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**The Oxford Group, Group Revivalism, and the  
Churches in Northern Europe, 1930–1945, with  
Special Reference to Scandinavia and Germany**

Anders Jarlert



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*For*  
**EDVARD**

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## Abstract

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Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Lund University. Göteborg 1995, 526 pages, Monograph, ISBN 91-7966-318-4 (Lund University Press), ISBN 0-86238-391-9 (Chartwell-Bratt Ltd).

The development of and interaction between the Oxford Group, Group revivalism, and the Churches is analyzed firstly according to general principles and structures, secondly according to the national development in Scandinavia and Germany. The network of the Oxford Group in fellowship with Frank Buchman is distinguished, though not isolated, from independent Group revivalism, and Church Group revivalism, respectively.

In the 1930s, the Oxford Group changed emphasis from revivalistic personalism to social personalism on a national or supranational level, presenting a utopian alternative to National Socialism and Communism, expressed in 1938 as a strategy of moral rearmament, from 1943 interpreted as a democratic ideology (ideological personalism), though Moral Re-Armament (M.R.A.) was not used as a designation of the fellowship until after the war.

The national development is studied in four subsequent phases of information, revival groups, the Oxford Group, and isolation, respectively. In its encounter with the Lutheran national Churches, and totalitarian National Socialism, the Oxford Group faced new problems. The study is built on literary sources, new-found duplicated reports and private letters, and gives a new, critical reading of the development, in previous descriptions often spoiled by propagandistic or hostile purposes, or by over-emphasizing Frank Buchman's person.

## Preface

The first idea of studying the Oxford Group came to me from one of its Swedish postcards, placed by my mother in her Bible. A second inspiration came from people to whom the meeting with Group revivalism meant a new personal beginning. A third – and perhaps the ‘guiding’ – event was when the Rev. Arthur Enander, an afternoon in the early 1980s, generously gave me a trunk full of books from and about the Oxford Group and Group revivalism.

As I conclude this project I wish to express my thanks to several persons. First and most I thank Angelica, my wife, and our three sons, for sharing the loving ‘family team fellowship,’ and accepting the sometimes very demanding inclusion of my work in that fellowship. The book is dedicated to Edvard, who was born when this project was still a plan, and has grown with the manuscript. This study could probably never have been completed without the inspiration and help of the late David Wiklund, who combined loyalty to the Oxford Group with a passion for critical research into its history, and opened many doors to me. In a period when I sometimes doubted the possibility and worth of my work, I was encouraged by the ‘sharing’ acquaintance of Sixten Ekstrand, at the time writing his doctoral thesis on the Oxford Group in Finland, and dealing with similar problems. Last but not least: the skilful assistance of Peder Carlsson has greatly improved my English, and made a book out of my manuscript.

Many colleagues have given me assistance, and shown patience. I wish to mention Professor Ingmar Brohed, who also has included this book in the *Bibliotheca Historico-Ecclesiastica Lundensis*.

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Gothenburg and Lund in March, 1995

Anders Jarlert

# I. INTRODUCTION

## I.1. The Oxford Group, Group Revivalism, and the Churches

### I.1.1. *Introductory Definitions*

In the 1930s and 1940s the Oxford Group represented a new revivalistic model. This was clear already to its National Socialist critics:

Unter den religiös-christlichen Phänomenen der Nachkriegszeit, die versuchten, die durch den Weltkrieg aufgebrochenen sozialen, wirtschaftlichen und politisch-internationalen Probleme von der christlichen Erkenntnisgrundlage und den biblischen Zielsetzungen aus einer Lösung zuzuführen, hat die sogenannte "Oxford-Gruppen-Bewegung" ohne Zweifel in den verschiedensten Ländern den nachhaltigsten Eindruck hinterlassen und verdient wegen der Neuartigkeit der von ihr zur Realisierung ihrer urbiblischen Prinzipien eingeschlagenen Methoden und Wege, die sich erheblich von dem seither herrschenden Kirchentum und seinen Verkündigungs- und Seelsorgeformen abheben, besondere Beachtung.<sup>1</sup>

Since that time, the Jesus Movement and various forms of charismatic revivalism have widened the spectrum further. The Oxford Group was the first worldwide revival movement of this modern type, based on the same experiences and, while lacking a formal membership, creating informal, strong structures of cooperation, without direct ties to any existing denomination and without developing into separate congregations or churches, even lacking a ministry. Thus, it may be described as a movement, more or less sectarian, though not a sect.<sup>2</sup>

In a short sketch of evangelical Christianity and cultural modernism, D. W. Bebbington has stated that the following characteristics of cultural modernism in the Oxford Group can be discerned in the charismatic renewal as well: free self-expression, depth psychology and group therapy, the importance of personal relations, the cultivation of holy worldliness, lacking traditional evangelical taboos, a nebulous tone in the thinking, emphasizing life at the expense of theology, an anti-institutional thrust in the practice, and finally, an authoritarian streak.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:5.

<sup>2</sup>Belden 1976:27 f. further discusses the definitions 'non-separatist sect' and 'pre-sectarian movement.'

<sup>3</sup>Bebbington 1990:4 ff. It is important to notice that this cultural modernism must be distinguished from theological modernism. Within the Oxford Group, 'modern' was

‘The Oxford Group,’ ‘the Oxford Group Movement,’ ‘the Group Movement,’ or even the single word ‘Oxford’ have often been used synonymously in literature, designating several more or less co-operating movements, describing a common direction of movement or a spiritual impulse.<sup>4</sup> There were other Group movements as well. In his widespread edifying book, *Victorious Living* (1936), E. Stanley Jones wrote: ‘Many Group Movements with varying emphases have sprung up throughout the world – the Oxford Groups, the Cambridge Groups, the Burma Gospel Team Groups, Kagawa’s Fellowship of the Friends of Jesus Group, the Christian Ashram Group Movement in India, and various other types.’<sup>5</sup>

We interpret the Group movements in an open sense, as a summarizing denotation of a common historical phenomenon, of which the Oxford Group was one. This summarizing and inclusive use of ‘Group movements,’ and the only apparently high precision of ‘the Group Movement,’ make these terms unsuitable as tools for an analysis of concrete historical situations. Instead, on sociological more than ideological grounds, we have chosen the rather uncommon, less trite, and consciously open ‘Group revivalism.’ It is not to be interpreted as a doctrinal description, but as a methodical one, neutral in value.

In this study, ‘the Oxford Group’ refers to a national or international network with a strong, informal organization, working in personal fellowship – both inspirationally and functionally – with Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman (1878–1961)<sup>6</sup> or the team around him, willing to live and work in the Oxford Group way, i.e. according to a certain pattern of attitudes in action. ‘Group revivalism,’ on the other hand, presents a varying attitude to Buchman and the Oxford Group, both inspirationally and functionally. It may contain or lack a continuous personal fellowship with the Oxford Group. Significant for *independent* Group revivalism – in contrast to the Oxford Group – is often a separation between the message and the methods of the Oxford Group, and always a separation between life and work in the Oxford Group way and the personal fellowship with Frank Buchman and his team.<sup>7</sup>

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used in this consciously wide and open sense. In *What is the Oxford Group?* 1933:130, it says: ‘We are Moderns. [...] God is as modern to-day as He was [...]. Let us be Moderns with God; or soon we shall be nothing without Him.’

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the Swedish presentation in Södergren 1945:229, 232.

<sup>5</sup> Jones 1936, Sept. 7.

<sup>6</sup> On Buchman and the development of the Oxford Group, see Lean 1985, and, in Swedish, Ekstrand 1993, Ch.II.

<sup>7</sup> Such groups consisted of people willing to live in the Oxford Group way and to work independently in that way, or willing to live in the Oxford Group way, though working in some other way, more or less inspired by the Oxford Group, in opposition to or accordance with it. In some cases, this independent position was given a fundamental importance, i. e. it developed into Group independentism. Hestvold 1987:132 is one of very few authors correctly distinguishing the Oxford Revival from the Oxford Movement. We prefer ‘Group revivalism’ and ‘the Oxford Group’, respectively. Ekstrand

These introductory distinctions are needed especially for two reasons: 1) the Oxford Group should not be confused with Group revivalism of varying origin and character, and 2) though other Group movements or independent revivalistic groups have not been regarded as genuine or authorized by the Oxford Group, they still played an important part in the development of ideas and practices connected with the Oxford Group, and cannot be left out of the historian's view. To understand the development of the work of the Oxford Group in Northern Europe, it is necessary to pay attention also to other Group activities and attitudes, more or less connected with the Oxford Group, though often unobserved in literature of or on the Oxford Group.

### *I.1.2. British Group Revivalism, the Oxford Group, and the Cambridge Group Movement*

Frank Buchman spoke at Cambridge in October 1920, making Cambridge his base for nearly a year, staying at Westminster, the Presbyterian theological college. Some Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union men were his ardent disciples, but before long the C.I.C.C.U. was divided. After some months Buchman was disappointed and, after his visit to Oxford in May 1921, his interest in Cambridge slackened.<sup>8</sup> In November 1929, he returned for a week-end, and by the following summer his movement was established in Cambridge, too. To the ordinary undergraduate, the Group seemed the natural development of the evangelistic tradition. The C.I.C.C.U. acknowledged a debt to the ideals of the movement, but found its particular methods and principles wanting, and in 1933 the influence of the Oxford Group was on the wane.<sup>9</sup>

Then came the Cambridge Group Movement. The guiding personality in its formation was the Methodist pastor W. Harold Beales. Lots of people came together in 'group meetings, retreats, exchanges of correspondence, and in visits to Methodist churches up and down the country,' responding to the question: 'Is the full, rich, evangelical experience available to everyone?' The Movement was taken up by London University Methodists, and spread through the Methodist student world, also in the U.S.A.<sup>10</sup> The Cambridge Group Move-

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1993:68 f., 99 distinguishes Group movements inspired by the Oxford Group, thus separating the methods from the fellowship. Belden 1976:383 ff. has seen *Groups* magazine and independent Group revivalism as a British phenomenon, explaining it by the lack of house-parties for the clergy, etc., and not as a common pattern of different times and places.

<sup>8</sup> Pollock 1953:207 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Pollock 1953:238-241.

<sup>10</sup> A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, III. 1983:368 f., A Group Speaks 1931, Strömstedt 1933:76 ff. Oxford Group campaigns sometimes resulted in Methodist groups, as in Edinburgh, 1930: 'Numbers of young people gave themselves to Christ, continued to meet afterwards in weekly groups and carried the message to other

ment was made known and influential in many countries through the *Groups* magazine, and through Frank C. Raynor's *The Finger of God. A Book about the Group Movements* (1934). Raynor was inspired by reading Russell's *For Sinners Only*, but as he was not prepared to accept the guidance of the Oxford Group leaders, a breach was unavoidable. His conclusion was that 'either the leaders of the Oxford Group Movement dared to believe that the Holy Spirit had delegated to them the responsibility of defining, and divining, that quality of life which He would accept; or, to admit that the crystalization of this movement into a closed corporation is a *fait accompli*.'<sup>11</sup>

Raynor's conflict with the Oxford Group formed an important prerequisite for the creation of a new magazine, *Groups*, in June 1933, promoting 'the wider fellowship of the Spirit, which is manifesting itself in the various forms of the Group Movement,' edited by A. B. W. (Peter) Fletcher and Raynor, with a certain Methodist flavour. It was published till December 1935, succeeded by *Discipleship*, January 1936 to January 1937.<sup>12</sup> The group was defined as 'a company of people drawn into fellowship by a common desire for a richer experience of the living Christ and of the Holy Spirit, and united in the common task of winning souls for the Kingdom of God.'<sup>13</sup> Beside the Cambridge Group Movement and the Oxford Group Movement, there were other Group movements, like the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement, the Kingdom of God Movement originated in Japan by Kagawa, and several Youth Movements, 'which are all expressions of the intense desire of the younger generation for deeper spiritual experience and personal knowledge of a living Christ.' Later on, the list was completed with the Christian Laymen's Union of Pittsburgh in the United States.<sup>14</sup> In April 1934, Toyohiko Kagawa sent greetings to 'Groupers the World Over,' aiming at radical social changes, published in the September issue of *Groups*. Kagawa asked 'you Oxford Groups to carry out the Love Movement completely in action,' i.e. to get the tariff walls between nations abolished, and to establish international trade agreements to make production tie in with consumption, ending waste and competition.<sup>15</sup> The tendency of *Groups* was

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Methodist churches in Scotland.' The involvement was considerable by Presbyterians and Congregationalists as well, while the support from Anglo-Catholics or Baptists was more singular (Bebbington 1986:496, 499, 501).

<sup>11</sup> Raynor 1934:109 ff. (quot.112), 170 f. Raynor's book was quickly translated, also into Swedish in 1935.

<sup>12</sup> The magazine was started as a result of 'clear guidance of the Holy Spirit.' *Groups* vol. I:1. A series of great life changers included St. Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi, Lady Julian of Norwich, Martin Luther, John Bunyan, George Fox, and others. Translations from *Fioretti* were presented as 'A Thirteenth Century Team,' 'Absolute Love,' etc.

<sup>13</sup> *Groups* vol. I:16.

<sup>14</sup> *Groups* vol. I:269.

<sup>15</sup> *Groups* vol. II:168; a Swedish translation in *Vår Julbok*, the Methodist popular year-book, 1934. Kagawa (1888–1960) was a famous Japanese Christian social reformer, influenced by Wesley, Fox, and Mme. Guyon. In his emphasis on identification with



clearly critical to the Oxford Group, when the editor writes that ‘we are made aware at times of a certain air of spiritual exclusiveness in some of our Groupers friends, who manage to convey the impression that the particular movement to which they belong, [...] is the only one through which the Spirit can work effectively.’ Instead of this exclusive network of guidance and authority, the house-parties arranged by the *Groups* were open to both Oxford and Cambridge Groupers, as well as to those being ‘neither Oxford, Cambridge, nor Puddleton.’<sup>16</sup> Thus, *Groups* represented the position of Group independentism.

The knowledge of *Groups* reached active Group members through outside channels as well, as when J. F. Laun in Germany in 1933 read about the magazine in *British Weekly*. Asked for further informations, Moni von Cramon wrote him from the Oxford House-party that *Groups* was ‘abgelagert’ – a layer of the Group Movement.<sup>17</sup> In Finland, Bishop Aleksi Lehtonen subscribed for *Groups*, spreading knowledge of it to Swede as well.<sup>18</sup> In Norway, Sverre Norborg, in his second book on the Oxford Group Movement (1934), wrongly referred to *Groups* as officially representative of the Oxford Group, regarding its criticisms positively.<sup>19</sup> In Denmark, the magazine was read in 1933, and at Christmas 1934, greetings came from Denmark, Norway, and Switzerland. Swedish readers were mentioned in January 1935, and in July 1935, *Groups* contained a report from a ‘house-party’ in Swedish Alingsås.<sup>20</sup>

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other men, Kagawa had much in common with the Oxford Group way of life, but his identification also meant direct work for a change of social structures.

<sup>16</sup>Groups vol. II:397 f. The critical tendency towards the Oxford Group was subsequently strengthened. See, for example, Groups vol. II:446 f., on a small group formed in Shetty, Swansea, after the visit of A. J. Russell. This group met for some eight months when it was visited by ‘a Leader of the Oxford Groups’: ‘Without mincing words, he told the little company that it was not a Group and had no business to be meeting at all; and, in short, succeeded so well in damping down the interest and enthusiasm of the little band of disciples that their gathering was disbanded and had ceased to exist.’ The critical aspects on the Oxford Group in Allen 1935 were applauded in Groups vol. III:16 f. Pollock 1953:219–227 mentions the Anglican Fellowship, the Way of Renewal, and the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement, growing rapidly among liberal evangelicals. With the arrival of William Nicholson – an Ulster evangelist and minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland – in Cambridge, the United Mission 1926 had an overwhelming effect on a few young men, of whom one testified, that ‘when left alone, I had my first “quiet time” and then went to bed. My first conscious thought in the morning was of the Lord Jesus’ presence.’ The Anglican Evangelical Group Movement is mentioned also by Bril-  
ioth 1934:138. Groups vol. I:280.

<sup>17</sup> Laun to von Cramon 1933 July 12, von Cramon to Laun 1933 July 17 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>18</sup> Ekstrand 1993:42.

<sup>19</sup> Norborg 1934:28, 64.

<sup>20</sup> In Groups vol. I:271, a certain Andrea from Denmark is mentioned, writing letters that ‘are a joy even if we do not always know just what they mean.’ Groups vol. II:313 ff., with greetings from Johs. Juul Nielsen, Denmark, Margary K. Nilsen, Norway, C. E. Peter, Switzerland, etc. Groups vol. II:352. Groups vol. III:75.

