] Buchman's international success fanned his hope to solve the world's political problems by inspiring audiences. This path to peace began at private venues hosting hundreds and led to public gatherings with tens of thousands of people. This wide group seeking spiritual unity necessitated a minimum of explicitly Christian references.

Buchman's group showed that interaction between the various components in the international Protestant community continued to flow across the Atlantic. He presented a modernist expressionism and paved the way for respectful engagement in personal and intimate religious conversations outside the church walls.[14] An attractive aspect of the movement in the 1930s was its internationalism. This global perspective built bridges between different (often hostile) nations and meant their individual decisions were of significant consequence. Internationalism overcame divisions among religious groups, and through ecumenicity, changed hearts from the inside out.

Yet, despite the fact that many European followers of Moral Rearmament had resisted totalitarian regimes and expected a renewal of their movement after the war, others abandoned the Moral Rearmament movement altogether. A good example of this process is the path taken by Norwegian author and Buchmanite, Ronald Fangen. Fangen had spoken out against the Nazi occupation and was imprisoned for doing so. After the war he had second thoughts about the methods of the MRA. Though he himself had experienced a personal change, he now realized that these changes did not last, and were not deep enough to penetrate into society. He saw the MRA in the role of John the Baptist, boldly proclaiming sin and salvation, but then forgetting that their message was merely preparation for the central figure of Christ. In his opinion the MRA oversimplified the process of personal change and thus could not deepen it. For Fangen, replacing Jesus Christ with John the Baptist resulted in

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13   Buchman did not aspire to proselytize, but to put people in touch with the Spirit which "blows where it likes." Lean, *Buchman,* 513. The flip side of the easy spread of the personal spiritual experience was the underestimation of the power of evil and the complexity of human relations. More than his apparent, and to many appalling, sympathy for Hitler, it was the problem of immunity against criticism, that harmed the movement. Once one was sure about God's direct guidance, it was hard to be overruled. Even though some checks were put in place to undercut idiocy, eventually Buchman had the final word.

14   David Bebbington wrote that Buchman shared this feature with the Charismatic Movement. This is true for the phenomenon of the expressive self, but there is no direct or personal line from the Buchmanites to the charismatics. Sack, *Moral,* 76.

mere legalism. Fangen continued to hope for a post-war revival in the church, but died in airplane crash in 1946.[15]

Buchman's anti-institutionalism resulted when his personal ambitions were thwarted by ruling bodies and boards. Since Buchman believed that God would speak to each person individually and the church was therefore redundant,[16] he did not seek a revival, but a revolution. His own Lutheran denomination saw his attitude as one of utter neglect. In the spring of 1936, he was summoned to Pennsylvania to explain to the regional synod why he was neglecting his home turf. They did not suspend him, but it was clear that they felt a growing distance from Buchman, and vice versa. It was true that he was ignoring the church. While this attracted many who felt as he did at some level, he eventually lost a large number of ministers who had once welcomed the Oxford Group but who now abandoned it because they noticed that while it used the facilities of the church, it drained rather than replenished its numbers.[17]

Buchman's hopes were nicely captured by the following definition of the Oxford Group: "It's not an institution, it's not a point of view; It starts a revolution by starting one in you."[18] Of course Buchman could not completely do without a bureaucratic framework. He needed one for publicity and fund-raising at the very least. But the institution was not to interfere with his ideal of direct divine intervention.

