

*from the Editorial Page of the* EVENING CHRONICLE (Manchester), *Monday, July 13, 1936.*

# AN APOSTLE WITH A SUITCASE

By  
GEORGE  
ELGIE

02-03-021

**D**R. FRANK BUCHMAN, leader and founder of the much discussed Oxford Group, which now has followers in many countries of the world, visits Manchester for the first time this week.

Dr. Buchman attended a "council of war" of the Group at Oxford during the week-end. Men and women from various parts of the world were present. Their purpose was to plan a "revolution" in 50 countries, by which God would be put in control in each of domestic and foreign policy.

**A**S I made my way from Oxford Railway Station to Lady Margaret Hall I turned over in my mind what I have read lately about Dr. Frank Buchman and the drive which the Oxford Group he founded and leads is about to launch in five centres simultaneously.

I expected to find the leader of all this activity busy in an office surrounded by secretaries, a battery of telephones at his elbow, especially when I heard that already 21 special trains have been booked for the Group's national demonstration at the British Industries Fair Hall at Birmingham on the last Sunday of the month.

I expected that Dr. Buchman would be able to spare me just a hurried few minutes, broken into repeatedly by 'phone calls and other interruptions.

### Pickwickian Twinkle

But, instead of an overworked organiser, I found a genial man in a sports jacket, who spent his time not among the telephones and typewriters, but among the men and women who had come from all over the world to plan the advance of a Christian revolution in 50 countries.

Gusts of laughter came from the group of people who sur-

rounded Dr. Buchman in one corner of the college grounds.

Dr. Frank Buchman has discovered a secret unknown to many a captain of industry or political leader. He has learned how to delegate work without shedding responsibility.

I have never seen anyone more obviously on top of his job. Through rimless glasses Frank Buchman's eyes twinkle with Pickwickian fun, and you notice the same thing whether you talk to him at breakfast or at midnight.

He can meet people all day without losing his sparkle. Those who know him best say that that is because of the inner harmony he has achieved. Since he uses no energy inside himself he has more to spend on others.

### Lives in Suitcases

Rising at 5 a.m. to keep his first "quiet time" with God, Frank Buchman is still an untired man late at night. Never flustered, he preserves a geniality and freshness in conditions most people would find insupportable.

How, for instance, would you care to keep on packing up not only your home, but your office as well, and moving on somewhere else? That is what Dr. Buchman has been doing for nearly 20 years. All that time he has had no private life. All those years it has been exceptional for him to be more than a week or two in one place.

He has been living in suitcases.

Dr. Buchman's travels began before the war. He came to Europe out of tune with himself and out of tune with life. He had left his work in Philadelphia, where he ran a hostel for poor boys, because of disagreement with its committee.

### Changed by a Sermon

A sermon preached in a village church near Keswick changed his life. Letters of apology to all the members of that committee in Philadelphia were posted with the lines, "When I survey the wondrous Cross I pour contempt on all my pride."

That simple act of restitution a quarter of a century ago was really the start of the Oxford Group. It brought Frank Buchman under the guidance of God and so to Oxford to the



"For nearly 20 years Dr. Buchman has been moving on somewhere else."

rooms in Christ Church of Loudon Hamilton, cynical and disillusioned ex-gunner officer, who became and remains Dr. Buchman's chief lieutenant.

Since those early post-war years Frank Buchman has moved round the world—North and South America, Australia, China, Japan, the British Isles, all over Europe. Yet he will revisit a town after a long absence and remember not just the "big-wigs" but the man who sells newspapers or fruit at the stall round the corner or the staff at the hotel.

### "Frank" to All

At Oxford during the weekend over 600 workers of the Group were meeting for days of training.

I found that all of them

called their leader "Frank," and that he, for his part, knew all of them personally and what they are doing and where they are doing it. Spread though it has all over the world, the Oxford Group seems to have lost none of the spirit of a happy family in which it started.

I went to a meeting in the Oxford Union Society. Frank Buchman was at the back of the hall, not on the platform. When anyone spoke too fast or indistinctly he called out to say so. He would expect to be treated the same way himself.

On the platform Dr. Buchman commands attention. He uses no oratory to sway his audience, makes no attempt to play upon emotions. In a direct and businesslike way he talks about the world and its problems in

language that appeals to the hard-headed business man, the housewife and the worker, no less than to the academic mind of the university man.

When he is speaking you forget somehow that this round-faced man with the Pennsylvanian voice is speaking to a crowded hall. He seems to be talking just to you.

Humour abounds in his talks, but probably what distinguishes them most is the gift the speaker has for concentrating a whole philosophy in a sentence. Such a sentence he will repeat slowly.

"Write it down," says Frank, and a thousand pencils write down in a thousand notebooks such a phrase as "The only sane people in an insane world are those who are guided by God," or "God-controlled people will make God-controlled nations, which will remake the world."

The words go down at once. The philosophy, the implications, sink in later and come out in a factory, on a farm, in a newspaper office, a Parliament.

### Revolutionary

Frank Buchman's philosophy is simple but revolutionary.

"Everyone agrees that the world has got in a mess and has got to be remade," he said to me as we strolled around the grounds of an Oxford college.

"Everybody wants to see the other fellow changed just as every nation wants to see the other nation changed, but the trouble is that everybody is waiting for the other fellow to begin."

"My view is that if you want an answer for the world to-day the best place to start is with yourself. The problems of the world are just your problems multiplied."

"Selfishness and fear are the roots of most of the trouble."

"Suppose you let God get rid of them in your own life," he went on. "Suppose you let God take control of you—well, if He can make you different He can make a thousand people different. He can change a million people, change a nation, remake the world."