Articles from *Groups* were collected, translated and published in Scandinavia as well.<sup>21</sup>

### *I.1.3. Church Group Revivalism*

The Group revival of the 1930s was spread within the framework of congregational life in churches and denominations. In Scandinavia, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, etc., we may speak of a Church Group revivalism, being either a form of Oxford Group work, or a form of independent Group revivalism. Its fundamental principle was not Group independentism, but loyalty to the doctrines and fellowship of its Church or denomination. Criticism from Church Group revivalists was not much concerned with the claims of the Oxford Group, but with the doctrinal defects in its message, especially when developing in a biased social direction. Contrary to Group independentism in general, Church Group revivalism did not wane during the late 1930s, but continued in Scandinavia as part of congregational work and life, during and after the Second World War, with or without a waning fellowship with the Oxford Group work for a moral rearmament.<sup>22</sup>

## I.2. The Historiography

### *I.2.1. The Unhistorical, Personalistic Approach*

The unhistorical, personalistic approach of the Oxford Group is demonstrated by its American name: A First-Century Christian Fellowship. For a long time, the Group used its own history only in order to evangelize and propagate on a personal level. This does not imply that the earlier historiography of the Oxford Group must be regarded as false or unreliable from a critical point of view. But its purpose was 'life-changing', not historical explanation or analysis. The selective choice of historical events and persons, and the stress on the importance of the parts played by these persons, while omitting others, was spiritually motivated. It was part of the Group's interpretation of its own work as an instrument of realizing God's plan, and as directly guided by God, continuing the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Sangster 1935:8. In April 1936, *Discipleship* (vol. I:164 f.) published an article by the Swedish Group revivalistic Methodist pastor, Göte Bergsten, 'On Being Considerate'.

<sup>22</sup> See further Jarlert 1994:41 f., 45.

<sup>23</sup> Further on, this interpretation is relevant in the life-changing work, though it is not the only one. See, for instance, Campbell & Howard: *The Strategy of St. Paul* (1956, later

The Canadian professor Douglas J. Wilson even spoke of the Oxford Group's 'total misreading of church history, of which only two periods are recognized, namely, the primitive church and the Wesleyan revival.'<sup>24</sup> As a reaction, R. H. Murray's harmonizing, historical survey of *Group Movements Throughout the Ages* (1935) appeared, with an authorizing foreword by L. W. Grensted, who vividly recommended both the chapter on the history of the Oxford Group Movement, and the general over-view of the Group ideal in Christian life through the centuries, here represented by Montanists, Franciscans, Friends of God, Quietists and Methodists, and with a reference even to the Tractarians. When a more strictly historical approach turned out to have a life-changing effect, it was adapted by the Oxford Group (for example the parallel drawn during the Norwegian campaign between Frank Buchman and the national revival preacher, H. N. Hauge).

### *1.2.2. The 'Life-Changing' and 'World-Changing' Stories about the Oxford Group*

The most widespread publications on Group revivalism were not historical reports, but stories about the Oxford Group, aiming at the challenge to and change of individuals. This category includes Harold Begbie's *Life Changers* and A. J. Russell's *For Sinners Only*, both journalistically written in the 1920s, and primarily directed towards the non-church-going masses. A later, Scandinavian product of this kind is Sven Stolpe's *Oxfordprofiler* (1938).

From stories about changed individuals, who themselves became life-changers, this genre developed into the story of a world-changing movement, encouraging its readers to work for changed nations and a changed world through personal life-change. The best example of this is *Rising tide*, translated into nine languages, printed in 1,630,000 copies during 1937–1938, and advertised as the History of the Oxford Group in pictures.

### *1.2.3. The Testimonies of Changed Persons*

Though Begbie's and Russell's books contained several confessions of changed persons, they were based on stories about the Group. In many other books

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reprinted), with its presentation of the ideology as being there already with St. Paul, finally even listing 29 chapters or passages from St. Paul's letters on 'Ideology.' Cf. the religious interpretation of their own history among Pentecostals, see Petursson 1990:214.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson is quoted by Henson 1933<sup>2</sup>:XVII f.; 28: 'The Groupist ignores the history of Christianity [...] He moves at a stride from the Age of the Apostles to the present time, and assumes that the centuries of previous essays in extra-ecclesiastical revivalism, inspired like their own by the ideal of a restored "first-century Christianity," and also finding in the New Testament at once their credentials and their models.'

which contained separate or collected confessions, no story was told, just the straight testimonies. These collected confessions were frequent in the German-speaking countries (for example *Ermatinger Tagebuch*) as well as in Scandinavia. Examples of individual confessional books are those of the theologian Geoffrey Allen (especially *He that Cometh*), the more journalistic books by Stephen Foot and Jack Winslow, as well as the confessional books by the Scandinavian writers Harry Blomberg, Ronald Fangen, and Sven Stolpe. The testimonies of changed persons also include the oral tradition of the M.R.A. movement. This tradition may often point to some important basic fact or clue, though the oral testimonies often exaggerate the influence of the Oxford Group or confuses it with other religious or ideologic forces of the time.

A counterpart to the collected confessions are the collections of statements. *Oxford and the Groups* is a collection of articles both favourable and critical, published in 1934. In another collection, *The Meaning of the Groups*, published in the same year, a couple of articles discuss the Oxford Group in connection with other Group movements or ordinary Church life. This book also contains the differing views of the modernist H. D. A. Major, and the Roman Catholic R. A. Knox.<sup>25</sup>

#### *I.2.4. The Story about the Life- and World-Changer's Own Life*

Short Frank Buchman-biographies were – among other items – included in the early, story-telling books on the Oxford Group, creating the pattern for subsequent conversions and life-changing. After World War II, greater emphasis was placed on the propagating value of Buchman's life and work, starting with Peter Howard's *That Man Frank Buchman* (1946), followed by *Frank Buchman's Secret* (1961). David C. Belden has studied the rewriting of the movement's history, especially after the Second World war, noting that Buchman's early life, with the gradual change in the presentation of the whole movement, was made to appear either secular or merely vaguely Christian, with the aim to emphasize the universality of Buchman's message for all well-intentioned people.<sup>26</sup> In the biggest and most reliable biography of Buchman, *Frank Buchman: a Life* (1985), Garth Lean rewrote history once more. It is the first biography written for public consumption from inside the Oxford Group, but with an aim not to exclude more delicate matters, and to put at least most of the cards on the table. The biographical form is still of historiographic significance, especially when it is used as a pattern for the history of the Group's work in a certain country. In such use, the importance of the individual, Frank Buchman, is over-emphasized

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<sup>25</sup> *The Meaning of the Groups* was translated into Swedish (*För och mot Grupprörelsen*) by Bengt Redell, at the request of Manfred Björquist, the director of the Sigtuna Foundation (see Redell 1984:49).

<sup>26</sup> Belden 1976:310 ff., especially p. 316.

at the expense of local and national Group work. Obviously, this emphasis has been adapted by some renegades as well.<sup>27</sup>

### *1.2.5. Critical Research* <sup>28</sup>

The first extensive, theological examination of the Oxford Group, with claims to be close and exact, and with pastoral authority and ambition, *The Group Movement*, by Herbert Hensley Henson, Bishop of Durham, was widely spread and read, and influenced critical circles both in Britain and abroad.<sup>29</sup> Henson's examination of 'Groupism' led him to the conclusion that it was 'gravely, even fatally, defective' in three respects: 1) It ignores the demands of the intellect in this high matter of religion, 2) The Movement is too closely bound to the moods and claims of adolescence, 3) The conception of Christianity which Groupism presents is far too meagre and limited. 'Groupism' was 'a closed system, as close-knit and dominating as that of the Jesuits.'<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Stolpe 1987. The emphasis on Buchman is constant within the Group, see, for example, Svend Major's duplicated memoirs from the 1980s. Despite its 'social' title, 'Et kristent samfunnsbilde,' out of 51 pages, 23 deal exclusively with Buchman, and 8 with H. N. Hauge.

<sup>28</sup> Scandinavian or German studies are dealt with below in Chs. III–VI.

<sup>29</sup> It was first published in March, 1933, as first part of the charge, delivered at the third Quadrennial Visitation of the Diocese, then in a separate form (82 pages), reprinted in July, 1933, and re-issued, with a new preface of 36 pages, in December, 1933. Though a safeguard of theological freedom, Herbert Hensley Henson (1863–1947), Bishop of Durham 1920–39, was a Victorian survivor, 'the acute critic of all and sundry – of Davidson and Gore and Temple and the Oxford Group,' Hastings 1986:194, 176. In his biography of Henson, Owen Chadwick, 1983:214, points out that 'the charge on the Oxford Group showed in one booklet the weakness of Henson's pugnacity and the virility of Henson's faith.' See further Henson 1943:283, 328, 349; 1950:77 f., and Lean 1985:181–183, which gives the actual British context. Henson's book was used by the Dane Knud Hansen in *Oxfordsmen eller evangeliet*, 1935, and for the study of Moral Re-Armament, prepared by The Social and Industrial Council of the Church Assembly of the Church of England, 1955. The author's copy was dedicated by Henson to Yngve Brilioth, Professor and Dean of Lund, future Bishop of Växjö, and Archbishop of Upsala, in January, 1934. Henson wrote the preface to Marjorie Harrison's *Saints Run Mad* in 1934, as well as an introduction to Strachey's *Group Movements of the Past and Experiments in Guidance*, 1934 (a reprint of *Religious Fanaticism*, 1928).

<sup>30</sup> Henson 1933:3–12, 72. In Henson 1950:77 f., he spoke of the 'often-noticed resemblance between Buchman and Loyola' as 'something more than facial.' Buchman had adopted the same 'controversial method of never replying to criticisms, but collecting testimonials from prominent persons and parading them as sufficient disproof of all accusations' as Loyola had done before him. The modernist leader, Henry D. A. Major, found Henson's criticisms in certain respects both premature and even prejudiced. He stated that the bishop's conviction that the Movement could not be brought into work-

Erdman Harris' unpublished study of three contemporary approaches to the problem of Divine Guidance (Union Theological Seminary, 1934) was written from a positive angle. He found important variations in the attitudes of Oxford Group men towards philosophical theism and a 'more reasonable metaphysical foundation.' A weakness in Harris' analysis is his innocence regarding the different levels of Oxford Group writing. The almost totally untheoretical Russell and Kitchen are treated as Oxford 'theorists,' along with the increasingly more theoretical writers Forde, Allen, and Grensted. In 1937, J. C. Keene presented his unprinted dissertation on 'the doctrine of Guidance in the Oxford Group Movement' (Yale University). Keene stresses the historical one-sidedness in the movement's appeal 'for authority for its doctrines to the practices of the early Christians,' though it would be 'an easy matter to show that it emphasized and now emphasizes only a part of the practices of that period.'<sup>31</sup>

The most extensive pre-war study of the Oxford Group was Philippe de Mestral's unprinted baccalaureate thesis, presented at the Faculté Théologie de l'Église Évangélique Libre du Canton de Vaud in Switzerland, on May 31, 1939. Mestral analyses the faith, the message, and the working principles of the Oxford Group. His perspective is anti-Barthian, and positive. Though his approach to his sources is commendably critical, some of his conclusions – especially in the final theses – have an often overwhelming, testifying colouration.<sup>32</sup>

The first unbiased, critical studies of the Oxford Group, aiming at some completeness, were American, both in view and material. In *The Psychology of Social Movements* (1941), Hadley Cantril devoted a chapter to the Oxford Group, as did Charles Samuel Braden in *These Also Believe* (1949). In his *Drawing-Room Conversion* (1950), Allan W. Eister emphasizes the organization, structure, and varieties of religious experience in the Oxford Group, as well as some Oxford Group diagnoses of personal and social problems. Eister's historical views are indeed American, though he does make some general observations of wider theological and sociological relevance. In his unpublished doctoral thesis (1944), Walter Houston Clark studied the work of the Oxford Group at American colleges and its effects on the participants. Seven years later, he published *The Oxford Group. Its History and Significance*, which was the first printed, thoroughly modern, historical study of the development of the Oxford Group. Clark clearly states that 'the aims and the methods of the Oxford Group have

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ing harmony with the Church of England seemed to show 'as little understanding of the real nature of the Church of England as it does of the powers of growth and adjustment of a very young Movement,' in 'Signs of the times' (*The Modern Churchman* XXIII:1, April, 1933):5–7.

<sup>31</sup> As we have not been able to study any copy of Keene's thesis, we here use the references by Werkström 1963:174 (Keene 1937:73).

<sup>32</sup> Group revivalistic books elsewhere often used as Oxford Group material, though not authorized by the Oxford Group, like Russell's *One Thing I Know* or Weatherhead's *Discipleship*, are here classified as '*Ouvrages contre le Groupe ou non recommandés par les chefs du mouvement*,' Mestral 1939:342 ff., Theses 6.

remained essentially the same since the early 1920's, though emphasis have changed somewhat through the years.' It is worth noting that while theological critique had dominated in the 1930s, most of these analyses emphasized not the theological, but the psychological points of view.<sup>33</sup>

The Social and Industrial Council's report (Church of England, 1955), relies partly on examination of different sorts of Group literature, partly on former studies, such as Bishop Henson's hostile one, though no severe source-criticism is to be found in the whole report. As it deals mostly with conditions of the early 1950s, it cannot be used here except rarely.<sup>34</sup> The most thorough Roman Catholic study of M.R.A. and its history is Clair M. Dinger's *Moral Re-Armament*, presented in Washington, D.C. in 1961.

In his doctoral thesis, *Bekännelse och avlösning (Confession and absolution; 1963)*, the future Swedish Archbishop Bertil Werkström compared Frank Buchman's view on private confession with the views of Martin Luther and Eduard Thurneysen in 'a typological study.' In a Dutch doctoral thesis, *Stanger en Buchman (Stanger und Buchman 1977)*, Willem Cornelis van Dam compared the soul-cure of Friedrich Stanger, Buchman, and Thurneysen, though without referring to Werkström's thesis.<sup>35</sup>

Curt Georgi's study of the German development of the Group Movement into the Marburger Kreis (1970) is of great value for its rich references, but is also tinged with the author's critical view on M.R.A., and his opinion of the early Group work as the heart of the Group Movement. Other specific matters have been dealt with in theological and historical studies by Jens Holger Schjørring and Bernt T. Oftestad. Schjørring has concentrated mainly on the Oxford Group work in Denmark and on the M.R.A. and German society. Oftestad has studied the Oxford Group from a missiological viewpoint, and, in his doctoral thesis on Ronald Fangen, has given an account of Norwegian Group work as well. It is obvious that while the importance of Group work in Denmark, Norway, and Germany has to some extent been observed, its importance to Swedish Church history has been more neglected.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Clark 1951:26. An exception to this rule was Stratton 1936.

<sup>34</sup> The Council of Management of the Oxford Group immediately answered the report with some comments, relying on J. P. Thornton-Duesbery's 'authoritative and official' statement (*Moral Re-Armament 1955:5*), *The Oxford Group* (1947), B. H. Streeter's *The God Who Speaks* (1936), as well as on the speeches of Frank Buchman. A few weeks before the Council of Management's answer, R. C. Mowat had edited *Report on Moral Re-Armament*, including statements from abroad, such as those of nine Swedish bishops, in favor of M.R.A., which were not quoted in the Social and Industrial Council's Report.

<sup>35</sup> The Oxford Group is touched upon in some pastoral or psychological books on confession as well, for example, Berggren 1975 (an English version of the Swedish edition of 1946).

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Giertz 1983:78, 'Jag tror att man i dag inte riktigt ser, vad den faktiskt har betytt i vår kyrkas historia. Den hade sina begränsningar, och det kan tyckas som om den runnit ut i sanden. Men den vattnade faktiskt många torra marker och kom

David C. Belden's doctoral thesis from Oxford, on the origins and development of the Oxford Group (1976), focuses on Frank Buchman's person (pp. 76–168), dealing much with British conditions, and with the post-war development as well. Its method is historical-sociological, emphasizing the influence of Drummond, Wright, and Mott on Buchman and the Oxford Group. It is written from the inside, with a critical distance, and as an explicit answer to some modern, critical or hostile books.

Since H. D. de Loor's sociological study of the Oxford Group in the Netherlands (1986) focuses on its relation to secularization, the relationship between the Oxford Group and the churches is treated in a separate chapter, while independent Group revivalism is left without consideration. As de Loor was brought up in the Oxford Group/M.R.A., he explains that his emotional ties forced him to write independently, from a critical distance.<sup>37</sup>

Franz Johann Vock's doctoral thesis (Salzburg, 1989) is written from inside the M.R.A., dealing mostly with the movement's political work after the Second World War. In his detailed accounts of the earlier development of the Oxford Group, he gives an objective opinion, while his perspective is – significant for the M.R.A. historians – centred on Frank Buchman's connections with the Group work. In their studies, the distinction between the Oxford Group and Group revivalism of another or an independent character is not drawn or does not play any important part.

Sixten Ekstrand's doctoral thesis *Tro och moral. Oxfordgrupprörelsen och MRA i Finland 1932-1955* (1993) is the first study of a national development of the Oxford Group written from the viewpoint of Church history. A clear attempt is made to distinguish in practice between the Oxford Group work and early, independent Group revivalism in Finland, though explicit definitions are lacking.

As the course of events around Frank Buchman is in the main correctly and lucidly described in Garth Lean's biography, we will not write the external, universal history of the international Oxford Group. Lean's biography lacks, however, an attempt at a more systematic analysis, and through its almost exclusive concentration on the Oxford Group, other forms of Group revivalism have been left aside.

### I.3. The Task

The purpose of this study is to analyse the development and interaction of the Oxford Group, Group revivalism, and the Churches in Northern Europe, with special reference to Scandinavia and Germany, 1930–1945. The significant Ox-

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det att växa i öknen.' Positive exceptions are the short analyses in Nyberg 1982 and 1985, and the observations in Eckerdal 1992.

<sup>37</sup> De Loor 1986:3.



ford Group experience is based on a combination of vision and strategy, built upon a certain doctrinal foundation. This foundation is in itself of practical, soul-curing nature, with an emphasis on a certain way of life rather than on the matters of traditional dogma. This necessitates a historical-systematic analysis of the Oxford Group, from three angles: Vision and Strategy, Doctrine and Theology, and Mentality and Function. In the subsequent chapters we will describe and analyse the national development and interaction in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Germany respectively, and, finally, present our comparisons and conclusions.

