

AMERICAN BUSINESS SURVEY

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"The Groups" Inaugurate a New Era in Religious Ideals

A SPIRITUAL leader of vital significance recently returned to America. The Rev. Frank N. D. Buchman, the founder of the religious movement known as "First Century Christian Fellowship,"

has been the subject of much controversy in this country as well as abroad. But whether "The Groups" are accepted or rejected, whether the aims and ideals of the movement to recapture the spirit and power of the early church and to bring back the charm which it had once exerted over a world and a civilization surprisingly like ours, found approval or were denied, in any case, it has managed to stir us out of a spiritual lethargy.

"The Groups" was founded in this country before the war, and it recently held at Briarcliff Lodge, Briarcliff Manor, New York, a house-party. More than seven hundred gathered there, and the Rev. Buchman who arrived with 22 European followers of the movement departed immediately to this retreat to be ready for the first evening of the house party. The meetings continued until May 2nd. The intervening time was devoted, in the main, to conferences, Bible study and religious instruction.

Religious and educational leaders have followed the movement with great and serious interest, for it was felt that "The Groups" bring the personal touch, the immediate spiritual communion and comradeship back to the work of the churches which, due to the emergency of the complex civilization of our day, have often been more concerned with social welfare work than the needs of the individual soul. It is not a new sect, but a movement of life within the church.

The guests at the house party were drawn from the student bodies of Eastern universities and from every walk of life. The clerical as well as the lay world mingled and, in addition to more formal meetings, discussed on a footing of friendliness and equality, all those questions which trouble soul and mind and can only find a satisfactory answer from the source of religious insight and understanding.