The problem for many European Christians—and the attraction for others—was Buchman's failure to engage in current theological debates about the role of the believer in modern society. In this way he avoided a struggle over the origin of faith. His non-engagement was an asset in getting an inclusive movement started, but a liability in the long run because he lost the connection with the churches and their priorities, that had formed the core of his support. Buchman's inclusive path welcomed other religions, and this also alienated more traditional Christians. For many sophisticated believers, Buchman's aim of changing nations—his next step from the personal to the social/political realm, was too big. The leap from the person to the nation sounded promising in times of distrust of politics, but it was not sufficient as an alternative to the growing complexity and the organizational sophistication during and after World War II.[19]

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15   Govig, "Ronald Fangen," 106–108, 125–32. For an excellent analysis of the phases of the
      spread of the Oxford Group in Scandinavia in comparison to Germany and other coun-
      tries see Anders, *The Oxford Group,* 154–434.
16   Buchman, *Remaking the World,* 49, 64–68.
17   Sack, *Moral,* 116–17.
18   Ibid., 45.
19   H.D. de Loor, *Nieuw Nederland loopt van stapel. De Oxford groep in Nederland, een
      sociale beweging van het Interbellum* (Kampen: Kok, 1986). David Ellwood, *The Shock of*

In the course of the 1930s the implicit pacifism that had attracted many ide-alistic Europeans, lost ground in response to militaristic threats. Buchman had turned the call for disarmament into a battle cry for spiritual rearmament. As this approach could not prevent World War II, its ideals were discredited and the movement went into decline. Whereas, in the 20s and 30s many Christians had given Buchman the benefit of the doubt, in the 50s the main Christian traditions dismissed Buchman altogether. The mainline protestant churches criticized his thin theology, fundamentalists rejected him as too ecumenical, and the Catholic hierarchy condemned him for the heresy of illuminism, the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit outside the Church's authority.

Buchman's emphasis on the effects of personal change for any hope for global improvement found its most receptive audience among the elite. His belief system limited his mass appeal before the war and robbed him of his influence after the war, when this old elite lost its relevance to international corporations and institutions.[20] Buchman died in 1961, and after a temporary uptick as a youth mobilization group, the MRA went into further decline as a mass movement in the 1970s, suffering internal divisions over the way forward, and the lack of financial support. It claimed a number of successes in recon-ciliation in Africa, following its endeavors to reconcile France with Germany. Its legacy is an interfaith center for human change in Caux, Switzerland.[21]

3   Billy Graham

As Buchman's light faded, Billy Graham's star began to shine.[22] Compared to Buchman, Graham's training was provincial. Born in rural North Carolina in

America: Europe and the Challenge of the Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

20   Maarten J. Aalders, "Distant Relatives: The Oxford Group and the Reformed Churches in Restored Union," in C. van der Kooi, E. van Staalduine-Sulman, and A.W. Zwiep (eds.), *Evangelical theology in transition: essays under the auspices of the Center of Evangelical and Reformation Theology* (CERT) (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2012), 68–85.

21   Martin Marty, "M.R.A.: The New Druseanism," *Christian Century* (31 March 1965), 399–401; Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. "An Evaluation of Moral Rearmament ," *American Ecclesiatistical Review* 135 (July-December 1956), 217–26. Philip Boobbyer, "Moral Re-Armament in Africa in the Era of Decolonization," in Brian Stanley, ed., *Missions, Nationalism and the End of Empire* (Grand Rapids,: Eerdmans, 2003), 212–36. and

22   *New York Times* citations of Buchman averaged 40 per year in the 1930s and dropped to a handful in the 1950s, while Graham's score moved from 100 per year in the 1950s to 200 in the 1970s.

1918, converted in a classic revival meeting, and educated at small fundamentalist schools, he prepared to become a Baptist minister with a media ministry. When their paths almost crossed in the spring of 1946, it was Graham's first international adventure. He belonged to a Youth for Christ team that had gone on an improvised tour of England. He made it his life's goal to bring the gospel to the whole world and he slowly disengaged from his fundamentalist background.