We will pay special attention to the development of and changes in relations between the Oxford Group and other forms of Group revivalism, and between the international Oxford Group and national teams, as well as to the development of and changes in Group revivalism as a sub-structure to churches and denominations. Comparisons will be made between different places or regions, between the different Scandinavian countries, and between Scandinavia and Germany. The importance of Group revivalism in the development of and change in nations, churches, and societies will be studied from a Church historical viewpoint. We will try to answer the questions why, how, and when the Oxford Group changed into Moral Re-Armament, and the results of this change, as far as they may be recorded up to 1945.

Our study has the further aim of contributing to the theory of Church history by emphasizing both the importance and the limits of the human person in the history of the Christian Church.

#### I.4. The Period (1930-1945) and its Phases in the History of the Oxford Group

The 1930s were a decade of Apocalyptic, when utopian ideas of the realization of the Kingdom of God grew in answer to the political and economic -isms of the time, and as portents of a Second World war. Political Millennialism was represented by the German Third Reich, and by Stalin's Communist Empire. The 1930s were also those years when the Oxford Group tried to conquer Northern Europe. The beginning of the period is vaguely indicated by a notable growing interest and curiosity in Scandinavia, Finland, the Baltic countries, and in the Netherlands, more exactly by the creation of a German group in Oxford, in June 1930. Immediately after the Second World War, the ideological training was concentrated to the United States. Subsequently, the new European center at Caux in Switzerland radically changed the conditions of the work, reduced some of the national influences developed during the war, and retightened the whole movement around Frank Buchman and his team.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Werkström 1963:XXI, who admits, though drawing the line in 1938, that there

An important aim is to study this development as a structural change, not challenged by traditional, Christian doctrine, but by the encounter with strong, doctrinal, Non-Christian ideological forces, such as National Socialism and Communism, and to do so not just from a general point of view, but with regard to the actual historical situation in Scandinavia and Germany. The development of the work in the different countries was influenced partly by the change of phases in the respective country, partly by the development of the Oxford Group.<sup>39</sup>

Our hypothesis is that the establishment of Group revivalism in Scandinavia and Germany follows in rough outline – as in the Netherlands and Switzerland – the same pattern in the different countries. After an opening stage of information, when no groups were formed, a revival groups phase followed. The new groups were independent of the Oxford Group, and seems to have worked more in the revivalistic way of, for example, the Cambridge Group Movement.

The subsequent Oxford Group phase is characterized by the presence and work of an international Oxford Group team. This involved reconstruction of previously established groups into working teams in fellowship with the Oxford Group, or conflict with them, leading to a dismantling of independent Group revivalism. Our interest in the Norwegian and Danish events is not limited to the actual development in these countries, but directed also to the wider influence this development had on the revival groups phase and on the later Oxford Group phase in the neighbour-countries.

The Oxford Group phase was interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War, and succeeded by a phase of growing isolation. The teams with connections to the Oxford Group continued their work together with a few members of the international team still working in the respective countries, with sporadic, inspiring contacts with teams in England and America, but, functionally, they became more independent. They also built up direct international contacts with other teams without the mediation of the international team.

Before the war, Finland was important to the Oxford Group strategy as a country from which Group work could be established in Estonia and Latvia as well. In the autumn 1936, the young composer Will Reed went from Finland to

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was a change after the Second World War, and describes this as a disintegration or disappearance of the former uniformity of the movement. This description, while true from a traditional, theological viewpoint of Christian doctrine, is misleading from a sociological or historical viewpoint. Van Dam 1977, too, draws the line in 1938.

<sup>39</sup> Belden 1976:3 f. writes of an incipient phase in the early 1920's, a phase of enthusiastic mobilization, 1928–38, a third phase of organization, and perhaps a subsequent one of terminal institutionalism. These phases are modelled on the sociological development of the Oxford Group in Britain, while our phases are modelled on the encounter between the Oxford Group and national religious and political forces in Scandinavia and Germany.

Estonia, hoping to 'get in touch with the fellowship there.'<sup>40</sup> In the summer 1938, the full-time workers Francis Goulding and John Guise travelled in the Baltic countries to invite spokesmen from these nations to take their part at the Visby party in August. They were given letters of introduction from the Finnish Foreign Minister, Rudolf Holsti, and met 'several leading statesmen,' who expressed their eagerness 'either to get to Visby in person or to be represented there,' and some did go.<sup>41</sup> *What is the Oxford Group* and *For Sinners Only* were translated into Estonian.<sup>42</sup> In April, 1939, a team in Tartu had about '100 Menschen, die in der letzten Zeit mit uns in Berührung gekommen sind und sehr interessiert sind für die Oxford-Bewegung.' The team was 'young and untrained, but full of initiative, and keen to work and to learn.' Most of them were teachers, or in the theological faculty of the university. Some of their friends in Finland thought that the Estonians should organize a small party in the summer 1939, and a party of 40 people was arranged in Tartu at Midsummer 1939, with some university teachers and students, a team of eight Finns, a couple of Latvians, and Sydney Linton. He was at the time travelling in the Baltic countries, seeing editors and journalists, the Latvian Archbishop and the British minister, as well as Oxford Group friends like the Hahn family in Latvia, and making accurate observations on old social prejudices and gaps between the former landowners and peasants. The Oxford-inspired people worked for national and social reconciliation according to the vision from Visby.<sup>43</sup> In September 1940, a Swedish exile from Tallinn, who had been active in the Group there, brought greetings to Sweden. She reported they were all 'very hopeful, working on in their homes, knowing that this is the only form of work which can hope for advance,' though missing the Group.<sup>44</sup> This report shows that while Group revivalism developed at a pace much slower than in Finland, the isolation of the war soon grew much more severe.

In Iceland, Group revivalism in the 1930s does not seem to have passed the information phase. Some Icelanders met the Oxford Group abroad, but did not

<sup>40</sup> A. Dawson to E. Brunner 1936, Nov.29 (ZZ).

<sup>41</sup> J. Guise to E. Gulin 1938, July 5 (RAH), Krista Petersen to Halfdan Høgsbro 1938, July 18 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK), 'Letter from Francis Goulding. Estonia' 1938, July 15 (Tirley). See further Esmaspäew 1938, Sept. 3, Eesti Kirik 1938, Sept. 8 (German translations at Tirley). On Guise in Finland, see Ekstrand 1993:118 f. Though the reports speak of 'the Baltic countries,' it is obvious that there is no evidence at all of any contacts in Lithuania.

<sup>42</sup> Estonian broadcast 1938 July 28 (dupl., Tirley). The Estonian titles were *Kis on Oksfordiliikumine?* and *Ainult patustele*, respectively.

<sup>43</sup> Salme Klaos (University teacher of Theology at Tartu) to E. Gulin 1939, Apr. 25 (RAH). Copy of Linton to A. Strang 1939, June 26 (DWC), to F. Buchman, 1939, June 26 (DWC), to H. Blake, E. Goulding, J. Morrison and 'Scandinavians all' 1939, July 28 (DWC), to H. Blake 1940, Sept. 26 (DWC).

<sup>44</sup> Copy of Linton to H. Blake 1940, Sept. 26 (DWC). The Swedish exile was Dagmar Petersson.

disseminate it at home. The printed invitation to the male Youth camp at Røros in Norway, July 30 – August 9, 1937, emphasizing the responsibility of the youth and the Nordic countries for the future of the world, pointing to the solution of changed men, changed nations and a changed world, was sent from young people in the Nordic countries, including Iceland. After the Visby party in 1938, special appeals to the women were distributed in the Nordic countries, including Iceland, and in November 1939, Professor Gudmundur Kamban spoke in Copenhagen at a public meeting for world peace based on the service of reconciliation. During the World War, Iceland was occupied by British and American forces, and thus drawn out of the Scandinavian sphere.<sup>45</sup>

After World War II, Oxford Group work was concentrated on the ideology of Caux, in most countries as a new start without public connections to the isolation phase.<sup>46</sup>

The analysis of this development is dependent on whether one regards partly the first two phases, and partly the Oxford Group before M.R.A., as expressions of a not yet fully developed Group work, or as the heart of the Group Movement. In this study, we will try to make distinctive, critical analyses of different kinds of Group work, avoiding that kind of normative valuation.

## I.5. Unprinted Material and other Sources

[...] daß kein Verhandlungsprotokoll geführt wird; daß viele Entscheidungen in der 'stillen Stunde' oder in seelsorgerlichen Gruppen getroffen werden; daß man nur in sehr geringem Umfang geordnete Archivalsammlungen besitzt; daß Außenstehende zu den entscheidenden Akten (soweit es solche gibt, die nicht nur Geschichten von erster oder zweiter Hand sind) nicht herangelassen werden, und endlich, daß die MRA-Literatur meistens ganz unwissenschaftlich ist und ohne jeden Quellennachweis auskommt.

These words of the Danish theologian Jens Holger Schjørring (1976) are to a great extent applicable also to our research work, though some of the archives have now been put in order, and others, especially some private, valuable ones, have been added or made accessible. As a consequence, we have had access to more material on more levels, and material of greater variation. These conditions have both delayed and stimulated our work with the sources, but we have taken the following words of Schjørring as an incentive:

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<sup>45</sup> Jónsson 1938:129, and further Ch. V.3.4., VII.3.4. resp. VI.3.8.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, *Mot en andlig renässans*, 1946, presenting the vision of a spiritual renaissance to Swedish key-persons as experiences from the conference for Moral Re-Armament in Caux, in the summer 1946.

Statt sich von den damit zusammenhängenden Schwierigkeiten überwältigen zu lassen, sollte gerade der Kirchenhistoriker sich meines Erachtens provoziert fühlen, der überpragmatischen Geschichtsschreibung gegenüber die Bedeutung der Ideen, wenn es auch, wie hier, nur tastend geschehen kann, herauszustellen.<sup>47</sup>

In previous, modern research in this field, the use of sources has differed widely. For example, Werkström relies only on printed material, and has been criticised from within the M.R.A. for his use of information in books by Begbie, Russell, and Shoemaker,<sup>48</sup> while Vock concentrates on unprinted material, even on such that is kept in private archives with official or private relations to M.R.A.

We have tried to make use of different kinds of sources, not avoiding the subjective, critical, or propagandistic ones, but examining them in their different tendencies, looking for affective values even where the cognitive ones are very limited. As the house-parties and campaigns of the Oxford Group normally had at least two purposes – to reach large audiences with public appeals and witnesses, and to train and weld together the working teams – both sources of a public and a private nature, originating both from positions of testimony and of training must be used. Newspaper articles and public statements are to be used together with personal and public invitation cards, more or less confidential, duplicated team letters, and private letters and notes. We have not quoted singular notations from Quiet times, as they – including notes from team meetings – have a character too fragmentary and individual.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Schjørring 1976:83 f.

<sup>48</sup> Robach 1971:129.

<sup>49</sup> On the special difficulties of using interviews in this field, see Ekstrand 1993:14. The answers given may often be traced back to the same tradition.

## II. THE OXFORD GROUP AND GROUP REVIVALISM UP TO 1945

### II.1. Vision and Strategy

#### *II.1.1. Prelude*

According to Frank Buchman, the life-changing way of the Gospel does not go through reflection on doctrine or theology, but through personal and practical experience. This experience contains a vision as well as a strategy. As this combination had been so crucial to Buchman's own life, it also formed a pattern for the Oxford Group. More than any distinct doctrine, this interwoven combination of vision and strategy exposes the nature of the typical and common 'Oxford' experience. It would probably be incorrect to say that Frank Buchman's work before his journey to the Keswick Convention in 1908 was characterized by a strategy without visions, but even at that point he seems to have developed a personal strategy which was rather loosely connected to his less personally and existentially perceived visions. The self-evident prerequisite or presupposition<sup>1</sup> and the framework or basic horizon of comprehension for all the visions and strategies of Frank Buchman is the utopian, visionary purpose expressed in John Mott's well-known motto: Evangelization of the world in this generation.<sup>2</sup>

#### *II.1.2. A Spiritual Revival: The Vision of the Cross of Christ and the Personal Strategy*

Frank Buchman's vision at the Keswick Convention in 1908 was an individual's vision of the Cross of Christ, leading to a strategy for bringing other individuals

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<sup>1</sup> See Nygren 1948, 1972 Ch. XII.1.

<sup>2</sup> Unlike David C. Belden, we have not emphasized the influence of Drummond, Wright, and Mott, on the strategy of the Oxford Group. In Ch. II.2.2. we will trace the roots of the doctrinal principles of the Group. We may agree with Belden (1976:74) in that the 'sense of "strategic" planning' had been integral before Mott, but rather we put emphasis on the combination of vision and strategy, as well as on the actual development of the strategy. This does not imply that we find Frank Buchman more original in his thought than Belden did, but we concentrate on the subsequent consequences of his thought in history, rather than on the possible historical inspiration of it.

to the Cross, and by the way of the Cross to one another. This vision followed a sermon in a small chapel, preached by the female evangelist, Jessie Penn-Lewis, to a congregation of seventeen people. Buchman later recalled that she

pictured the dying Christ as I had never seen Him pictured before. I saw the nails in the palms of His hands, I saw the bigger nail which held His feet. I saw the spear thrust in His side, and I saw the look of sorrow and infinite suffering in His face. I knew that I had wounded Him, that there was a great distance between myself and Him, and I knew that it was my sin of nursing ill-will.<sup>3</sup>

The Keswick conferences had begun in 1875, aiming at ‘the promotion of Practical Holiness.’ To understand Buchman’s development, it is important to pay attention to the Holiness Movement’s teaching of a life in purity, holiness, and full obedience as following the ‘second blessing’ – a personal experience of holiness and baptism in the Spirit – as well as to its emphasis on the need for confession. An important line of development runs from Wesleyan Methodism through the Holiness Movement of the 19th century on to 20th century Pentecostalism. By virtue of the Keswick Conventions, the Oxford Group and Pentecostalism – despite their many dissimilarities – have some important roots in common.<sup>4</sup> Through the work of Robert Wilson, its Chairman from 1891 to 1900, a strain of Quakerism had been led into the interdenominational Keswick Conventions. Wilson ‘brought something of the still quietness of a “Friends Meeting” with him.’<sup>5</sup> The Keswick movement was characterized by its aim at already converted Christians, searching a deeper experience of holiness, and by its emphasis on ‘full surrender.’<sup>6</sup>

Knowledge of the Keswick milieu is one important factor when it comes to understanding Frank Buchman’s vision of the Cross. Another is Buchman’s personal bad relations with and his hurt feelings towards six Americans, Members of the Board of Buchman’s hospice in Philadelphia. The impulse to immediate activity transmitted by the vision was of decisive importance. On the very same day, Buchman wrote at least six letters asking forgiveness, and

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<sup>3</sup> Lean 1985:30. Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis was a Welsh teacher who had become a travelling evangelist within Britain as well as in Sweden, Russia, Finland, and Denmark. She was determined never to give an address on any theme without preaching the Cross (Guldseth 1982:75 f). In 1899 she spoke for the first time at the Keswick Convention. Cf. the traditional Oxford Group version of her as a simple woman, sometimes even a simple peasant woman, who just spoke a few words of testimony in a small chapel for a small congregation. This version is correct only in its estimation of the size of chapel and congregation. See further Sloan [1935]:60 on the Keswick Convention in 1905: ‘Mrs. Penn-Lewis had spoken on the Tuesday about bringing of gifts to the altar, and the need of a cleansing of our inner relationships with one another.’

<sup>4</sup> See Bloch-Hoell 1964:16, 82 f.

<sup>5</sup> Sloan [1935]:37.

<sup>6</sup> See also Barabas 1952.

brought a Cambridge undergraduate ‘face to face with the central experience of Christianity.’<sup>7</sup> The vital elements of this new strategy was to connect one’s relations to other people with one’s experience of the Cross, and to share that experience with these people, as a sinner to sinners. In the letters in which Buchman asked for forgiveness, he quoted the hymn,

When I survey the wondrous Cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Formally, Buchman’s vision was introvert, while his strategy was extrovert. However, the main point is that this formally introvert vision did not leave him with any alternative other than immediate, external activity. This activity was not just a consequence in general – the strategy is directly dependent on the vision.<sup>8</sup> The key-word is *personal*. As his relations to other persons had disturbed his relation to God, Buchman’s experience of a renewed, personal relationship with God renewed his intentions towards other persons. His former relations to others were now experienced as inseparably united with his experience of the Cross, and his intention was to share his experience with these people and with others, thus mutually renewing their personal relations. Here, the most important difference between ‘personal’ and ‘individual’ is that ‘personal’ is always associated with relations, whereas ‘individual’ concerns the single person himself/herself. While ‘person’ and ‘individual’ often may be used as synonyms, ‘personalism’ and ‘individualism’ are opposites.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Lean 1985:31 f. Lean notes that Buchman used to say that he received no replies to these letters; but in one of the letters at least, no address was supplied. Lean also quotes the answer to a seventh letter from Buchman.

<sup>8</sup> Dinger 1961:70 f. points out that Buchman’s ‘experience of the Cross’ formed ‘the mode of justification,’ and that ‘the emphasis is placed upon carrying out this “experience” in action according to the principles of the *Group*.’ Schjørring 1976b:100 says that the Cross is not understood in the Pauline manner, as judging and saving through grace, but more as a miraculous power, restoring man to renew the world according to the will of God – i.e. more of reconciliation than of atonement. Cf. Bockmühl 1963:26 f., who thoroughly analyses what is said of the Cross in Buchman’s speeches: On the Cross of Christ the knowledge of sin reaches its greatest depth. The gap between God and man is made obvious. In the same moment, Frank Buchman realizes the positive meaning of the suffering of Christ: the *‘Versöhnung’*. [The German ‘Versöhnung’ corresponds to both the English words ‘atonement’ and ‘reconciliation.’] That is: through the Cross the new, pulsating life is delivered, as a result of the unbroken community with God. The deed of Christ is the source of the new life. Buchman’s faith in the redeeming power of Christ is a faith in not only heavenly justification and future resurrection to eternal life, but in true healing and sanctification, as the end of the dominion of the Evil One in man.

