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OXFORD MOVEMENT AND FUSION

"NEW SPIRIT ABROAD IN
SOUTH AFRICA"

LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS
CHANGED

South Africa's share in the Oxford Group movement is described in a "British Weekly" supplement.

"A Norwegian youth said, 'We used to try and change Africa, and now to my surprise Africa is sending life changers to Norway.' So it is," says the writer of the article. "A country looked upon in Europe as pre-eminently a field for Christian enterprise is becoming a life-changing force among the nations. Its field is the world. It is helping to build a new Europe on the foundation of changed lives.

"A nation beginning to understand what inter-racial reconciliation means is sending spiritual ambassadors to the nations of Europe; beginning to realise its own destiny in Christ, it is eager to spread the same new spirit abroad. During the last 18 months 30 South Africans have co-operated with international teams in no less than eight countries. These are spiritual pioneers who labour for an enduring world peace.

RACE AND COLOUR

"To the mind of the world, South Africa has always suggested the problems of race and colour. In 1929, when Dr. Buchman brought a team of the Oxford Group to our country, many saw a new way of regarding the race situation. Was it not in reality the country's great opportunity of proving to the world that the Spirit of Christ could adequately solve this baffling problem? The solution, however, had first to be found in the lives of individuals.

"Many came to those early House Parties with an attitude of national pride, isolation and bitterness, which only needed to be multiplied in more lives to land the country in civil war. Yet at the end of ten days we rose together, and took a vow of friendship, in these words: 'Sooner shall this limitless veld pass away, sooner shall this endless sunshine cease, than we Afrikaans and English-speaking South Africans shall break the peace which we swear here at the feet of Christ the Redeemer.'

"THE BIRTH OF A NATION"

"To-day South Africa is providing for the world a demonstration of the possibility of a new understanding between the races. A new spirit is abroad in our country. Parties representing the Dutch and English have united. It was one of the great English dailies that pointed out the significance of the spiritual forces which underlay political unity.

"A leading lawyer wrote recently: 'I attended the great Fusion Conference at Bloemfontein, when the new Fusion Party was launched, and the spirit was different from anything we have seen in this country for a hundred years. Instead of the usual struggle between English and Dutch to get as much as each could out of every situation, there was the utmost good will, and each side was most anxious to give to the other side a fair deal. I have seldom seen such a spirit in a political meeting.'

"In the relations between black and white, too, something is beginning to happen which may yet develop into an understanding and co-operation that the most optimistic of us considered impossible. In certain districts renowned for their anti-European sentiment, natives whose own lives have been changed have become apostles of reconciliation, and are demonstrating this new spirit in their daily living. A growing number of Europeans are finding a complete freedom from the ingrained colour prejudice of generations. Surely these are prophetic promises of what still may happen on a nation-wide scale."