Graham's breakthrough in Europe came in the 1950s after he had established his own ministry and had run successful rallies in Los Angeles in 1949. His tour route resembled that of Buchman's, beginning in the United Kingdom, where scores of visitors from other European nations witnessed the event, and on into Scandinavia and Western Europe. The well-publicized Greater London campaign held in the Harringay Arena in the spring of 1954, persuaded like-minded Christians across the continent, who were active in evangelism, that mass meetings were a useful instrument for drawing attention to religion outside the Christian subculture and its church buildings. Graham returned in 1955 and at various times in the early sixties. In 1966, the European media discovered that Graham was part of a larger evangelical movement. His mission conference in Berlin that year put the evangelicals on the religious map as a separate category. Conferences in Brussels and Amsterdam marked a shift from direct witnessing to the training of evangelists worldwide. By the 1960s Graham had become the spokesperson for evangelicals in the United States and elsewhere in the world, and he was America's number one religious figure. Graham held 107 rallies in Europe during his active career. In 2000 he officially retired as chairman of his organization and in 2004 he held his last crusade.

In contrast to Buchman, who remained single and never settled down to a permanent home, Graham represented a genteel American masculinity and showcased domestic bliss. He married young and though he was away from home as much as Buchman was, Graham extolled the virtues of the family and male companionship in sports. Graham could be as assertive as Buchman, but was recognized for his humility and proved to be more democratic in his decision making. Graham was a strategist, readily using the latest bureaucratic instruments, associations, and structured networks, and critically assessing the consequences of his campaigns. In this he depended to a great extent on his team of professionals.[23]

In Graham's thinking, conversion was a deep interplay between God and man. Conversions could change society, but more importantly they could

23   See "Appendix: Behind the Billy Pulpit," in Michael G. Long, *Billy Graham and the Beloved Community* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 227–32.

rescue the individual from the coming disasters. Essentially he was as pessimistic about the possibility of creating a good society as Buchman was optimistic. Only slowly did he embrace racial integration, and in 1953 organized his first desegregated meetings in the United States.[24]

In contrast to Buchman's targeting of social and political elites, Graham sought a more mixed audience among the middle classes and solicited endorsements from popular cultural heroes, such as movie stars and sportsmen. He invested much time and energy in courting church involvement. While he mostly drew Christians to his mass meetings, his aim was to reactivate church members to accept a call to Christ. While Buchman attracted Christians at the margins of the established churches with his individualized message, Graham went to the core group of the church to encourage them to get organized collectively. His public events were not only aimed at non-believers, they also sought to bring Christians to an explicit commitment. Meanwhile Graham preserved an appeal that was exclusively aimed at established Christian churches and he did this without isolating himself.

Graham's ministries signified a shift in needs for the pre- and post-war generations in Europe. Buchman belonged to and represented a generation that believed in a Christian civilization, which only needed to be mobilized in order to be livable. His inclusion of the high and mighty was evidence of this belief. He was an optimist who was convinced that all conflicts could be solved with the proper mediation. Graham was inculcated with an awareness of a great antithesis in civilization, which he saw as between liberalism which lead to unbelief, and fundamentalism which was the guardian of faith. Though he shed the separatism of the fundamentalists and never closed doors to other types of Christians, he kept these two basic categories separated in his mind. By the time his career took off, Buchman was increasingly moving away from recognizable evangelicalism.

The war had made a difference in American-European relations in general, and in religion in particular. In both spheres the U.S. was the provider of protection and support, and Europe was the needy receiver. To Buchman, Europe and the U.S. belonged together. He experienced no great contrast between the continents. Each warm reception in a European country confirmed his expectation that nations could be changed and that he was destined to be the mediator in this process.

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24   Long, *Billy Graham*, 19–29. Timo Pokki, *America's Preacher and His Message: Billy Graham's View of Conversion and Sanctification* (Lanham, NY: University Press of America, 1999), 90–92. Steven P. Miller, *Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 13–38.

Graham and many of his fellow Americans saw the relationship between Europe and the United States in terms of contrast: spiritual starvation in the Old World versus spiritual abundance in the New. Joining many evangelicals and fundamentalists, he pointed to the embrace of theological liberalism by European Protestants as the cause of their inability to resist Nazism. This did not preclude Europe from participating in the great revival, according to Graham, but he and many other evangelists who came to Europe emphasized the differences between Europe and the United States.