<sup>9</sup> According to Balling 1986:56, the Christendom of the Old Church was not in-



To Buchman himself, the experience of a new relationship with God undoubtedly entailed renewed personal relations to other people as well. Still, an intended relation is not always a realized one. This simple fact reveals the partly utopian character of Buchman's strategy even on the personal level. A certain strategy may encounter different reactions. This sometimes became very obvious, when Buchman's experience subsequently set a pattern in the Oxford Group.

Buchman's Keswick experience did function as a pattern not only for individual or group experiences, but also for the essential Oxford Group practice of sharing. With its emphasis on a humiliating confession bringing liberation and strength – generally without any formal absolution, the latter reflects Frank Buchman's experience of the Cross, with its immediate change from contrition to new activity.

### *II.1.3. A Personal Revolution: The Vision of God's Plan and the Strategy for Changing Communities through Individual Key Persons Working in a First Century Christian Fellowship*

Frank Buchman's leadership in the Oxford Group was not limited to carrying out the work along the path outlined by the vision and strategy he had found in Keswick. Buchman had new visions, continually transforming the older ones to new needs, adapting them to new situations. Thus the static character of many renewal movements was avoided; correspondingly, however, the visions and strategies of the Oxford Group were closely linked to, and dependent on Buchman's own person.

Buchman's visions of God's plan were transformed to an operative level through a human strategy which is experienced as being guided by God. The realization of this plan is dependent on the cooperation of men, which is thus given a key position. The contention that God has a plan for every single human being is Frank Buchman's chief notion regarding man. His anthropology is instrumental in both vision and strategy: the individual is considered on the basis of his optimum possibilities as an instrument of God. God's plan is itself regarded as the great vision, containing both a vision and a strategy for every single person as well as for communities on different levels, and for mankind. This personal vision may be found in the Gospels, where Jesus has 'a long, strong vision for Peter and his friends [...] They are his alternative programme [...] We need the same long vision for those who come to us.' A ten year vision is rec-

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dividualistic, but personalistic. In other contexts, for example, in Nikolay Berdyayev's existential personalism, such a difference is an ontological one, the 'individuality' interpreted as a naturalistic and biological category, and 'personality' as a religious and spiritual one. Even here, though, 'person' is related to a life in fellowship; see Thunberg 1974:141 ff.

commended. To the persons concerned, the long vision is revealed only part by part, when they are ready for it.<sup>10</sup> The personal revolution is the utopian goal of this vision.

The inception of the 'guided' strategy for changing communities through individuals is found in the chapter on Bill Pickle in Russell's *For Sinners Only*. After his Keswick experience, Frank Buchman returned to the United States and was appointed YMCA Secretary at Pennsylvania State College from January 1909. On the advice ('almost certainly') of F. B. Meyer, Buchman decided to give at least an hour each morning to listening to God. During one of these Morning Quiet Times, as Buchman was seeking guidance to bring the whole college 'Godwards' (i.e. the Vision), three names repeatedly came into his mind.<sup>11</sup> That was the start of the personalistic strategy of the Oxford Group, the strategy of altering communities through the change of key persons. This strategy turned out to be different in detail when it came to changing the above-mentioned three men and further persons; but it adopted a similar approach to different situations in different societies and nations.

Just as the general personalistic strategy is put into practice through different personal strategies, the vision of God's plan may be transformed into special visions for individual persons or situations – visions which provided knowledge of where to find grace and strength to realize the strategy. The visions of an earlier period could easily be translated and applied to new situations, as long as the personalistic strategy against the impersonal -isms was the same. For example, Buchman's words on depersonalisation in a letter from East Asia in the late 1910's could easily be applied to the German situation in the early 1930's.<sup>12</sup> The strong point of the personalistic strategy lay in its general character, independent of changing ideological structures. Simultaneously, the exclusively personalistic strategy could be used for 'escaping completely from any reference to the social context within which the problems arise and persist,' and as such as a defence against 'any positive program of social amelioration.'<sup>13</sup> Still, the vision of God's plan could easily acquire an ideological component; in fact, the vision of God's plan was open to an ideological interpretation from the very beginning. This fact emerged when stress was put on visions at the national and supranational level.

The interwoven combination of vision and strategy was made evident by

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<sup>10</sup> Lean 1990:95 f. Lean's manuscript was originally completed in 1943. It is interesting and useful, not least because Lean has a Methodist background – sometimes revealed in the examples of his texts – while his conception of Group revivalism entirely agrees with the one held by the Oxford Group. In this book, the later ideological interpretation is missing, too. Moral Re-Armament is not even mentioned in the original text.

<sup>11</sup> Lean 1985: 33-36, Lean 1990:34 f.

<sup>12</sup> Laun 1931:166 ('Die Entpersönlichung aller menschlichen Tätigkeit bedeutet eine der größten Schwierigkeiten der Gegenwart'). See also Leon 1940<sup>3</sup>:173 ff., on 'the Sin of Depersonalisation.'

<sup>13</sup> Cantril 1941:166 f.

Buchman's vision of 'peripatetic evangelism.'<sup>14</sup> The individual key persons were united in a First-Century Christian Fellowship, working within the churches. This strategy involved an element of thinking 'in terms of human beings: whom to do it with or through, who will be developed by the adventure or responsibility. It meant clothing every plan with people and putting people first.'<sup>15</sup>

However, the early attempts to realize such a fellowship were not successful. Lean says that the FCCF, formed in 1922, 'was never much more than a name, since it was composed mainly of supporters rather than people with a commitment equal to Buchman's. Within a few years it had faded away.'<sup>16</sup> The name of FCCF continued to be used for designating the work of the Oxford Group in the United States, and the vision gained great importance during the early years of the subsequently established Oxford Group, at which time the FCCF still worked as a fellowship of personal religion within the churches.<sup>17</sup> An illuminating example is supplied by Olive M. Jones, who worked with Samuel Shoemaker in the Protestant Episcopal Calvary Church in New York City from 1927 onwards. In 1933, she described Frank Buchman's work as 'a world-wide campaign of winning souls for Jesus Christ, of helping to bring people, individually, into a natural and real experience of the things of the spirit.'<sup>18</sup> But the strategy of personalistically working fellowships was not given up when the purpose of a First-Century Christian Fellowship was succeeded, and to some extent replaced, by other goals. Instead, personalistically working fellowships served as instruments of new visions. Even when these visions dealt with changes in collective mentalities, ideological warfare, etc., on a suprapersonal scale, the working fellowship itself was built on the personalistic vision, and in its encounter with individuals the personalistic strategy was still employed.

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<sup>14</sup> Lean 1985:86.

<sup>15</sup> Lean 1990:124 f.

<sup>16</sup> Lean 1985:97.

<sup>17</sup> The Letter 6 1929:1 ('A First Century Christian Fellowship. A movement of life within the churches to make the principles of the New Testament practical as a working force today'); The Letter 7 1930: Inner cover. See also Howard J. Rose's brochure *A Fellowship of Personal Religion within The Churches*.

<sup>18</sup> Jones 1933:8, lacking the special Oxford Group emphasis on making men into life-changers. The revivalistic way of defining a 'group' is still found in the Australian Benson 1936:161 ('A Group is a company of people drawn into fellowship by a common desire for a richer experience of the living Christ and of the Holy Spirit, and united in the common task of winning souls for the Kingdom of God').

*II.1.4. A National and Supernational Revolution and Renaissance: The Vision of Changed Nations and the Problematic Top Strategy of Changing Key Persons*

On 16 August, 1938, Frank Buchman spoke at a house-party in Visby, Sweden, on the theme of Revival – Revolution – Renaissance. These three words were interpreted as three successive stages of understanding, surrender, and activity. By that time, ‘revival’ had in Buchman’s vocabulary acquired a bad taint of religious indolence – he called it ‘a nice armchair religion.’<sup>19</sup> In Buchman’s earlier visions, ‘revival’ had been a thoroughly favourable word used as a description of the actual vision at work. So it was still in January 1933.<sup>20</sup> At a house-party in Oxford, 1934, Frank Buchman presented the Oxford Group as a Christian revolution, aiming at living Christianity. The vision was a new social order under the dictatorship of the Spirit of God.<sup>21</sup> From the mid-1930s, ‘revolution’ was the key-word in the strategic work of the Oxford Group. From 1935 onwards, it was supplanted by ‘renaissance,’ aiming at personal, national and supernatural rebirth.<sup>22</sup>

In the summer 1935, Buchman began to speak of ‘God-controlled supernaturalism’ as ‘the only enduring foundation for world peace,’ as internationalism had failed and nationalism could unite a nation only. Memoirs from the Oxford house-party that summer recalls how the vision was lifted up above the merely personal, local, and national level, to a universal vision.<sup>23</sup> But ‘supernationalism’ was not, as has sometimes been argued, a term created by Frank Buchman. It was introduced as early as in 1919 by the Swedish Archbishop, Nathan Söderblom,<sup>24</sup> and frequently used in ecumenical connections during the 1930s,

<sup>19</sup> Buchman 1942:18 ff., 1943 (Sw). The title ‘Revival – Revolution – Renaissance’ has been found in an Oxford Group manuscript, dealing with the results of the Norwegian campaign, and dated as early as 1935, Dec. 12 (Tirley).

<sup>20</sup> Copy of Buchman to Laun and Krumhaar 1933, Jan. 12 (NLC): ‘I appreciate your thought about this important work and I wish I could be more definite but there is no question but there is a revival on in Canada and we must center our thought and action there. [...] I believe we can do the same thing in Germany as has happened in Canada some day.’

<sup>21</sup> The Oxford Group International House Party. Oxford 1934:15, Buchman 1942:1. It is notable that this speech at Oxford in 1934 is the earliest one to be printed in later editions of Frank Buchman’s speeches.

<sup>22</sup> Buchman 1942:4. One of the first examples of Buchman’s use of ‘renaissance’ as something more than ‘revolution’ is a letter to Arvid Runestam, 1935, Oct. 9 (Runestam Coll.I). Despite the obvious national and supernatural revolutionary significance of the Dutch campaign in 1937, de Loor’s interesting essay (1985) on the tension between revival and social movement does not pay attention to ‘revolution’ as a decisive stadium between revival and renaissance in Buchman’s thought already before his Visby speech in 1938.

<sup>23</sup> Buchman 1942:3, F. D. Buchman: ‘Oxford – supernatural’ (Oxford i Danmark 1935:9 ff.). Svend Major’s duplicated memoirs p.4.

<sup>24</sup> Söderblom 1919:102 (synonymously with ‘international’), 110 (a new catholicity as a

as 'internationalism' was often interpreted in an unfavourable sense in Germany.<sup>25</sup>

Frank Buchman's vision of a new social order under the dictatorship of the Spirit of God and the utopia of a Christian revolution and renaissance were presented as God's answers to materialistic and political ideologies. The utopian aim was to create a new political and cultural climate and life through a new ethical quality, as well as to replace the struggle between classes and parties with the fellowship of personalities.<sup>26</sup> The principles, methods, and results of revivalistic, personalistic work in smaller communities were transformed into a social personalism on a national and international level. This did not exclude, for example, National Socialism as such. Replacing the earlier, exclusively evangelizing strategy, even the terminology of a (spiritual) revolution and a (spiritual) dictatorship could easily be interpreted within a National Socialist framework.<sup>27</sup> If this strategy was successful, the effect would be a different National Socialist, without racialism:

Frank Buchman erkannte, daß es nicht genügt, einem Kommunisten oder Rasse-sozialisten einen persönlichen, religiösen Glauben zu vermitteln und ihn zu 'bekehren', wenn die eigene Leidenschaft und das eigene Ziel ideologischer und nicht persönlicher Art ist. Man kann ein solches Ziel immer nur von einem größeren und richtigeren Ziel her überwinden und braucht dazu eine größere Leidenschaft, um den kollektiven Klassen- oder Rassenhaß zu beseitigen.<sup>28</sup>

Visions of God's plan for nations were not exclusive or new with Buchman or his team. The thought of God's plan for a certain nation, the United States of America, is a common idea in the Puritan/Calvinist heritage of that nation. It has been stated that the basic concept in the Puritan covenant theology was 'the conviction that God's predestinating decrees were not a part of a vast impersonal and mechanical scheme,' but 'irreducibly personal.'<sup>29</sup> Mixed with other influences, this heritage has become one of the common roots and main currents in American religious mentality, exempt from doubts of confessional or ethnical origin. It has often been connected with perfectionist, millenarian

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foundation for supernational legal systems and for supernational law-governed society), 112 f. (synonymously with 'universal', as a definition of the character and task of the Church).

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Jarlert 1989:139 (A. Runestam), and further the Ehrenström Papers 36:25, 1935, Apr. 17 (LUKA), on '*The Supernational Church* – and as its organ the World Alliance and the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work.'

<sup>26</sup> See also the interpretation in Fangen 1935:93–108.

<sup>27</sup> This is obviously the point of Scharpff's conclusion (1980:308) that some Group men, being blinded by National Socialist ideas, left the biblical, evangelizing message behind.

<sup>28</sup> Ernst 1982:137 f. Though representing contrary opinions, both Scharpff and Ernst confuse the 1934 vision with the later one of a moral rearmament.

<sup>29</sup> Lejon 1988:163.

thoughts. W. G. McLoughlin even speaks of American history as ‘best understood as a millenarian movement.’<sup>30</sup> This belief in God’s plan for the American nation, as a more or less millenarian conception, is an important and indeed self-evident prerequisite for Frank Buchman’s vision of God’s plan for the nations and the remaking of this world. It could, with some changes, easily be connected with national Christian traditions as Danish Grundtvigianism, the Swedish Young Church Movement and its motto: ‘Sveriges folk, ett Guds folk’ [The people of Sweden – a people of God], or even the German political, national revival.

Changing a nation is not, however, equivalent to changing every single person in that nation, and the strategy for changing a nation proceeds only partly from the change of ‘ordinary’ individuals. The vision of national change meant a strengthened emphasis on relations, for example, family relations, and a higher estimation of the responsibilities and possibilities of the work of the housewife. Further, it meant a widening of ‘change’ from just individual change (in a revivalistic manner) to social change, emphasizing superindividual relations as well.<sup>31</sup> The main strategy of personalistically working fellowships in changing nations was – as in smaller communities – the strategy of changing certain key persons. But this change was sometimes characterized by a declared identification with the Oxford Group way of life, and not, as in smaller communities, by mutual sharing.<sup>32</sup> This direction of the strategy was a main point in subsequent critical labeling of the Moral Re-Armament work as ‘class salvation.’<sup>33</sup>

In order to realize the vision of changing nations, any way in which the political leaders of a nation could be reached was of paramount importance. A strategy of Frank Buchman’s was to reach both the key persons and the masses through the press – not just with news of great manifestations, but primarily with the personalistic message of life-change and new responsibilities.<sup>34</sup> Another

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<sup>30</sup> McLoughlin 1978:XIV – ‘the fundamental belief that freedom and responsibility will perfect not only the individual and the nation but the world (because they are in harmony with the supreme laws of nature – and of nature’s God) has been constant.’

<sup>31</sup> In popular presentations, for example Bünzli 1936:9, Frank Buchman’s views and strategy were described as ‘daß das Chaos der Welt eine Multiplikation der Nöte und der Sünden der einzelnen sei, und mit einem daraus resultierenden Willen: die Welt umzuändern durch Veränderung des einzelnen Menschen.’

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, the Danish bishop J. Gøtzsche (reluctant) 1936:26 f., the Norwegian bishop E. Berggrav (reluctant) to A. Runestam 1938, Feb. 22 (Runestam Coll.I), A. Dawson to the Finnish bishop A. Lehtonen (hesitating, then ‘identifying’ himself) 1936, Feb. 1, Oct. 20 (RAH), and the Swedish bishop A. Runestam (‘identifying’ himself, though criticizing the term) to T. Ysander and B. Jonzon 1938, July 1 (Biskopsämbetets arkiv, Vol.2:91, Landsarkivet i Visby).

<sup>33</sup> Englert 1958:315.

