

175 ATTEND FIRST MEETING OF GROUP

Converts to Personal Re-consecration Idea

NINE SPEAK

Spirit of Good Fellowship Reigns at First of Four Sessions in Mitchell School.

That the burden of problems under which nations as well as individuals are struggling may be entirely cast off or at least greatly lightened through a universal revival of personal religion, was the message of hope that was brought to Williamstown and Berkshire county last night by nine speakers from a band of 35 representing a spiritual force whose influence it is believed is bound to be felt in and around this community. They told how their lives and the lives of hugh cities had been transformed because, through the medium of exchanging experiences, they had been able to create in the hearts of nominal Christians a burning desire to find Jesus Christ in their individual lives.

The visitors, several of whom crossed the ocean to take part in a nation-wide movement in this country, were members of the Oxford group or the First Century Christian Fellowship. They will spend the remainder of the week here and conduct meetings each evening at 8 o'clock in the Walter G. Mitchell school where they were welcomed by more than 150 Berkshire citizens last night.

The warmest of welcomes was extended by the group members as those who had been invited to the first meeting and the ones to follow, entered the hall. In turn, wishes for a most pleasant stay in the Berkshires were voiced. The utmost informality prevailed throughout the evening. At the close of the scheduled program, each individual in the gathering of more than 175 widened his circle of friendship.

There was a general feeling of expectancy that great things were impending when William Cook Hart of this town opened the meeting. The Oxford group members mingled with the audience which was seated in a wide semi-circle.

After a word of hearty welcome and a brief reference to the purposes of the get-to-gether, Mr. Hart presented H. Kenaston Twitchell of Oxford, England, who presided as chairman. The young leader was a prominent member of the house party recently held at Oxford's colleges with an enrollment of nearly 800.

An enthusiastic and brilliant speaker, Mr. Twitchell said philosophers, scientists and many other observers agree that in the present crisis only a world wide religious revival can present universal chaos. The miracles of changing cities spiritually which have been wrought by the Fellowship both here and abroad clearly indicate, he said, that there is a new Christian movement existing and that it is making great strides at a rapid pace.

Mr. Twitchell referred specifically to Detroit, Mich., where he and other group leaders held a series of meetings a short time ago. Radicals were camping on the steps of city hall, the unemployed were clamoring for aid, business men were discouraged, 16 substantial citizens had committed suicide in a single day. By meeting in groups, both large and small, the exponents of the "religion that works"—which is as old as Christianity itself, he said—renewed hope in hundreds of breasts and transformed the spiritual complexion of the entire city.

The next speaker, Miss Eleanor Forde of New York city, whose family met financial reverses when she was a young girl described convincingly the changes that had taken place in her life when she became acquainted with a fuller conception of Christ.

Victor Kitchen, a New York advertising man endowed with a keen wit, spoke of having started out in life interested only in accumulating a fortune, having a good time and receiving applause. Finding something lacking he began searching for answers to his questions and discovered them by sharing his experiences and gaining a new understanding of the Holy Spirit.

Miss Marjorie Evans, another New Yorker, said that when she became secretary to a prominent social leader she thought her goal attained but

after having come in contact with Miss Forde, one of the previous speakers, she realized her own life had been spiritually empty.

The widow of a clergyman and mother of a large family, Mrs. Luther D. Bradley of Brookline, spoke of her life in a Christian home and told how one of her daughters first brought home to her the need of a fuller interpretation of Christ in her life. She described her reactions when she first learned that the daughter had found a new religious experience with the groups and mentioned that four of her children were in with her in Williamstown.

John Trevorrow, a native Vermonter but now of New York, outlined his glamorous career as a runaway boy, woodsman, seaman and bootlegger and spoke of having the true meaning of Christ's life impressed upon him in a Metropolitan mission. He said he intended to return to his home in the Green Mountain state this week and tell his family which he has not seen for several years about his "new life."

Mrs. Albert H. Ely, Jr., of Cold Spring Harbor, N. Y., told of her former resentment when any one violated her self-established and petty rules. She said she had always gone to church regularly because she considered it the thing to do but not until she began "witnessing" the things that had occurred in her life did she feel that she was living up to the ideals of Christianity.

A North Carolina clergyman, Rev. Norman von Post Schwab of Asheville, explained what the work of the groups had meant to his home city. The movement there, he said, was established by a physician who soon had 77 persons meeting groups in all sections and of all classes with the result that Asheville underwent a widespread religious revival.

C. Scoville Wishard of New York who was a track star at Williams college in the early years of the last decade, said that his auditors might be assured that he was making his first speech before a religious gathering in Williamstown. He spoke at first becoming acquainted with the work of the Fellowship when he was trying to help a fellow-student at Williams. Mr. Wishard declared that the influence of college men he had heard speak of their experiences made him decide to enter a theological seminary after his graduation in 1925. He told of the battles he had before he succeeded in fighting off habits he had acquired before and during his undergraduate days.

The high spirit of happiness and good fellowship that permeated the school hall last night is said to be typical of every meeting of the Fellowship. The leaders who have come here from widely separated sections of the south and east as well as from foreign lands were all enthusiastic over the success of the first meeting.

True Williamstown hospitality is being extended to the Fellowship whose members are being entertained in a number of private homes. Tomorrow afternoon Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Shellabarger are to be hosts to the visitors and their friends at a tea and reception at the summer home of Professor and Mrs. Philip Marshall Brown in South Williamstown which they are occupying for the season.

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