In Europe, both Buchman and Graham benefited from their status as American outsiders who lifted believers over their individual church walls by engaging them in practical cooperation.[25] While both men criticized established ecclesiastical authorities, they differed in their basic approach to the organized church. Graham was much more positive about the church. He often castigated the churches for laxity and liberalism, but his intention was to strengthen their impact through parachurch organizations. For Graham a global revival was his top priority.[26] For this purpose he sought to mobilize a wide array of Christians both in the mainline churches and in the fragmented free churches. Using voluntary organizations such as Youth for Christ and his own Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and by encouraging the National Association of Evangelicals, *Christianity Today*, and many other organizations, he stirred the churches into action.

In contrast to Buchman, Graham invested much to build up an impressive network of contacts with institutions and organizations on the evangelical side. Evangelicals were suspicious of centralized ecumenical and civic organizations, such as the World Council of Churches, so they set up their own voluntary organizations. Where Graham strengthened his position through cooperation, Buchman tightened his control over the MRA when he saw its supporting institutions dwindle. While Graham's efforts resulted in a growing European and global evangelical infrastructure, Buchman found his thunder

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25   Ian Randall, "Conservative Constructionist: The Early Influence of Billy Graham in Britain," *Evangelical Quarterly* 67.4 (1995): 309–333. Prospectus Billy Graham Continental Tour, June 12–30, 1954, p. 2: "These [visitors] returned to witness to their more skeptical countrymen, opening doors that no foreigner could have otherwise entered." Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Il, USA, collection 338, box 29, file 22. Uta Balbier, "Billy Graham in Berlin: German Protestantism between Americanization and Rechristianization," Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History, Online-Ausgabe 7 (2010) H.3. Url http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen .de/16126041-Balbier-3-2010 (accessed 1 July 2014).

26   Buchman, *Remaking the World*, 65.

stolen by new organizations that specialized in building cultural bridges and did so better than the dated MRA.

Simultaneously with Graham, a growing number of American evangelical organizations set up shop on the Continent and prepared the soil for an evangelical subculture. Graham was their identifier. This joint venture added up to a powerful third force in world Christendom next to the World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church. Buchman missed out on this kind of collaboration and the movement consolidated as a conference center at Caux, Switzerland, which focused on the economic and political elite.[27]

The difference between the two ministers on the question of institution building came from their different views on the relationship between religion and politics. Buchman moved from the spiritual to the political and tried to clean up politics with an inspirational impulse. He approached politicians in private to find political solutions, while Graham tried to avoid explicit political entanglement. Graham used political climate and politicians' prestige to create a religious upswing. Graham told his audience that the world was in crisis due to the spiritual and social needs of humanity and could be saved by explicit conversion. While this sounded similar to Buchman's point of view, Graham's core activity remained the presentation of the classic message of sin, repentance, and salvation, followed by an invitation to come forward and accept the Lord. He was optimistic about a revival, but pessimistic about the chance to create a better world and was, by temperament, a man submissive to worldly authority. His real hope was placed in the Second Coming of Christ. Moreover, he believed that Christians engaged in politics worked better for the common good than political activism apart from a Christian identity.[28]

At the core of their differences over political priorities, was the theological issue of the Millennium. Whereas Buchman maintained the postmillennial ideas of his formative years, which foresaw a better world, he maneuvered himself out of the evangelical fold which took a dispensationalist turn in the first half of the 20th century. His strong drive to carry out his mission missed out on the urge to believe in an approaching apocalypse. Belief in the apocalypse had stimulated the global revival of the immediate postwar years and had kept the evangelicals on edge for a decade. Meanwhile Graham and his

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27   Sack, *Moral Re-Armament*, 163–190. Edward Luttwak, "Franco-German Reconciliation: the Overlooked Role of the Moral Re-Armament Movement," in Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (eds.), *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 37–63.