<sup>34</sup> This demanded an immense work seeing journalists, writing press releases, and reckoning the effects. For example, after the Gränna conference in Sweden in August, 1940, reports to the Oxford Group in the U.S.A. stated that 470 articles in 183 out of

strategy was to launch his visions where national leaders were gathered, or in their close vicinity. For example, during an Oxford house-party in the summer 1935, a delegation was received by Prime Minister Baldwin at his country house.<sup>35</sup> The use of the Oslo States, or the Oslo Alliance, was another part of this top strategy. The Dutch campaign in Utrecht in May 1937, for example, ‘coincided’ with the signing of the Trade Agreement of the Oslo States in the Hague, and J. L. Mowinckel, the Norwegian father of the Oslo Convention, welcomed the idea of a ‘spiritual Convention of Oslo.’<sup>36</sup> In early September 1938, representatives of forty countries at the Interlaken Conference on Moral Re-Armament sent a telegram to Lord Runciman, the unofficial British mediator between the Czech Government and the Sudeten Germans, saying that ‘the practical solution to disputes emanating from conflicting interests lies in complete honesty between all parties and in the acceptance of God’s guidance in each individual case.’ And on the day when Neville Chamberlain flew to meet Adolf Hitler at Berchtesgaden, Frank Buchman and 300 conference delegates attended a luncheon in Geneva for the League of Nations, Buchman speaking together with the Dutch Foreign Minister, Dr. J. A. N. Patijn.<sup>37</sup> Buchman had

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277 papers, and 165 pictures had been published, in spalt-metrage 170 metres (copies of S. Linton to H. Blake resp. H. and P. Blake 1940, Sept. 6 resp. 21; DWC). In the years 1935–1945, Harry Blomberg, together with Sven Stolpe and Margit Wohlin, published not less than 515 articles in *Jönköpings-Posten*. In the years 1935–1940 and 1941–1945, Harry Blomberg published 263 and 171 articles in JP, Sven Stolpe 38 and 22, and Margit Wohlin 1 and 20, respectively (Rydén 1989:173 ff.)

<sup>35</sup> In his duplicated memoirs, p.6, Svend Major further recalls that Montague Norman of the Bank of England came to one of the big demonstrations.

<sup>36</sup> Van Roon 1989:264. Mowinckel’s letter was reprinted in *Vänd strömmen*. According to Lean 1985:268, ‘some of the politicians who had been influenced by Buchman were among those who created an organization called “the Oslo States”.’ Cf. van Roon 1989:11 f. The first agreement of the Oslo Convention was signed as early as December 22, 1930, and – we may add – certainly without any inspiration from Buchman. But cooperation between the Oslo States was intensified and widened in the political field from 1937 onwards, see van Roon 1989 Ch. VIII. ‘Top strategy’ was used by Kai Selinheimo in his graduation thesis in Helsinki (see Ekstrand 1993:246).

<sup>37</sup> Van Roon 1989:263, Lean 1985:273 ff. Stolpe 1938b:61 reported on the Inter laken party with approximately 2,000 Oxford leaders from all over the world. Here no personal confessions were allowed – personal conflicts should be solved beforehand. The purpose was to seek God’s guidance for the settlement of the crisis situation in the world. This gave the party a political character. See also p.63 on the encounter of the Oxford Group with representatives of the League of Nations and the political delegations, Sept.15, at the Hotel des Bergues in Geneva, opened by C. J. Hambro. Hosts were Hambro, the Dutch Foreign Minister J. A. E. Patijn, the Romanian Minister in Haag, V. V. Pella, and the High Commissioner, N. W. Jordan from New Zealand. Without adducing special evidence, van Roon also states, 1989:264, that the Oxford Group aimed to strengthen the bonds between the United States and the Oslo States. On the political response to Moral Re-Armament in England and the Netherlands in September 1938, see van Roon

addressed luncheons for the League of Nations in Geneva twice before: first in September 1933, and then on the invitation of its President, Prime Minister Eduard Benes of Czechoslovakia, on September 23, 1935. According to Buchman, six countries were 'opened to the message of the Oxford Group as a result of that lunch.'<sup>38</sup>

In the mid-1930s, Buchman seems to have grasped that the change or identification of key persons of high station only was not a sufficient strategy for the change of a whole nation. The strategy had to be divided into different categories or social strata, each with its different key persons. This was to become of special significance applied to the workers in the industrial world. Still, well-known key persons in high positions were needed for issuing affirmatory statements for use in the general propaganda, or as inviters to international Oxford Group campaigns in different countries.<sup>39</sup>

Besides, a certain tension may be observed between the aim of changing individuals and the adjacent, but more utopian one of changing nations. By way of an answer to a hypothetical question, the change of nations would – from the mid-1930s onwards – be given a certain preference. This was publicly shown at a house-party in Oxford, 1936, where Buchman's aim was to arrange a 'different' house-party, to 'take up the philosophy of the work,' and so 'lift the work beyond a revival in the minds of these people.' There were still opportunities to cure the souls of individuals, but the main aim was to apply the message 'to national and supernational problems, where it truly becomes a conquering Christianity with the Cross of Jesus going on before.'<sup>40</sup> From now on, the utopian change of nations as the superior aim acquired a much stronger emphasis in Buchman's vision as well as in the international Oxford Group work.<sup>41</sup>

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1989:264 ff. Dr. Patijn was publicly used in the Oxford propaganda, even in Scandinavia; see Dagen 1938, Aug. 8 ('Min hustru og jeg har en stille stund sammen hver morgen').

<sup>38</sup> Lean 1985:216; 'Speeches at a luncheon given by Dr. Eduard Benes [...] and members of the Oxford Group International Team at the Hotel des Bergues, Geneva on September 23rd. 1935' (dupl., The Oxford Group, North London), Lean 1985:245. F. Buchman to A. Lehtonen 1935, Oct. 9 (RAH). On the early Oxford Group work in Geneva, see also Russell 1932:339 ff.; – especially the declaration of its principles, p.340, with a heavy, personalistic emphasis in expressions such as 'The international problems of to-day are, at bottom, personal problems.'

<sup>39</sup> Some key persons declined to act in this unpersonalistic way merely for personalistic reasons, for example the Swedish Archbishop, Dr. Eidem.

<sup>40</sup> Buchman to A. Runestam 1936, Apr. 29 (Runestam Coll.II). See also the reactions from F. Ramm to R. Fangen 1936, July 16 (488 a, UBO): 'det var jo bare for gruppefolk slik at de personlige problemene blev det ikke talt om. [...] Det var denne om du vil mere filosofiske linje som gikk gjennom det hele [...].'

<sup>41</sup> The South African, Presbyterian minister, Ebenezer Macmillan's preface to his second edition of sermons, 1935:VII, exemplifies this, as he states that 'we find ourselves thinking and acting in terms of spiritual revolution, away from everything that is petty or personal. [...] the further question: Is my witness related not only to what I am but to what I am doing? Is the change in my life being followed out and applied in all the



This wider direction of the work meant a different attitude to the individual, with less emphasis on personal change leading to work for national change through civil professions and duties, often outside of the active Oxford Group fellowship. The vision of changed nations implies a crisis for the totally personalistic strategy which paves the way for its subsequent ideological interpretation.

### *II.1.5. The Vision of Remaking the World through the Strategy of Moral Re-Armament*

As early as in May, 1921, while Frank Buchman was in Cambridge, ‘a sudden thought struck him: “You will be used to remake the world.” This thought so staggered him that – as he used to recall – he almost fell off his bicycle.’<sup>42</sup> In a letter from Buchman to Gerhard Heine in Berlin, in December 1921, we find one of the earliest proofs of his vision of and strategy for a moral and spiritual reconstruction of a nation:

I count upon you heavily to be one of the great spiritual reconstructing forces in Germany, which is her greatest need. I am grateful that there is a very hopeful chance through the influence of broad-minded statesmen to see that the Treaty of Versailles needs to be changed and the conditions were far too drastic and unjust.[...]

In the meantime, you and I must do all in our power to fit ourselves morally and spiritually for the new conditions which are bound to result.

I am going for this week end to visit various members of the Disarmament Conference.<sup>43</sup>

Only the use of ‘disarmament’ instead of ‘rearmament’ reveals that this letter was written seventeen years before 1938. The term denoting the strategy of a spiritual renaissance, ‘spiritual reconstructing,’ was used in the Oxford Group until the introduction of Moral Re-Armament in 1938.<sup>44</sup>

Throughout the 1920s as well as the 1930s, up to the presentation of the strategy of a moral rearmament, there had been much talk, in both ecclesiastical

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relationships and problems for which I am more or less responsible; in the home, in the church, in business, in questions of national or international importance, problems of war and peace, race and colour, hunger and industry?’ Macmillan’s book had been ‘read’ and thus also authorized by H. Kenaston Twitchell of the Oxford Group. This makes clear the rapid circulation of Buchman’s visions.

<sup>42</sup> Lean 1985:93. As Lean points out, this was not an unusual notion at the time. Billy Sunday’s campaign card from 1915 asked converts to dedicate themselves to ‘the task of rebuilding the world according to Christian ideas.’

<sup>43</sup> 1921, Dec. 14 (Copy in NLC).

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Roland Wilson to A. Runestam 1934, Feb. 12 (Coll.Runestam I).

and political circles in Europe, about the need for a moral and spiritual disarmament. In 1928, Martin Rade spoke at the World Conference for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches, in Prague, on 'Moralische Abrüstung eine erste Notwendigkeit,' and, having raised the issue as early as in 1925, the Danish Foreign Minister, P. Munch, stated – in the League of Nations in 1931 – that 'le désarmement moral est nécessaire,' repeating it as late as in September 1936.<sup>45</sup> This moral disarmament meant a disarmament of hatred and hostility as well as cooperation based on good will in and among individuals, churches, classes, nations, etc. Further examples of a late use of 'disarmament' in this favourable sense are given in a memorandum from the Swedish Foreign Office, August 1936, as well as by the Norwegian journalist Fredrik Ramm and the Swedish author Harry Blomberg, both in 1937. According to the memorandum from the political department of the Swedish Foreign Office, the Finnish government had no sympathies for what was stated in the Danish memorandum on the so-called moral disarmament.<sup>46</sup> In an article on peace and disarmament in the political sense, Fredrik Ramm wrote on the need for a disarmament that was not merely military but spiritual as well, and in his confessional book *Vi måste börja om*, Harry Blomberg wrote about the necessity of personal disarmament: to show mercy in our daily surroundings, we must personally disarm.<sup>47</sup>

Blomberg's book is of interest beyond its role as an example of the contemporary vocabulary. According to several publications, including Garth Lean's biography on Frank Buchman, Harry Blomberg was the very first person to express the view that 'we must rearm morally.'<sup>48</sup> However, the only indisputable fact is that in the Swedish edition of the Oxford Group mass-publication *Rising Tide (Vänd strömmen 1938)*, the words 'Vårt folk måste moraliskt upprusta' [Our people must morally re-arm] appeared.<sup>49</sup> Though Blomberg's picture was printed later in the journal, in another context, and he was active in the preparatory work, there is no evidence for the presumption that the vision of Moral Re-Armament was originally his. On the contrary, his letters from 1937–

<sup>45</sup> Rade 1928:858 ff.; Munch 1931:37 f; further Karup Pedersen 1970:297, 82, 172 f; 218.

<sup>46</sup> O. Johansson, P.M. 1936, Aug. 18 (UD HP 20 D/8, RA): 'Däremot hade man inga sympatier för vad som i den danska promemorian framförts i fråga om den s.k. moraliska nedrustningen.' Cf. van Roon 1989:264, wrongly stating that in 'consultations between the Scandinavian foreign ministers in August 1936, both Denmark and Norway emphasised the need for a change of mentality and the importance of Moral Rearmament.' See also SvM 1936, Oct. 6: 'Nedrustningen bör även vara mental,' with a report from the Disarmament Conference in Geneva and the speech by the Swedish Foreign Minister, R. Sandler.

<sup>47</sup> Mannen i tønnen [Ramm]: 'Nedrustning er ikke aktuell politikk' (Dagen, 1937, Feb. 12). Blomberg 1937:137 f.

<sup>48</sup> Lean 1985:262, also Spoerri 1971:131, Ekman 1971:59. This assertion appeared already in Stolpe 1940:170; see also Stolpe 1950:201, 1975:86.

<sup>49</sup> *Vänd strömmen* 1938:23.

1938 do not mention 'rearmament' in any favourable sense whatsoever.<sup>50</sup>

According to another version of the origin of Moral Re-Armament, Frank Buchman, taking a walk in the Black Forest at Freudenstadt, suddenly thought of a 'moral and spiritual re-armament' all on his own. Lean tries to reconcile the two versions in a 'suitable' way by suggesting that Buchman received the Swedish edition at Freudenstadt, but still there is no evidence in favour of the Blomberg tradition. Besides, the question whether the Swedish *Vänd strömmen*, published in the second week of May, 1938,<sup>51</sup> reached Buchman before or during his stay at Freudenstadt remains unsolved.

As early as in October 1937, Kenneth D. Belden, working in the fellowship of the Oxford Group, had launched the programme 'Spiritual Rearmament for Britain' in *The Church of England Newspaper*. Two weeks later, Rom Landau expressed a prevailing attitude with regard to the disarmament/rearmament situation when he stated that 'To disarm materially without arming ourselves spiritually is folly.'<sup>52</sup> One of the very first Scandinavian examples of a favourable use of 'rearmament' in the spiritual sense is a speech by the Bishop of Strängnäs, Dr. Gustaf Aulén, at a visitation in the parish of Mariefred on May 23, 1937, on which occasion the Bishop expressed his view that a Christian rearmament was

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<sup>50</sup> Blomberg's *Vi måste börja om* was reprinted in its 16th edition in 1938, still with its original words on personal disarmament. It was probably not until later that Blomberg used the Swedish 'moralisk upprustning' [moral rearmament], publicly in Oslo Oct. 30, 1938 (*Morgenbladet* 1938, Nov.1), then in an interview (JP 1938, Dec. 31), subsequently in a speech at the Vasa ski race on March 5, 1939 (see Blomberg 1941:62 ff.). Though Frank Buchman's letters to Blomberg (1937, Dec. 17, 1938, Jan. 4, UUB) concern the preparatory work for *Vänd strömmen*, and the following letters (1938, Jan. 6,10) a planned meeting of Buchman and Blomberg, of the planned contents only 'the Magna Carta of the new democracy' and 'a message that will make the Nordic north shake the world and give a pattern to world democracy' (1938, Jan.4) are mentioned. Oskarsson's confessional book 1938:150 ends with a reaction against the current rearmament: 'Mitt i allt upprustningskränet [the rearmament yelling] nås vi av maningen: Världens förbättring begynner med min egen förbättring.'

<sup>51</sup> This time of publication according to *Nytt Liv* 1938, No. 10. According to 'Arbetet i Sverige före Visby' (EPC), the Swedish team heard of the programme of a moral rearmament on April 2 ('Vi hörde för första gången ordet moralisk upprustning och folkförsoning').

<sup>52</sup> Kenneth D. Belden: 'Defend Your Homes: Your Homes Defend Britain' (*The Church of England Newspaper* 1937, Oct. 22); Rom Landau: 'III. The Church and World Affairs' (*The Church of England Newspaper* 1937, Nov.5: 'But if the guns of steel are replaced by the guns of the spirit, then indeed our example will become creative throughout the world'). After the 80th Foyle monthly literary luncheon at Grosvenor House, July 8, Miss Christina Foyle described the event as 'a reasonable and objective presentation of the case for moral and spiritual renewal at a time of world crisis' (J. C. M. Fairlie: 'The Oxford Group. A Literary Luncheon'. *The Church of England Newspaper* 1937, July 16). On this occasion, see Lean 1985:258 f., and Oskarsson's fictional 1943:130 ff.

required. This phrase formed the headline of a local newspaper article: 'Kristen upprustning kräves av vår tid' [A Christian Rearmament is Required of our Time].<sup>53</sup> In his book *Moderne mentalitet* (1937), the Norwegian statesman C. J. Hambro stated that no external rearmament could save democracy, if it was corroded by rust from the inside.<sup>54</sup>

The favourable use of 'rearmament' in a spiritual and moral sense was spread through Frank Buchman's speech at East Ham Town Hall in London May 29, 1938. During the 1930s, the political situation in Europe had changed from disarmament to rearmament. An illuminating example is the British Ministerial Committee on the Disarmament Conference, which in 1934 was changed over to considering and planning rearmament without so much as an appropriate change in title.<sup>55</sup> As late as in the spring 1937, the Swedish government made a last attempt to persuade the other nations to agree to a disarmament treaty, but Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, and Switzerland gave negative answers. On May 31, 1937, the Swedish Foreign Minister, Mr. Rickard Sandler, pushed through the last resolution concerning a limited disarmament treaty to be presented at the Disarmament Conference of 1932.<sup>56</sup>

Frank Buchman's vision of Moral Re-Armament was launched as an answer to the political and military rearmament in Europe, and comprehended and accepted as such. It was soon used and interpreted outside the Oxford Group, too.<sup>57</sup> The vision and strategy for remaking the world was also possible to adapt to new circumstances, if a war were to break out. It was supplemented by special visions for certain nations. For instance, Buchman's vision as regards Sweden in 1938 was that this country would become 'a reconciler of the nations.'

During the years between 1921 and 1938, the strategy of changing communities through certain key persons, as well as the strategies of personalistically working fellowships and of a national revolution and renaissance, had smoothed the way for a strategic use of the vision of changing the world – now aiming not at a revival, but at a supernatural awakening. W. G. McLoughlin defines the difference: 'Revivals alter the lives of individuals; awakenings alter

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<sup>53</sup> Strengnäs Tidning 1937, May 24.

<sup>54</sup> Hambro 1937:51.

<sup>55</sup> Shay 1977:35. Stephen Roskill names the second part of his history of naval policy between the wars 'The period of reluctant rearmament, 1930–1939.'

<sup>56</sup> Trönberg 1985:283.

