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# What IS This OXFORD GROUP?

*There is an immense camp at Castle Bromwich.*

*Members of the Oxford Group movement are its inhabitants.*

*Why are they there? What is this movement?*

*In this article, REGINALD HOLME explains.*



Founder  
of the  
Oxford Group Movement,  
Dr. Frank Buchman.

**E**VERYBODY in Birmingham — and indeed throughout the Midlands — seems to be asking these questions:—

What is this Oxford Group?

How did it start?

What hope does it offer for getting the modern world out of the *status quo* — defined *apud* by the negro as the “mess we are now in”?

Thousands will be pouring in from the Midlands to-day and to-morrow to the National Assembly at the British Industries Fair buildings

Others come on 21 special trains from regional training centres where they will have been learning, as many thousands in Britain have already learned in the last few years, what their part is in a “Christian Revolution to remake the world.”

**I** ASKED Dr. Buchman, founder of this world-wide movement who is in Birmingham to take part in the Assembly, to define the essence of the Oxford Group in two words.

“It’s a Christian Revolution,” he said.

“It’s aim,” he continued, “is a social order under the dictatorship of the Spirit of God, making for better human relationships, for unselfish co-operation, for cleaner business, cleaner politics, for the elimination of political, industrial and racial antagonisms.”

“How did it all start?” I asked this genial Pickwickian person.

Even the most hardboiled fellows respond to the kindness in Dr. Buchman’s eyes and to his “fluid flywheel” laugh — its the only way I can describe it.

He positively caws with laughter early in the morning or late at night like an amiable crow—eagle would perhaps be

a better word for this man who mobilises men and women on a world-wide spiritual front.

“The Oxford Group really began one day when two of my best friends went and ruined their lives and I found I could do nothing for them,” he said.

Dr. Buchman determined he would learn how to be a “human engineer” — able to repair people.

But it was not till he heard a sermon preached by a woman in a little Lake district church that he saw the gulf that separated him from the Founder of Christianity.

He felt he had to write six letters to men against whom he bore resentment. That very day on which he began to live under God control, he began to be a life changer.

**I**N 1921 he went to Oxford, taking — diplomatically enough — some “changed” Cambridge men with him.

The men changed at Oxford were the pioneers of a spiritual revolution which has spread into 50 countries in 15 years.

Seven Oxford men took this new spirit to South Africa with far-reaching consequences in reconciling Dutch and English, who had been separated by an age-long feud.

There began to come a new attitude to the coloured people. Loudon Hamilton, tall Scottish ex-officer, who will be speaking at the B.I.F. Assemblies, was one of those pioneers.

It was in his rooms at Oxford that the first “Oxford” Group was held.

As Beverley Nichols says, the word “Oxford” is totally inadequate to describe the scope of the movement, which he describes as the “most important current thing happening in Europe.”

The name was actually given by the South African Press to the first team of Oxford men in 1928, and it has stuck.

So far from being pacifist, this is a movement of militant Christianity which claims to

have found the “moral equivalent of war.”

If so, it holds one of the most important discoveries of any century.

What hope does it hold out for national recovery and world peace?

What is its philosophy?

**A** SIMPLE but profound speech made by Dr. Buchman in the film “Bridge Builders,” which is showing in Birmingham, gives the answer.

This is what he says:—

“Everybody wants to see the other fellow changed. Every nation wants to see the other nation changed. But everybody is waiting for the other fellow to begin.

“The Oxford Group is convinced that if you want an answer for the world the best place to start is with yourself.

“Everybody admits the necessity of a moral and spiritual awakening. You find selfishness and fear everywhere, in men and in nations.

“One person really different, a thousand people different, a nation changed. That is the programme of the Oxford Group.”

“The secret is God-control. God-controlled individuals, homes, schools, business, industry, God-controlled parliaments and God-controlled Cabinets.”

“The true patriot,” says Dr. Buchman, “gives his life to bring his nation under God’s control.”

**W**HAT sort of people are there in the Oxford Group?

The answer is: “All the 57 varieties.”

Peers and prisoners, baronesses and barmaids, bishops and burglars, young

and old, of all temperaments and nationalities, are in "it."

"It" being not an organisation but an organism.

The Oxford Group is a "quality of life" like ozone, which cannot be bottled or stereotyped.

No fossil Christianity here, but the original essence of the men and women, who as the Lord Mayor of Birmingham put it "turned the world right side up."

It flies over barriers of party, class and creed.

How does this philosophy work out in practice?

What happens when these "life-changing locusts," as a great Japanese leader described them, move in on a country.

When they landed in Canada, almost unknown, the first thing that happened was that the director of a great newspaper paid back £2,500 to the Customs.

This so delighted the Government that within a fortnight the international "team" who were to pioneer across Canada in a new way were sitting with the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.

After two years the Prime Minister said that their work had profoundly affected every part of the country's life.

**R**ECENTLY, in Geneva, Dr. Benesh, President of the League Assembly and now President of the

"key" European country, Czecho-Slovakia, gave a luncheon for the Oxford Group to meet the delegates.

The President of the Norwegian Parliament, Mr. C. J. Hambro, the man who makes the nations pay their subscriptions, told of "the whole mentality of Norway being changed" through the work of a team of the Group which he had invited to Norway.

He spoke also of its "unbelievable impact on Denmark," where it is also nationwide in character.

After that lunch two hostile nations signed a treaty of "friendship and goodwill." An international journalist said it "gave God a seat in the League Assembly."

Men whose names are household words in industry are now convinced that "God-control" is the one sure foundation on which to base business.

Leaders in Church and State call for a "moral and spiritual awakening" which will bring unity within a nation and harmony between nations.

The Oxford Group knows from the experience of all past history and from its own 20th century experience that this only happens when the leaders of a nation and the people whom they lead begin, individually and corporately, to take their marching orders from God.

The question the Oxford Group asks is:—

"When are you and I going to begin?"