28   Long, *Billy Graham*, 20–29. Miller, *Billy Graham*, 8–12, 203–204 which ascribes considerable political power to Graham.

new evangelicals eagerly dived into the wave when they saw it coming. Graham's premillennialism prevented him from counting on a gradual path toward the improvement of the world's problems.[29]

4   Roots and Legacies

At first sight, Buchman and Graham had much in common. Both were shaped by America's evangelical subculture. Despite their generational difference, both felt compelled to come to Europe, and not just to the UK. Both were closely identified with American-style religion, and believed strongly in the message of personal repentance and personal change as the condition for social improvement. They both blasted Communism, and used modern advertising and communication to draw attention to their programs. Both sought cooperation with a broad spectrum of Christians and celebrities and both promoted a universal message. Some historians of religion list Buchman as one of America's leading revivalists. Many other scholars ignore him completely, or only mention his name in passing.[30] The first group places Buchman in the longer series of transatlantic evangelists, beginning with Dwight Moody and ending with Billy Graham. The second group ascribes a temporary significance to Buchman at best, while it hails Graham as a crucial figure in transatlantic relations.

From an American perspective the two men were two different types. Buchman belonged to the periodic Atlantic crossings of American holiness preachers such as Robert and Hannah Pearsall Smith. Graham followed directly in the revivalistic steps of Dwight Moody.[31] This distinction is confirmed by the fact that Buchman and Graham hardly ever referred to one another, neither positively as serving the same goals, nor negatively in terms of rejection of the other, nor in competition.

The key to unraveling this combination of connection and distance between Buchman and Graham can be found in two components of the Anglo-American evangelicalism, the holiness tradition and revivalistic practices. Buchman and

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29   Markku Ruotsila, *The Origins of Christian Anti-Internationalism: Conservative Evangelicals and the League of Nations* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008), 27–52.

30   Kee, *Revivalists*, 96–142; Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion.* Vol. 2: *The Noise of Conflict 1919–1941* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991), 375; Hutchinson and Wolffe, *A Short History*, 165; and Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

31   Bobbyer, *Spiritual Vision*, 14 confirms the direct influence of the Pearsall Smiths.

Graham were rooted in the same evangelical tradition of the nineteenth century, but Buchman must be identified as an evangelist who combined elements of the Social Gospel with the call to conversion in the hope of perfection. Graham on the other hand, was a mass evangelist who exemplified the break between modernists and traditionalists in Protestantism.[32]

The connection between both preachers is an indirect one. Stronger than the similarities between them, are the continuities each had with his own predecessor. Graham was a twentieth century copy of the first mass revivalist Dwight Moody, whose fame was established during his two years of revival preaching in the United Kingdom in 1874–75. Dwight Moody was the first American evangelical who turned to the urban centers in the UK and ran his revival meetings like a business. Graham studied Moody's career and organization, used his sermon topics, partnered with a gospel singer like Moody's companion Ira Sankey, and was widely recognized as his twentieth-century successor.[33]

Buchman was the successor to Robert Pearsall Smith (1832–1898), a Quaker glass manufacturer turned lay holiness preacher. He came under the influence of Wesleyan holiness preachers, and became one himself after the death of a son. Though there are no traces of personal connections between Buchman and the Smiths, there are numerous parallels in their careers, including their region of origin, a history of nervous breakdowns, their holiness experiences, and a European tour complete with aristocratic mansions, house parties and international fame.[34] Both Buchman and Smith contributed to the growth of a transatlantic protestant network of ideas and lay people, but both failed to

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32   See for the latest scholarship Michael McClymond, "Revivalism," and Jonathan R. Baer, "Holiness and Pentecostalism," in Philip Goff (ed.), *Blackwell Companion to Religion in America* (Chisester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 306–20 and 569–86. Of course there were similarities as well, especially in public events. Historian Kevin Kee identified flashy means such as flags and a fancy choir as external similarities between Buchman and YFC evangelist Charles Templeton in Canada. Bringing entertainment, patriotism and religion and emphasizing masculine qualities and Christian life style, in a more dignified style than most YFC evangelists. *Revivalists,* (96–187).