<sup>57</sup> See Austin 1938 (*Moral Re-Armament. The Battle for Peace*). Good examples from Sweden are supplied in Z. Höglund's editorial 'Moralisk upprustning,' explained as the strengthening of the moral world opinion, something which the dominating Christianity lacked, here emphasized from a Socialist viewpoint (SD 1938, Oct. 18); in a conservative article, 'Moralisk upprustning – självdisciplin' by Major Henric Lagercrantz (SvD 1938, Dec. 18); and in the pamphlet *Moralisk upprustning* (1939), independent of any form of Group revivalism, with articles on the theme by Ebbe Reuterdahl and Olov Hartman, and sold in aid of Rikskampanjen mot svärjan det [The National Campaign against Swearing].

the world view of a whole people or culture.’<sup>58</sup>

Buchman’s vision and strategy also included millennialist views. During 1938–1939, a millennialist view on world peace is noticeable in Buchman’s speeches.<sup>59</sup> For example, to the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on ‘The Golden Age,’ May 8, 1939, Buchman announced ‘the new civilisation of our dreams,’ coming not by our own wisdom, but by obedient cooperation with God in the task of Moral Re-Armament. In a pamphlet issued by the Oxford Group in England, the Golden Age was further described as ‘an age of peace, lasting peace in heart, home and between nations – a peace which will be not alone the absence of war, but the liberation of all our energies to build a new world.’ Both poverty and unemployment would be ‘wiped away’ in this ‘fear-free, hate-free, greed-free world.’<sup>60</sup>

In its original form, the strategy of Moral Re-Armament was built on individuals. One instance was the new stage in Frank Buchman’s strategy, with the planned mobilisation of ‘one hundred million people listening,’ December 1–3, 1939, for the purpose of facing personal, national, and supernational issues in the light of God’s will. The war affected the campaign, but it did emphasize unity, especially between Britain and the United States.<sup>61</sup> The development of the war placed the question of an ideological basis for Western democracy in focus and paved the way for an ideological interpretation of the strategy of Moral Re-Armament.

### *II.1.6. The Ideological Interpretation of Moral Re-Armament*

Our present understanding of the historical vision and strategy of a Moral Re-Armament of 1938 is determined by the later interpretation of Moral Re-Armament as a democratic ideology. But this ideological interpretation was not a prerequisite for the 1938 vision. The situation was rather the reverse. Through its personalistic application of the Christian Gospel, the Oxford Group had created a revival, or – in Frank Buchman’s vocabulary – even a spiritual revolution (which, in sociological terms, is another form of revival). Personalism had developed from Revivalistic personalism to Social personalism. In the course of the following years, it became obvious to Buchman and his team that an ideol-

<sup>58</sup> McLoughlin 1978:XIII. Awakenings are described as ‘periods of cultural revitalization that begin in a general crisis of beliefs and values and extend over a period of a generation or so, during which time a profound reorientation in beliefs and values takes place.’ See also Buchman 1942:1: ‘To bring about this new world order the Oxford Group believes that a world-wide spiritual awakening is the only hope.’

<sup>59</sup> See Cantril 1941:152. Belden 1976:279 finds that Buchman shared with John Mott ‘the “triumphant” optimism characteristic of the post-millennial hope.’

<sup>60</sup> Buchman 1942:37; *The Golden Age of MRA. Moral Re-Armament. 1939*:[3].

<sup>61</sup> Lean 1985:286, 288; also P. Brodersen to Halfdan Høgsbro, 1939, Sept. 16 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

ogy was needed in order to create an awakening (in Buchman's terminology, a 'renaissance').

On the other hand, as we have stated above, the vision of remaking the world subsequently entailed a crisis for the totally personalistic strategy, a crisis which prepared the way for the later ideological interpretation of the vision. This development comprised many elements, such as the revelation of the ideological signification and character of social and political structures and the discovery that changing individuals was not sufficient for changing ideological structures. A new strategical pattern was formed in which personal change did not immediately lead to a change of structures. It did, however, entail a change of ideas, which in its turn led on to a change of structures.

In a speech at Mackinac Island on July 18, 1943, Frank Buchman unfolded the concept of Moral Re-Armament as an ideology, contrasting it with Communism and Fascism, and with a significant accent on the message that 'America must discover her rightful ideology.' Lean describes this as 'further clarification of the thought he had been reaching for at Visby.'<sup>62</sup> The strategy of Moral Re-Armament did not merely mean fighting for individuals – it involved preparations for a battle of ideas: against Materialism, for Democracy. This also meant – in somewhat simplified terms – that before the Second World War, and, at least in neutral Sweden, even during the war, a changed Communist or National Socialist could be a different Communist or National Socialist, whereas after the war a changed Communist was no longer a Communist.<sup>63</sup>

Hence, the ideological interpretation of Moral Re-Armament cannot be described as a prerequisite for the visions and strategies existing as early as 1938. But the vision of remaking the world and the strategy of Moral Re-Armament in 1938 obviously contained an embryo of a subsequent interpretation of M.R.A. as an ideology. As the utopian strain became more visible, not to say overwhelming, with the vision of remaking the world (a theocratic Utopia<sup>64</sup>), the need for an ideological interpretation of the strategy grew much stronger than it was at the time when the utopia had lain in the belief in individuals on a smaller scale. The ideological interpretation shifts the utopian emphasis, too, from a religious millennialism to a democratic one. This consciously ideological interpretation of its strategy points to the need for a clarification and an analysis of the doctrine and theology of the Oxford Group.

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<sup>62</sup> Lean 1985:321.

<sup>63</sup> See Jarlert 1989:144. A late example of the non-ideologic pre-war attitude towards Communism is given by the young Swedish priest Anders Tauson-Hassler to Erik Petré 1945, July 2 (EPC): 'Det synes mig viktigt, att vi i detta läge inte kommer i något motsatsförhållande till kommunismen. Tvärt om, skall vi från kristet håll villigt förverkliga alla berättigade och rättfärdiga krav, som kommunismen frambär, men tillika ge vår syn på de andliga värdena.' On Tauson-Hassler's extremely personalistic summary of the aim and instruments of the Christian revolution, 1942, see Ch. II.3.7.3.

<sup>64</sup> Oftestad 1981:68.

## II.2. Doctrine and Theology

### II.2.1. *The Doctrinal, Un-Theological Nature of the Oxford Group*

The first point to be made about the theology of the Oxford Group is that no such thing exists. Neither the Oxford Group nor Group revivalism in general ever intended to found a new systematic theology or draw particular attention to certain theological fields or matters. Its primary aspiration was to increase and transform the capacity of the Gospel – to a larger or lesser extent expressed in newer and older theologies – into personal practice and activity. Its attitude was fundamentally untheological, though not atheological, nor hostile to theological work as such. In this study, we have stated that Frank Buchman's influence is to be found primarily not in the fields of doctrine and theology, but in those fields of vision and strategy. In one of the most wide-spread, propagandistic books on the Oxford Group, his influence is said to be even 'wholly independent of his theology.'<sup>65</sup> We may well conclude that the function of theology in the Oxford Group, as in all Group revivalism, is its experience at work.<sup>66</sup>

Yet, a deliberately exclusive, strategical use of a word, for example 'change,' always has its limits. When strategy has begun to form a tradition, the strategical teaching soon will be comprehended as doctrine, by critics and other outsiders as well as from inside. This tradition is revealed in the writings and work of the Oxford Group, where we meet some strongly emphasized, often simpli-

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<sup>65</sup> Begbie 1932 12:43. See also Robach 1971:129, criticizing Werkström 1963, while stating that Buchman is not a builder of theological systems, but a life-changer, and not recommending a new method. Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:12 even states that the Oxford Group is 'die systemloseste, untheologischste und undogmatischste Erneuerungsbewegung der letzten Jahrhunderte. [...] Das Lehrmäßige tritt bei den Oxfordern vollständig hinter dem Erlebnis- und Gefühlsmäßigen zurück.'

<sup>66</sup> Englert 1958:315 states that the 'main emphasis is on "experience," borrowing in a sense from Ritschl and Schleiermacher. Therefore theological difficulties or differences of opinion are to be avoided.' On the theology of German Group revivalism, see Gericke 1936:26 – 'Die Gruppenbewegung bringt keine neue Lehre – Gott sei Dank, sondern sie ist eine neue Praxis. Sie ist keine Doktrin, sondern eine Disziplin, sie ist "Einübung ins Christentum".' Cf. von Eicken 1937:38 – 'Auf Theologie, Christologie, Eschatologie läßt sich die Gruppe als solche nicht näher ein; sie beschränkt sich also auf Soteriologie,' and the Australian Benson 1936:159 ('The theology of the Cross may divide, the experience of the Cross unites'). Cf. Bruner 1971:32, who, speaking of the Pentecostal Movement, asserts that its theology 'is its experience, which is another way of saying that its theology is pneumatology.' The later part of this statement cannot be applied to the Oxford Group, whose common experience, while lacking the special Pentecostal, pneumatological qualities, reaches far beyond Pentecostal 'pneumatology.' The Norwegian Sverre Norborg described Buchman as a fanatical experience-subjectivist, theologically un-knowing (Norborg 1962:165). Even after leaving the Oxford Group, Sven Stolpe recognised him as *the* Christian man of action (Stolpe 1975:73).

fied, doctrinal principles and assessments.<sup>67</sup> Due to this emphasis from within the Group, and to ignorance from outside of the real nature of the Oxford Group, these basic principles have often been confused with an assumed *Summa Theologiæ* of the Oxford Group.<sup>68</sup>

From an immanent view, the 'theology' of the Oxford Group would be a matter of experienced doctrinal principles in function, rather than a question of their theological environment or significance. The theological level does work more as an instrument in the service of activity, than as its foundation or starting-point.<sup>69</sup> It is a practical theology of action, and thus of uncommonly elastic nature.<sup>70</sup> This extremely elastic theology of action may sound legalistic or moralistic when systematized instead of practised, i.e. when understood as a sys-

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<sup>67</sup> Eister 1950:214 – 'The cult has no formal creed, though various rites and practices may be carefully prescribed, and in some instances as in the case of the Oxford Group a considerable degree of dogmatism may develop.' In stating that 'the fellowship is still grounded in a common experience of spiritual life; but agreement with the approved practices and principles which have sprung from that experience is also essential,' William C. Braithwaite's opinion on Quakerism is most relevant as a description of the Oxford Group, too (Sheeran 1987:20).

<sup>68</sup> See the report on Moral Re-Armament (1955) from the Social and Industrial Council of the Church Assembly of the Church of England, in which serious criticism of the movement is given. It is the most comprehensive report of its kind, its first chapter being dedicated to 'The Theology of M.R.A.' (On this report, see Lean 1985:436-441). The draft of that chapter was written by Dennis Nineham, at the time Professor of Biblical and Historical Theology at King's College, London. Already in its Introduction, the Council asserted that 'Theology is nothing more and nothing less than the attempt at straight and honest thinking about the data, the content of human experience of God.' From this definition, it became 'obvious that the duty of having a Theology should be included in the principle of "absolute honesty" inculcated by M.R.A.', Church Assembly 1955:4. Thus the Council tried to justify the method of its report. Its theological chapter contains many interesting and pertinent remarks, provided that the Oxford Group had laid theological claims, which it did only in a transferred or implicit way, without any ambition to present a system of Christian doctrine. Cf. Goebel 1956:18 'In der Tat hat die MRA *keine Dogmatik*, keine besondere "Theologie". Sie verdankt ihre Durchschlagskraft unter anderem einer *weitgehenden Vereinfachung der christlichen Botschaft*.'

<sup>69</sup> This makes, for example, the comparisons made between Martin Luther, Eduard Thurneysen and Barthian Theology, on one hand, and 'Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group Movement', on the other, in Werkström 1963, so complicated and not altogether theologically relevant.

<sup>70</sup> See, for example, Bartholdy 1958:184, 'Oxfordfolkene havde en højst mangelfuld teologi, hvis de i det hele taget havde nogen, deres teologi var det rene gummielastikum, men Gud brugte dem.' Cf. Eliot 1942<sup>4</sup>:59, 'It is not enthusiasm, but dogma, that differentiates a Christian from a pagan society,' p.83, 'I have never seen any evidence that to be a Buchmanite it was necessary to hold the Christian Faith according to the Creeds, and until I have seen a statement to that effect, I shall continue to doubt whether there is any reason to call Buchmanism a Christian movement.'



tem or a theory, open to intellectual analysis without personal involvement. This is at one and the same time one of the strongest and one of the weakest points in the Oxford Group teaching. In practise, the strong ethical emphasis did create sinners with a personal need for the gospel, as well as pharisees.<sup>71</sup> For example, the four absolute standards might work protecting against legalism and moralism, when interpreted as a dedicated attitude of unlimited and total honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love towards others. On the other hand, the same standards might promote legalism and moralism, when interpreted primarily as demands on others for surrender and obedience.<sup>72</sup>

In considering this, we still have to look for the theological signification, roots and development of these principles. Special attention also has to be paid to the critical examination of which sources might be used as genuine and/or authorized expressions of Oxford Group teaching. It also has to be noted that wide variations in personal, theological statements from people engaged in the Oxford Group, do not necessarily express corresponding variations in the doctrine of the Group. In general, they should be regarded as expressions of personal attitudes to theology, or certain theological doctrines, on a non-doctrinal, or popular level within the Oxford Group. A new element in comparison to previous critical research is our interest in the theologians getting involved in the Oxford Group fellowship, their theological presuppositions, and the way in which their encounter with the Group meant a change in the function, emphasis, or contents of their theology.

### *II.2.2. The Doctrinal Principles of the Oxford Group – their Signification, Roots, and Development*

A common ground for the Oxford Group doctrine as well as for many 20th century revival movements is the striving for a Biblical and at the same time simple form of Christianity – the noticeable combination of Biblicism and rationalism, once significant for the theology of the Enlightenment. A dominant, self-evident prerequisite for the Oxford Group principles is a theology of surrender, often described as ‘complete surrender,’ leading to a ‘maximum’ experience of Christ. Both Biblicism and rationalism are permeated by this theology of surrender, and therefore treated instrumentally, as a theology of action, expressed through the Oxford Group doctrinal principles.<sup>73</sup> These principles

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<sup>71</sup> Høgsbro 1936b:230.

<sup>72</sup> While acknowledging his debts to the Oxford Group, Andrews, 1942:162, emphasizes the need of using not only the four absolute standards, but also the Beati tudes as a test of one own’s life, ‘because apart from them this subtle danger of self-praise continually ruins the very best of all our undertakings.’ Another way of supplementing the four absolute standards could be an equally heavy emphasis on the absolute character of God’s mercy and forgiveness.

<sup>73</sup> See, for example, Lean 1990:102, ‘The Bible was written by people in action for

might easily be obtained from any of the smaller booklets on the subject, published by the Oxford Group. A representative and authorized one is Sherwood Sunderland Day's *The Principles of the Group*. Day has been called Frank Buchman's first full-time companion, and his pamphlet was published by the Oxford Group in the late 1920s. As a general supplement, we will use Eleanor Napier Forde's *The Guidance of God* from 1927.

Day states that 'the principles of "The Oxford Group" are the principles of the Bible,' the Group being neither an organization nor a sect, nor a new method, but 'that life which is hid with Christ in God.' It is said, that 'the great Bible truths concerning redemption' are taken for granted, and the principles mentioned are 'some of those which have been all but lost from our Christian message and which need reaffirming to-day.'<sup>74</sup> These principles are God-guidance, Fearless Dealing with Sin, Sharing, The Necessity for Adequate Intelligent Expressional Activity, Stewardship, Team-work, and Loyalty.<sup>75</sup>

Guidance is explained as communion with the Living God. Common phrases when speaking of this experience are 'listening to God,' 'two-way prayer,' and 'thinking God's thoughts after Him.' The experience of guidance is not built on any special doctrinal foundation, like, for example, the Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light as a divine, universal principle working in the soul, but, just as with the 17th Century Quaker theologian Robert Barclay, several proofs of the occurrence of Divine Guidance are collected from the New Testament.<sup>76</sup> If a resemblance may be found between worship in Quakerism and an Oxford Group team seeking guidance together, it is more a functional, and less a doctrinal one.<sup>77</sup> While faith is totally dependent on guidance at work, the Oxford Group teaching on guidance has some important presuppositions of doctrinal character: that God has a plan, with the individual as well as with families, societies, nations, and for the whole world, and that man is 'led into God's secret plans as far as He wishes us to know them at the time,' and further that '*guidance comes in action*,' i.e. 'when we are trying to win others to Christ.'<sup>78</sup>

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people in action.' On this activism as a combination of Biblicism and rationalism, significant of a certain type of American, religious mentality, see Ch. II.3.8.

<sup>74</sup> Day [192?]:3 f.

<sup>75</sup> In *What is the Oxford Group?* 1933, surrender is treated separately as 'our actual passing from a life of Sin to a life God-Guided and Christ-Conscious.' Also restitution is treated in a separate chapter, defined as 'righting to the best of our present ability wrongs we have committed in the past.' Jones 1933:135 f. has Conviction, Confession, Restitution, Conversion, Sharing, Surrender, Guidance.

<sup>76</sup> Eeg-Olofsson 1954:72, 85 f.

<sup>77</sup> Despite the facts that Quakerism is not centred on a theory, but on individual experience as part of a group experience, and that Christian qualities matter more than Christian dogmas, the Quaker experience still has a doctrinal foundation (Sheeran 1987<sup>3</sup>:5, 12, 3 f.). Functional resemblances are found, for example, in the tests of leading/guidance (p.24 ff.).