33   Martin, *Prophet,* 86, 190, 306. Billy Graham, *Just as I am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 50, 303.

34   Hans Krabbendam, "Zielenverbrijzelaars en zondelozen. Reacties in de Nederlandse pers op Moody, Sankey en Pearsall Smith, 1874–1878," *Documentatieblad voor de Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis na 1800* 34 (May 1991), 39–55. Karl Heinz Voigt, *Die Heiligungsbewegung zwischen methodistischer Kirche und landeskirchlicher Gemeinschaft: die "Triumphreise" von Robert Pearsall Smith im Jahre 1875 und ihre Auswirkungen auf die zwischenkirchlichen Beziehungen* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1996), 39–132.

leave a more permanent institution, and their personalities were insufficient to sustain the movement.[35]

Whereas the holiness tradition was often included in the revivals—Dwight Moody advocated both—Buchman and Graham pursued two different activities. Buchman was concerned with sanctification and updated a popularized version of the holiness tradition, stripped of its religious language and set in a more homey and relaxed atmosphere. His attempts to make it a highly visible global movement only worked for a decade.[36] Graham pursued justification and strongly advanced the revivalist method in his mass events after the war. Though the two traditions interacted with each other, their public displays ran different courses. In a direct sense, Buchman faded away even more completely in the United States than in Europe, while Graham's impact is still felt on both continents.

Indirectly, however, Buchman's legacy has been swallowed up by the steady stream of Anglo-American holiness teaching including many books about Christian spirituality by authors such as Henry Drummond, Asa Mahan, and Hannah Whitall Smith. Buchman gave this tradition enormous visibility, especially in Europe, by taking holiness practice out of the upper room and bringing it center stage. In this process, however, he lost two crucial links, thus obscuring the connection to an evangelical past. First he lost the specific Christocentrism, a loss which alienated him from his historic roots and traditional protestant allies, and subsequently he lost the uniqueness that came with promoting international cultural understanding, ecumenism, and mindfulness to other groups.

After the war, many organizations, most prominently the United Nations and the World Council of Churches, entered the conciliation project. Simultaneously, 'positive thinking' as a popular psychology boomed when authors/preachers Norman Vincent Peale and Robert Schuller brought the concept of change back to individual improvement. New and alternative religious movements such as Sensitivity Training and Scientology tapped into the

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35 Voigt, *Die Heiligungsbewegung*, 178–182 informs us about the disappointment when the high expectation of a sustainable high level of religious victories proved all too short. Voigt confirms the fact that thanks to Smith and Moody's simultaneous presence in the UK created some indirect links between holiness and revivalism. Smith's concentration on personal religious growth opened up the European minds for other expressions of Anglo-Saxon evangelicalism.

36 Paul Fleisch, *Die Heiligungsbewegung: Von den Segenstagen in Oxford 1874 bis zur Oxford-Gruppen-Bewegung Frank Buchmans.* Herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Jörg H. Ohlemacher (Giessen: Brunnen, 2003).

same need.[37] By that time, Buchman's message lacked the internal dynamism or intellectual content necessary to engage the new generation. He had no next and higher level to offer, his earlier examples had lost their bite, and attention moved to more contemporary expressions, leaving just a remnant behind. A number of Christians, including leading evangelicals, adopted Buchmanian elements, such as quiet time and small groups, without embracing the MRA.[38] After the war, new holiness waves reached the shores of mainland Europe, including the growing Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, but they stayed within the Christian community, attracted different classes of people, and did not pursue political goals. Other religious entrepreneurs took over Buchman's legacy of ministering to the high and mighty in politics and business. In the end the prophet's mantle fell to Abraham Vereide, the founder of the International Christian Leadership Movement.[39]