<sup>78</sup> Napier Forde [1927]:25. Cf. Bockmuehl 1990:145, who states that Christian

Though experiences of guidance occur in several Christian traditions of different times and confessions, the idea of God's plans and man's possibilities to get detailed information of them is less common.<sup>79</sup> The belief in the possibility of exact and detailed guidance as a common, everyday experience is distinctive of the Oxford Group and its roots of tradition as well as of Quakerism. Guidance is sometimes used as to designate a continued revelation of God's will, more often as a vision of God's plans on a limited level. Sometimes it is being interpreted as direct and concrete orders to do something altogether unexpected, without knowing why,<sup>80</sup> more often as instructions how to deal with a special problem or with the common situations of everyday life. Sir Arnold Lunn quotes the Oxford Group man, Basil Yeates, who states that guidance is just 'consecrated common sense', being conscious throughout the day of the presence of Christ, though it would be wrong to conceal the rare occasions when it went beyond this, and Yeates was sure that he got explicit and detailed guidance.<sup>81</sup> The importance of the quiet time is sometimes built more on the need for 'tuning in,' and on the readiness it gives, and not primarily for the explicit guidance given at that singular moment of the day. The common sense is 'consecrated' through surrender and readiness for immediate obedience. It may be described as an active mystical rationalism.<sup>82</sup>

There are several tests of guidance. Napier Forde speaks about five 'signposts':

The first is the Bible.[...]

The second signpost is this: 'Look for the coincidences.'[...]

The third signpost is a question: 'Where is the Cross?'[...]

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commitment in listening to God's instruction does not mean either activism or quietism. On the faith as dependent on guidance at work, see, for example, Jaeger 1935:338 ('völlig *atheoretische* Sinn des *Glaubens* – nämlich sich restlos und bedingungslos der Führung dessen *ausliefern*, den man im Ernst seinen "Herrn" nennt'). After leaving the Oxford Group, Sven Stolpe (1975:72) stated that all genuine spiritual experience through the centuries says that God surely does not speak to everyone who listens honestly. In most cases God reveals himself as a silence, as absent. For an explorative, religio-psychological examination of God's guidance in a broad and open sense, see Wikström 1975.

<sup>79</sup> According to Luther, the Spirit teaches the Christian what to do in each specific situation, but as every Christian does not have the Spirit to such an extent, it is necessary for the preservation of the unity of ethical judgement in Christianity to abide by the apostolic imperatives in the New Testament (Althaus 1966:270 f.). The idea of detailed information of God's plans is strange to Luther.

<sup>80</sup> The example of Philip and the Ethiopian, in Acts 8:26, is regarded as a promise.

<sup>81</sup> Lunn 1957:98.

<sup>82</sup> Weber 1968<sup>9</sup>:113 states that 'mysticism may indirectly even further the interests of rational conduct.' When the Oxford Group has been criticized for letting clarity hide the mystery (for example, by Hartman 1947:105), the critique is partly superficial, as clarity is found through a mystical method. Still, the objective Christian mysteries are, in function, often hidden in the practice of the Oxford Group.

The fourth signpost is an intuitive conviction that a course of action is inherently right, the certainty that, hard as it may be, there can be no other way. [...]

The fifth signpost, 'What say others to whom God speaks?' is the unwritten law of fellowship. [...] the constraining discipline of the 'team'; [...] <sup>83</sup>

In Howard J. Rose's short pamphlet, *The Quiet Time*, four questions are being asked as 'the Tests of God's Guidance':

1. Does it go counter to the highest standard or belief which we already possess?
2. Does it contradict the revelations which Christ has already made in or through the Bible?
3. Is it absolutely honest, pure, unselfish and loving?
4. Does it conflict with our duties and responsibilities to others?

N.B. – If still uncertain, wait and continue in prayer and consult a trustworthy friend, who believes in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. <sup>84</sup>

And in Thornton-Duesbery's *Sharing* :

- (a) Is it consistent with the revelations which Christ has already made in and through the Bible?
- (b) Is it absolutely honest, pure, unselfish, and loving?
- (c) Is it consistent with our real duties and responsibilities to others?
- (d) Is it in accordance with the guidance of other consecrated people? <sup>85</sup>

A thorough theological explication of guidance, its relation to conscience and inspiration, and to the idea of God's plan, is given in Streeter's *The God who speaks* (1936), considered below (3.1). Here we may observe that guidance is regarded as the chief requisite for true theological thinking, <sup>86</sup> and of decisive importance both for the theological question of truth, and for the moral question of right and wrong. <sup>87</sup>

Sin is defined as 'anything that separates me from God or from another person.' A fearless dealing with sin is necessary, partly because Christ came into the world to save sinners, not to salve them, partly because it is the prerequisite

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<sup>83</sup> Napier Forde [1927]:19–22.

<sup>84</sup> Rose [192?]:2.

<sup>85</sup> Thornton-Duesbery [192?]:8 f.

<sup>86</sup> See Harris 1934:72.

<sup>87</sup> In *Frank Buchmans Botschaft und ihre Bedeutung für die protestantischen Kirchen* (1963:30), Klaus Bockmühl explains Guidance as 'Spezifizierung und Realisierung der Herrschaft Gottes für den einzelnen Jünger und die einzelne Situation, in der er sich befindet: Eine "panik-sichere Erfahrung der Führung Gottes" ist Geschenk des Christus-in-uns.' In *Listening to the God who Speaks* (1990), Bockmuehl gives a theological explication of Guidance, which differs slightly from Streeter's *The God Who Speaks*, and without mentioning Streeter.

for the experience of spiritual truth.<sup>88</sup> The definition of sin reveals the utopian character of the Oxford Group strategy.<sup>89</sup> The application of the definition of sin, as well as the dealing with it, is chiefly a matter of guidance – tested against the four absolute standards, and not against detailed commandments. It does not proceed from the nature of sin itself, but from the consequences of sin, especially from its restraining function in the life-changing work.<sup>90</sup> Rather than as a dogmatic issue, sin is to be understood in the framework of ethical personalism, and, consequently, reconciliation is primarily understood as an active restoration in the present of the broken fellowship between God/Christ and human beings.

In its understanding of sin as the common denominator of all men, the Oxford Group has a realistic conception of the situation of man, although it uses it in an idealistic context, and with an optimistic and instrumental view of the nature of man.<sup>91</sup> From this view of sin, the common emphasis on ‘sinners only’ – best known from the title of A. J. Russell’s book – is developed, with the understanding of the Christian fellowship as a fellowship in the conformist and even

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<sup>88</sup> Day [192?]:4 ff.

<sup>89</sup> Berggrav 1937:266 redefines sin as what separates me from God and from *the love* towards men, a wording which opens for a separation from the evil in men, as well as from wrong opinions and acts of men, without separating from men as such; also Engberg 1934:134 on Buchman’s definition as both too narrow and too wide (both lack of knowledge and fear separates from God, though they are no sins; on the other hand, it might be necessary to separate from men because of differences in doctrine or liturgy).

<sup>90</sup> Dinger 1961:64 f. criticizes the teaching on sin as set out in Buchman’s speeches. He finds that personal morality is gauged according to whether or not it promotes social unity. He does not find any clear formulation of the real malice of sin: Outside of His unifying control by giving us His plan, God does not seem to enter much into their understanding of the real malice of sin as an offense against the divine Unity itself. In fact, God takes on a wholly secondary and subservient role in determining ‘sin,’ not only because the moral ‘messages’ of ‘divine guidance’ are authenticated by purely human thought and desire – ‘divine guidance’ is its own determinant – but also because there is no recourse to His entire moral Revelation or to the Church in its interpretation and determination of these ‘sins of division.’ Oftestad 1972:14, 1981:67 refers to the Oxford Group view on sin as obstacles stopping the contact between God and men – leading to an interruption of communication.

<sup>91</sup> The realistic conception of man’s situation and an instrumental, though less optimistic view on man’s nature is described by Brunner 1937:134 f. (‘Die Sünde Adams ist die Zerstörung der Gemeinschaft mit Gott, die zugleich die Zerreiung dieser Verbundenheit ist, das Wider-Gott-Sein, das zugleich ein Wider-einander-sein ist [...] Wir sind in der Sünde solidarisch verbunden, gerade so, wie wir in der Schpfung solidarisch verbunden sind, nur mit dem Unterschied, da wir eben – das gehrt zur Snde – diese Solidaritt in der Snde verleugnen’). Cf. Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:35, ‘Ein Sndenpessimismus und eine widernatrliche Sndenschwrmerie, die schlechterdings nicht mehr zu berbieten sind, kennzeichnen die Gruppenbewegung.’

secure, profound identity in sin.<sup>92</sup> This emphasis on fellowship on the basis of sin is significant of, though not original with the Oxford Group. The same view on the fellowship between God and man – though with another definition of sin – is found in ‘neo-orthodox’ theologies of the 1920s and 1930s, especially in the Lundensian theology of Anders Nygren, which states that Luther’s conception might be expressed by the formula ‘*Fellowship with God on the basis of sin, not of holiness.*’<sup>93</sup> These influences coincide in the Norwegian Ronald Fangen’s book on St. Paul and our time, emphasizing ‘fellowship in sin,’ and quoting both Barth and Nygren.<sup>94</sup>

Sharing covers two distinct elements: confession and testimony. ‘Confessing to another person always costs and is thus a test of our honesty in hating our sin.’ Sharing is to begin from where men are, and ‘bridge for them the gap between what they know,’ sin, and ‘what they have not known – Jesus Christ.’ This is ‘never’ done by preaching, ‘but by sharing our own experiences.’ The main truth in sharing is said to be summed up in the fact that ‘a sharing Christian is a propagating Christian.’<sup>95</sup> Sharing can take the form of private sharing, group sharing, or public testimony. In Leon’s *The Philosophy of Courage* (1939), sharing is explained as ‘spreading the world revolution.’<sup>96</sup> Sharing is based on,

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<sup>92</sup> Russell 1932, Stolpe 1936:102. Compare with the different emphasis in both title and contents of Oehler 1934, *Wir Pharisäer*.

<sup>93</sup> Nygren 1939:466 (Swedish version 1936). In parts of Western Swedish Church pietism, influenced by Nygren, it was stated that the Church was never ‘us.’ ‘We’ are sinners, that is the only thing ‘we’ are (Nelson 1934:134). In his ‘Oxford’ anthropology, Stolpe 1939:91, agrees with Lundensian theology in its emphasis of the borderline between the Antique motive and the Christian one, stating that the ascetic, frightened view of the instincts was Greek, and not Christian; p.95, which agreed with recent Swedish Luther research. The emphasis on the Crucified as the Victorious might have been inspired by the Lundensian Aulén 1931 (Swedish version 1930).

<sup>94</sup> Fangen 1936b:39, 47 f., 57. Fangen also emphasizes grace, 45, 48, etc. Fangen’s conception of sin is the Lutheran one: The real sin, the sum of all sin, is that one does not believe; 1935:41. Cf. also Berggrav 1936:2, who recognizes the uniting reality in the fellowship in sin, but stating that a fellowship in sin only would be well suited as a foundation for an association of hopelessness or a death-club; 1937:264, and agreeing with the talk of the Christian fellowship as a fellowship of sinners, and with the necessary identification with each other as sinners, but opposing Stolpe’s way of speaking of this fellowship as *based* on sin. St. Paul would have said: ‘justified only’ rather than ‘sinners only.’ Already in 1934, Arvid Runestam had described changed men as ‘sinners only,’ gathered on the basis of sin and forgiveness, distinguished, not through their new life, but through their status as unmasked sinners. Fangen’s book on St. Paul has a special interest as inspired both by the Oxford Group and by contemporary theology, when compared to the later MRA-book, *The Strategy of St. Paul* by Paul Campbell and Peter Howard, where the apostle is portrayed as a MRA-man of the first century.

<sup>95</sup> Day [192?]:6 f. See also Thornton-Duesbery [192?].

<sup>96</sup> Leon 1940<sup>3</sup>:173 ff.

and dependent on guidance.<sup>97</sup>

The necessity for adequate intelligent expressional activity is closely linked to the principle of sharing. Without 'adequate expressional activity,' there is no 'vital sustained experience of Jesus Christ.' Real knowledge of God emerges from sharing Him with others. 'An experience that is not shared dies or becomes twisted and abnormal.' Expressional activity means 'using one's spiritual muscles to maintain spiritual health.'<sup>98</sup> Intellectual discussions about Oxford Group principles, on the other hand, have often been regarded as contrary to expressional activity, and as such also as inadequate.<sup>99</sup>

Stewardship, team-work, and loyalty are all linked to Christ. 'A surrendered life means a life in which every possession of whatever kind is held in trust to be administered under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.' Stewardship is 'the Christian answer to Communism, which after all is an unguided human attempt to correct certain glaring abuses in the whole realm of possession.' Jesus Christ 'gathered a small group about Him and set the example for all His followers in this respect.' He believed that the highest life is found with others – 'in the group – in His Church.' The supreme loyalty should be to Christ, but the persons that have been used to reveal Christ to us too, are 'persons and groups which demand our loyalty.' It is not enough to assert one's loyalty to Christ, while acting disloyal to 'those who are incarnating His teachings.'<sup>100</sup>

Some of the roots of these doctrinal principles have been traced by Mark O. Guldseth, in his book *Streams. The Flow of Inspiration from Dwight Moody to Frank Buchman* (1982). The title of Guldseth's book is apt, as the ideas do flow into each other, without any regular, theological communication. However, it is possible to draw a few clear lines. In *The Will of God and a Man's Lifework* (1909), Henry B. Wright drew heavily on the writings of Henry Drummond and Robert E. Speer. The moral standards, later known as the four absolutes of the Oxford Group, were put in print by Speer – a Princeton theologian of Mis-

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<sup>97</sup> A theological analysis of sharing is made by Werkström 1963:164–184. A problem in Werkström's thesis is his identification of sharing with private confession, thus emphasizing one of the functions of sharing, while sharing is in fact much more than private confession, and private confession, on the other hand, more than sharing. A corresponding situation is found in the private soul-cure of other traditions, for example in Pietism or Eastern Orthodoxy. Despite this, Werkström has made many clear and relevant observations, such as that forgiveness has its place in the Group Movement, although absolution all the time runs the risk of being absorbed by the confession (p.210). The answer to confession 'is implied, but exists in the form of an experience, which brings both liberation and strength' (p.280).

<sup>98</sup> Day [192?]:7 f.

<sup>99</sup> Sometimes even as a sign of uncleared sin, see Stolpe 1975:72.

<sup>100</sup> Day [192?]:8 ff. It is interesting to note that Communism was regarded as the main enemy as early as in the 1920s. However, this was a rather general opinion. During the early 1930s, E. Stanley Jones (in Swedish 1934) put heavy emphasis on the choice between Christianity and Communism.

sions, and a conservative Presbyterian – in 1902. Buchman had heard Speer preach, but it was through Wright’s book that he found the absolute standards, and adopted them, with a change of order, as absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love.<sup>101</sup> Guldseth shows that Buchman got the practice of silent listening to the voice of God from F. B. Meyer, who, in one of his later books, recognizes this voice of the Spirit of God in ‘the fact that it never alters, never asks questions, but is always direct and explicit. Often it asks for an obedience which is against, or above, what we might naturally feel disposed to give.’<sup>102</sup>

H. A. Walter’s book on *Soul Surgery* (1919), with its principles of personal evangelism: Confidence, Confession, Conviction, Conversion, and Conservation, has been of great importance, too, for the doctrines of the Oxford Group. Walter’s book also reveals that doctrine, strategy, and practical function cannot be separated in the work of the Oxford Group.<sup>103</sup> Though it was not written within the fellowship, *Soul Surgery* was widely circulated in Oxford Group circles, and has as such only one parallel among the older works mentioned here.

Oswald Chambers’ *My Utmost for His Highest* was for a long time regarded as *the* devotional book of the Oxford Group.<sup>104</sup> Its short, daily readings were selected mostly from lectures giving at the Bible Training College in Clapham, 1911–1915, and from talks given in the Y.M.C.A. Huts in Zeitoun in Egypt, 1915–1917.<sup>105</sup> In his introduction to the Swedish edition of another of his books, Sven Stolpe gives Chambers’ biographical background.<sup>106</sup> Chambers’ writings emphasize the mystical union with God, and Christian activity. This mystical strain worked as a complement to the Oxford Group’s heritage from the Holiness Movement, and to many readers of Chambers’ books, his religious

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<sup>101</sup> Speer 1902:35. Wright had put purity before honesty. He listed his sources not just as the Sermon on the Mount, but as follows: ‘Purity – Matthew 5, 27-32; Honesty – John 8, 44-46; Unselfishness – Luke 14, 33; Love – John 15,12’ (Wright 1909:169). Guldseth 1982:94 f., Lean 1985:76. In the Oxford Group, Absolute Purity does not have the superior importance it has in the Holiness Movement.

<sup>102</sup> Meyer 1927:107, quoted in Guldseth 1982:99. An introduction in Swedish is given in Ekstrand 1993:17 ff.

<sup>103</sup> Walter was indebted to Henry Wright and Frank Buchman, and to ‘the pioneer in this field, Henry Drummond.’

<sup>104</sup> See, for example, Arvid Runestam’s preface to the Swedish edition (Chambers 1939:3), which states that to the people of the new revival, it had become a common devotional book as no other, despite the fact that it did not come from its own lines.

<sup>105</sup> Chambers 1937<sup>11</sup>:foreword.