Graham's continuity in the revival tradition was more consistent. Unlike Buchman, his maturing did not reduce his popularity, but increased it over time. This was partly the result of his organizational skills and partly a creature of careful cultivation of the connections with a broad spectrum of Christians. Moreover, he remained deeply rooted in America, kept his distance from the Christian Right (without losing its support), and developed an international persona during the Cold War, with the consistent goal of evangelism always

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37   Buchman sought "the unfolding of the possibilities which are in men." (Lean, *Buchman*, 79). Alison Falby, "The Modern Confessional: Anglo-American Religious Groups and the Emergence of Lay Psychotherapy," *Journal of History of the Behavioral Sciences* 39 (Summer 2003), 251–67.

38   Donald M. C. Englert, "Buchmanism or Moral Rearmament," *Interpretation* 12/3 (July 1958), 310–16. Some Evangelicals (in Europe) accepted Buchman because he encouraged people to meditate during quiet time "Dr. Klaus Bockmühl] was a godly man, thoroughly evangelical. At the same time he was a convinced disciple of Frank Buchman…which was held in some suspicion by most American evangelicals. He, Klaus, never missed his morning Quiet Time, during which he waited quietly to hear God speaking to him, giving directions for the day." (see Waldron Scott, "Double Helix: A Missionary's Odyssey," 685.) http://www.waldronscott.net/doublehelix/ (accessed 1 July 2014). In evangelical circles it has become a standard practice, albeit not identical to Buchman's. Buchman ascribed his thoughts to divine counsel, Boobbyer, *Spiritual*, 34–35.

39   They met in 1933 in Canada, where Buchman apparently encouraged Vereide to Christianize his operations of relief and unemployed and he turned from the "down and out" to the "up and out" Norman Grubb, *Modern Viking: The Story of Abraham Vereide, Pioneer in Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961), 51. Hans Krabbendam, "A Christian Bilderberg? The International Christian Leadership, 1948–1968," in Hans Krabbendam and Wil Verhoeven (eds.), *Who's the Boss? Leadership and Democratic Culture in America* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2007), 187–98.

front and center.[40] The growth of the welfare state in post-war Europe, the rapid decline of institutionalized Christianity in the 1960s, and the emergence of a new youth culture, bolstered Graham's inspiration among traditional Protestants. Buchman's emphasis on personal expression was new in the 1920s and 1930s, but common-place in the 1960s.[41]

5   Conclusion

From the European perspective, Buchman and Graham successively offered creative solutions to Europe's struggling Protestantism. In turn they sought support to strengthen European Protestantism's voluntary affiliation, and increasingly looking to North America for religious revitalization.[42] Five features set Graham's postwar mass events apart from the prewar Buchman campaigns. These included differences in personality, in message and audience, in the churches and institutions with which they were associated, in expectations for politics and the future, and in the changing conditions of European Protestantism before and after the war.

This transatlantic perspective reveals patterns in the export value of American Protestant religion that would remain obscure if analyzed solely from the perspective of a national American setting. The universal claims of American Protestantism became much more explicit on foreign turf than they had at home. This European perspective on mid-century American evangelists reveals two trends. The first trend is the intensifying link between protestant evangelical traditions in North America and Europe. The second trend is the existence of two distinct subgroups in Anglo-American Protestantism operating in Europe. The similarities in emphasis on personal conversion, a strong male leadership role, small groups, testimonies, the use of popular culture, professional public relations devices, the use of modern communication techniques, and attacks on Communism should not obscure the fact that Buchman and Graham belonged to two separate subcultures.

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40   Miller, *Billy Graham*, 217–20.

41   Hugh McLeod and Werner Ustorf, eds., *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750–2000* (Cambridge 2002), Peter Berger, Grace Davie, and Effie Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations* (Aldershot/Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2008).

42   Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), chapter 12. See for a description of the openness to spiritism and Eastern religions among the European aristocracy. Yme Kuiper, "Bekering op de buitenplaats: adel, religie en biografie in het interbellum," in Mirjam de Baar, Yme Kuiper & Hans Renders (eds.), *Biografie & religie: de religieuze factor in de biografie* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2011), 107–29.

In the late nineteenth century, the holiness tradition was the first of the two to cross the Channel to mainland Europe, followed by revivalism after World War II. This order can partly be explained by the language skills and international orientation of European elites who longed for spiritual renewal. The holiness tradition addressed the inner aspects of religion and did not require much organization or church visibility as it offered instantly applicable solutions. The organization of revivals, however, needed much more negotiation between the historically privileged church and the free churches, and then between those churches and religious associations, in order to target a wider audience and to realize a more conscious investment in cross-cultural communication. Though both found a hearing on the continent after a good showing in the United Kingdom, it took a person such as Graham to successfully engage European audiences beyond the United Kingdom.

Though the two men's character traits strongly distinguished one from the other, it was their spiritual environment that further set them apart. Buchman belonged to the old evangelical establishment of the Progressive Era, while Graham was rooted in the new evangelical and more defensive atmosphere of the liberal-fundamentalist opposition. Coming from this atmosphere, Graham made a concerted effort to reach out to the world. These backgrounds found expression in their messages and their target audiences.

Buchman's upbringing as a German Lutheran made him more receptive to Europe than Graham's Southern Baptist training. Buchman was steeped in the nineteenth century evangelical tradition, especially in the Christian student organization, and he specialized in holiness training targeting political and economic elites. Practical and clear responses to his appeals for serious commitment to the faith encouraged him and he opened up his geographical horizon and expanded his ideals in the hope of advancing a Social Gospel. But in the process he advocated faith as a means rather than a goal. He secularized his message by stripping from it explicit doctrinal references to classic Christianity.[43] Buchman's aim updated nineteenth century holiness activities and the secularized result explains the lack of continuity between Buchman and Graham. Graham's shift to embracing a greater inclusiveness was much more gradual. His interest in working in Europe was intensified by looming millennial expectations and a global revival. This combination kept his attention focused on the goal of spreading faith and reaching the widest possible audience.

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43   David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850–1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), quoted in Kee, *Revivalist,* 221.

The holiness-revivalist distinction also helps to explain the organizational differences and hence the long term success of the evangelicals. To Buchman, institutions obstructed direct spiritual communication.[44] With this belief, he not only disabled the continuity of his movement, he also lost contact with the growing organizational schemes of both the mainline churches concentrated in the Federal and World Council of Churches, and the alternatives that were emerging in a global evangelical organization.

The unique political stance of Buchman emerged from the still strong Christian pacifism in the 1930s when many American churches passed resolutions to reject military solutions.[45] That kind of broadly shared non-violence was inconceivable after World War II, when political strategists associated pacifism with liberalism and weakness. Graham's confrontational style resonated in postwar circumstances writ large by Cold War tensions.

Despite these differences, there are two overarching similarities that connect Buchman with Graham. The first is the view that personal change is a real possibility. This message in its religious and secular shape, from Smith and Moody, to Buchman and Graham, from Lincoln to Roosevelt, from Bush to Obama, continues to appeal strongly to Europeans, and deserves more systematic analysis. The second connection is that these evangelists offered two attractive alternative versions of the relationship between public and private religion to European Protestantism that was in the process of declension. The seriousness of this shift was more acute after World War II and became more visible than ever. When the religious constellations in Europe crumbled after the war, the timely presence of Graham and a well-developed set of alternative forms from America attracted some and appalled others in Europe. In both cases these religious exchanges connecting informal networks outside the established churches helped to keep transatlantic relations in full swing.

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44   Boobbyer, *Spiritual*, 54–58.

45   Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Knopf, 2012), 297–303.

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