<sup>106</sup> Oswald Chambers (1874–1917), the son of a Scottish Baptist Superintendent, recalled that he had been born anew as a boy, but did not surrender totally until he, then a teacher of Philosophy, heard F. B. Meyer speak of the Holy Spirit, and experienced what he recognised as his Baptism in the Spirit. He worked as an evangelist in Japan, teaching at The Bible Training College, and evangelizing at the front in Egypt (Chambers 1939b:8,12, 17, 19). See also Bloch-Hoell 1964:82, who notes Chambers’ activities in the Pentecostal Mission, a branch of the Holiness Movement, criticizing the new Pentecostalism of ‘spiritual ecstasy tongues.’



concentration must have worked as a corrective to the more extrovert and superficially activist elements in the Oxford Group work.<sup>107</sup>

In his unprinted thesis from 1934, Erdman Harris stated that ‘Lutheran piety, Keswick, and Henry B. Wright, combined to shape the spiritual life of Frank Buchman.’<sup>108</sup> As we have seen above (Ch.II.1.2), the Holiness Movement environment of Keswick was the place of Buchman’s first important vision. The doctrinal result of Buchman’s background and personal experiences was manifested in what he called living ‘by the Cross,’ not by rules or by the book. ‘Living by the Cross’ – a fairly Lutheran expression – is in the categories of the Holiness Movement interpreted as the voluntary ‘abandoning of one’s own will to do the will of God, and the daily experience of Christ’s cleansing and healing power,’ and – inspired by F. B. Meyer – with Guidance as its leading principle.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Chambers 1937<sup>11</sup>:331: ‘In holiness movements and spiritual experience meetings the concentration is apt to be put not on the Cross of Christ, but on the effects of the Cross.’ C. F. Andrews, too, walking in the companionship of Julian of Norwich, St. Francis, and Thomas à Kempis, was ‘profoundly grateful’ to those leaders of the Oxford Group and the Student Christian Movements, who had helped and encouraged him (Andrews 1933:15, 12).

<sup>108</sup> Harris 1934:89. According to Clark 1951:117, there are in general three important sources of Buchman’s thought: 1) the ‘conservative Lutheran pietistic influences of his home and the Pennsylvania German people,’ 2) the protestant evangelistic tradition, represented by the Keswick convention in England, and 3) American collegiate evangelism, conveyed through the Y.M.C.A. The first source is analysed in a rather hasty way, with some both anachronistic and simplified parallels between Philipp Jacob Spener and Frank Buchman, and the analysis cannot be said to ‘make clear that the Oxford Group belongs in the Pietistic tradition,’ though Clark does reduce the importance of the often much over-emphasized fact that Buchman was an ordained, Lutheran minister (Clark 1951:118-120; 26, ‘this connection has played no important role in the performance of what he considers his God-directed task’). The influence of the other two traditions are more carefully examined, and Clark’s reflections on American collegiate evangelism are especially valuable to European readers. Clark 1951:126 owes much to D. C. Macintosh, *Personal Religion*, 1942. Clair M. Dinger stresses – perhaps sharper than anyone before him – that ‘we might show that all the teachings of MRA have their basis in the personal evangelism of Henry Wright.’ Buchman ‘most probably got his emphasis on the “changed life” (at least there is a similarity of terms)’ from Drummond. But it was under Wright that ‘Buchman the disciple learned his lessons well,’ and through Wright came ‘the fundamental theory of the movement.’ Dinger 1961:114, 117 f.

<sup>109</sup> Lean 1985:77. Mestral 1939:291 f. asserts that ‘changer’ is not the exact equivalent of ‘convertir,’ the way it has been used. It means more *and* less, or rather something else, i.e. what Jesus says about denying oneself, taking up one’s cross every day to follow Him. These words are directed towards both believers and non-believers. In his emphasis on personal experience, Buchman corrects some forms of orthodox Lutheran theology, stating – with Luther – that God meets us in the death of Christ, only when we experience his death as our own. However, at the same time, the basic ‘for us’ aspect on

The development of the doctrinal principles may easily be inferred from J. P. Thornton-Duesbery's *The Oxford Group. A Brief Account of its Principles and Growth* (1947). In the first place, it is obvious that the thoughts and work of Frank Buchman play a much greater part in Thornton-Duesbery's book, than in Day's earlier pamphlet.<sup>110</sup> Secondly, the national and global perspectives are emphasized. This is said to have been the case already from the start: 'By 1921 [...] Frank Buchman had already become convinced that a world awakening was God's plan, with the change of whole peoples and nations as a definite promise.'<sup>111</sup> It is stated that the fallen human nature needs to be changed, which is possible by the power of Christ. The need for change in men and in nations is emphasized, but the relation between these two kinds of change is not explained.<sup>112</sup> Instead of openly admitting the need for social or ideological change in order to solve social and ideological problems respectively, the meaning of 'change' was altered in two ways: first, in the mid-1930s from an exclusively personal use to one signifying both a personal and a national change (more or less dependent on personal change: Social personalism), second, from 1943, the interpretative framework of 'change' was altered from an exclusively religious interpretation into a mixed religious and ideological interpretation, including a political change partly independent of personal change.

The Oxford Group is presented by Thornton-Duesbery as 'a living organism,' including 'a close-knit and highly efficient organisation.' On the one hand, the Group had worked in and through the Christian churches. On the other, it had 'pushed forward the frontiers of faith among the millions outside the scope of organised religion.'<sup>113</sup> The principles of the Group are a change of heart, the guidance of God, and the building of a Christian force. In the presentation of these principles, the speeches and actions of Frank D. Buchman are used as central sources. The aim and purpose of the Group is said always to have been

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the Cross is omitted. See Althaus 1966:28.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Clark 1951:15–17, 35: 'The Oxford Group is peculiarly the product of its founder,' 36 et passim. Thornton-Duesbery and subsequent writers are obviously dependent on Howard 1946. Our point is that the visions and strategies of Frank Buchman were of decisive importance from the very beginning, while Buchman's doctrinal, functional, and historiographical importance for the work grew heavily during the Second World War (in England and the U.S.A.) and after the war (in, for example, Scandinavia, and especially in Germany).

<sup>111</sup> Thornton-Duesbery 1947:6. This might to a great extent be the truth; see, for example, [copy of] Buchman to Gerhard Heine in Berlin, 1921, Dec. 14, NLC: 'I count upon you heavily to be one of the great spiritual reconstructing forces in Germany, which is her greatest need.' However, our point is that these national and global perspectives were not emphasized, and in most cases not even mentioned, in the 1920s.

<sup>112</sup> Thornton-Duesbery 1947:8 f.

<sup>113</sup> Thornton-Duesbery 1947:7.

that these Christian truths and experiences should be *applied* on the widest possible scale; that not merely personal, but also national and world problems should find their solution in a sufficiently dynamic religious experience related to the real needs of the world, and that a world Christian force adequate to overcome the onslaught of militant materialism should be created, and ultimately that the Christian ideology should be implanted as paramount in every nation.<sup>114</sup>

It is obvious that with the application of the strategy of Moral Re-Armament and its subsequent ideological interpretation followed a shift of emphasis from a fellowship on the basis of sin to one on a basis of personal and national change. Instead of efforts to form a third alternative above all the isms of the 1930s – including a fight against materialism and a clear borderline to humane idealism – a political idealism is being consciously formed, fighting for democracy.<sup>115</sup>

Thornton-Duesbery's account further presents a short historical outline of the Oxford Group – in itself a new element in its presentation of itself in the form of booklets and pamphlets. Compared to the historical accounts in the older propagandistic books of Begbie and Russell, the emphasis is not put on stories of life-changers and changed lives, but on big campaigns with thousands of people, and on quotations from politicians and bishops.<sup>116</sup> This development does not involve a stronger emphasis on the doctrinal teaching of Frank Buchman. Instead, the emphasis is put more on his visions and strategies, and less on the doctrinal background and setting of the Oxford Group. Thus the visions and strategies of Frank Buchman determine the doctrine and theology in a more immediate way, and the personal experience of guidance is made to conform to the guidance of the team, and to the guidance of Buchman himself.

Still, the basic, personal experiences of change and guidance were the same after the Second World War as before.<sup>117</sup> But the doctrinal perspective, the setting, and the motivation had varied, and a shift of the main points is also noticeable. Just as with the visions and strategies of the Oxford Group, the development of doctrine and theology may be described as a change of interpretation, not as a change of doctrinal and theological principles as such.

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<sup>114</sup> Thornton-Duesbery 1947:13.

<sup>115</sup> On the views of social personalism regarding a theocratic democracy, see Ch. II.3.7.3

<sup>116</sup> Thornton-Duesbery 1947:17 ff.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Eister 1950:11, who finds that two premises in 'the ideology of the movement and its founder' provide the 'Leitmotif' throughout the development from Soul Surgery to Moral Re-Armament: 1) 'the conviction that the world of men is sinful and in need of spiritual regeneration which is to be accomplished through the changed lives of individuals and only in that way,' and 2) 'a belief in the direct and detailed guidance of God accorded those individuals who have "surrendered" their wills to the point of listening for the divine commands.' Our point is that no ideological use or interpretation was made of this premises until 1943.

## II.2.3. *The Oxford Group Theologians and Philosophers*

### II.2.3.1. British Theologians and Philosophers

#### *B. H. Streeter*

Burnett Hillman Streeter (1874–1937), from 1933 Provost of Queen’s College in Oxford, was a well-known theologian and New Testament scholar. Like many theologians won over by the Oxford Group, Streeter was a modernist, and a notable one, as well as a noteworthy Christian apologist.<sup>118</sup> He had for a long time believed in ‘corporate thinking,’ practising group studies as early as in 1912.<sup>119</sup> After joining the fellowship in 1934, he soon became something of a theological figure-head in the Oxford Group, and his reputation as such has not faded. Streeter’s main work in the spirit of the Oxford Group, *The God who Speaks* (1936), was reprinted in an abridged edition as late as 1971, and a photo of Frank Buchman together with Streeter is placed on the back cover of Garth Lean’s biography on Buchman (1985), though Streeter’s name does not appear on more than six pages in the book.<sup>120</sup>

In his Prologue to *The God who Speaks*, Streeter found the facts and considerations in his earlier works still important, ‘and the conclusions drawn from them valid.’ But during the last two years he had seen more clearly that ‘certain limitations are inherent in any purely intellectual approach to problems of this kind.’<sup>121</sup> Streeter’s greatest concern was to give spiritual, theological, and exegetical reason for and legitimacy to the experience of guidance according to God’s plan. The aim of his book was ‘to show reason for the belief that [...] this voice within ought to be regarded as an authentic communication from the Divine.’ The method is ‘a historical study of that unique development of religion of which the Bible is our record [...] illuminated by [...] phenomena exhibited in the lives of religious men through all the ages and in the present day.’<sup>122</sup> The conditions are: ‘absolute devotion or surrender of the self to the Divine,’ ‘self-knowledge, and the consequent admission of failure,’ ‘a fellowship, within which mutual challenge, mutual encouragement, and mutual confession

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<sup>118</sup> Stephenson 1984:18, 154. Hastings 1987:231 places Streeter in a group of scholars ‘of immense biblical and patristic learning but of rather little sustained theological skill’ with ‘no time for miracles.’

<sup>119</sup> Thomsen 1937:274 (on the book *Foundations*); 277 (on Streeter’s Oxford Group work).

<sup>120</sup> On Streeter and the Oxford Group, see Thornhill 1943, 1986:103–121.

<sup>121</sup> Streeter 1936:1 f. Thornhill 1943:49 f. – ‘He was not ashamed of his books. He believed his conclusions were valid. he believed they were important. But they were not enough. “I have come to realize in the last few years that this work of relating religion to the new knowledge, important as it is, is not the thing that the world most needs.”’

<sup>122</sup> Streeter 1936:3 f.

of failure are easy.' Entrance into such a life always involves 'some measure of suffering, sacrifice, or humiliation.' Streeter found 'an inner coherence' between guidance, inspiration, and conscience on one hand, and the idea of God's plan on the other.<sup>123</sup> The effort to a Biblical, theological interpretation of Frank Buchman's vision of God's plan was perhaps Streeter's most important contribution to the doctrine and theology of the Oxford Group.

The function of reason is explained as dependent on the attainment of 'the wisdom that comes with, and from, a religious apprehension of the divine personality.'<sup>124</sup> In scientific matters, this wisdom 'is likely to manifest itself mainly as an enhancement of the individual's natural insight and intelligence.'<sup>125</sup> Streeter's encounter with the Oxford Group did not mean or lead to any theological conversion, but to a personal, spiritual communication and fellowship, which was new to him. The Oxford Group did not change the contents of his theology. But it added the doctrine of God's guidance, and it changed the function of his whole outlook. B. H. Streeter illustrates the fact that the doctrines of the Oxford Group formed a practical theology of action, rather independent of classical Christian dogma. On the other hand, Streeter's influence on this theology of action was of significant importance. Placed in the framework of theological modernism, the undogmatical attitude of the Oxford Group was strengthened, and made retroactive, with a heavy emphasis on the active instrumentalism of guidance as part of God's plan. Streeter travelled with Frank Buchman to Germany, and took part in the work of the international team in the Danish campaign, but his time in the fellowship was cut off through his sudden death by accident in 1937.<sup>126</sup>

For Continental and Scandinavian use, an article by Streeter on Luther, Erasmus, and the Oxford Group was translated into and reprinted in several languages. Its message was that the Oxford Group was a new reformation, and it stated that every Christian not only should, but also could fulfil the highest claims of life: The Oxford Group gives to our days what Luther gave to his. It does not want to underestimate the sacraments, or leave their administration to unordained persons. A cultural, reserved attitude towards the Oxford Group would not have been the attitude of the practical man Luther, but that of the intellectual Erasmus.<sup>127</sup> From a conservative, Lutheran point of view this was denounced as a moralistic and modernistic interpretation of Luther, and its effect seemed often rather the reverse of the intended one.

In a statement prepared by Streeter shortly before his death, he wrote:

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<sup>123</sup> Streeter 1936:21, 167.

<sup>124</sup> Streeter 1936:191.

<sup>125</sup> Streeter 1936:175 f.

<sup>126</sup> See Lean 1985:236, 255 f., and our Ch. VI.

<sup>127</sup> Streeter 1935 (Danish: 'Luther og Oxford-Gruppen', *Dagens Nyheder* 1935, Aug. 14, also in *Oxford i Danmark II*:38 ff.), Swedish: 'Luther, Erasmus och Oxfordgruppen', *NDA* 1935, Oct. 26).

I saw how largely the moral energies of Christianity were demobilised, partly through difference of opinion on points of doctrine or church organisation, but still more by failure to realise in actual life the religious and moral ideals which Christians are unanimous in professing. The Oxford Group is recalling the churches to their proper task of saving the souls of nations as well as individuals [...] Modern civilisation can only be saved by a moral revival. But for this it would suffice if every tenth or hundredth person were changed. For each such person raises the level of those whom he touches in the home, in business, and in public affairs.<sup>128</sup>

*L. W. Grensted*

Laurence William Grensted (1884–1964) was Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of Christian Religion at Oxford, and known as a Liberal theologian.<sup>129</sup> In *The Person of Christ* (1933), Grensted focuses on personal experience as a necessary prerequisite for the task of ‘the Christian interpreter,’ which is ‘to seek the Divine guidance in all that he writes,’ objecting to ‘the ordinary analytical procedure.’<sup>130</sup> It is

a commonplace of the history of doctrine that a system of theology is to be tested by its soteriology, the place which it gives to the Cross and to that which was wrought upon the Cross for man. But this means that the theologian himself must be subject to the same test. He is incompetent for his task unless Christ’s work of redemption is being wrought upon him and is the living centre of his life.<sup>131</sup>

If this is not the case, ‘the critic would have a right to complain that he was being put off with second-hand opinion based upon second-hand history.’<sup>132</sup>

Grensted’s Christology is not of the modernist kind: ‘If we mean what we say when we speak of Jesus as God, then this must be the key to all that we write.’<sup>133</sup> The understanding of the Christological formulae must begin by understanding ‘the living experience in which that faith has issued, and my only claim to write at all must rest not upon any learning, but upon my own sharing of that experience.’<sup>134</sup> Having stated the importance of ‘the historicity of the basic facts of Christianity,’ Grensted proclaims, that ‘fact as fact means nothing at all [...] apart from the living and personal experience in which it takes real-

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<sup>128</sup> Howard 1946:34 ff.

<sup>129</sup> Stephenson 1984:137. Grensted was made known to the readers of Oxford Group books through Russell 1932, Ch. XIX.

<sup>130</sup> Grensted 1933:4, 18.

<sup>131</sup> Grensted 1933:4.

<sup>132</sup> Grensted 1933:5.

<sup>133</sup> Grensted 1933:7.

<sup>134</sup> Grensted 1933:9.

ity,' which is 'the corporate experience of the Christian fellowship.'<sup>135</sup> Through his Oxford Group experience Grensted had found that

the keynote of preaching is in something personally felt and experienced, and that the moment it becomes official it is dead. This does not mean that theology is untrue, but that it has no life unless it is related to personal experience. This new impulse of personal experience in preaching came to me from contact with the Group.<sup>136</sup>

Unlike B. H. Streeter, Grensted was sometimes openly critical to some doctrinal dictums in the Oxford Group. The saint always, in his achievement of surrender, finds himself unsundered, and the Christian life can never rest in any fulfilment or attainment. Thus, 'there can be no "maximum experience of Christ", which is achieved, complete, and self-satisfied, until man comes at last to the Beatific Vision.' The experience is always a quest, not an achievement: 'Even love itself must pass out into the darkness, that it may be born again.'<sup>137</sup>

The emphasis on guidance is quite different from Streeter's. Grensted states that the belief in guidance is necessary to all Christians. But this does not imply

that guidance must necessarily make all things easy for us, that it will release us from the necessity of guarding against human fallibility and error, and, in short, from the healthy necessity of taking trouble for ourselves. The power and the peace of God are indeed known among men, but they were first made plain upon a Cross.<sup>138</sup>

Neither is Grensted's theology a theology of action in the common Oxford Group sense of the word. To him, surrender means action, 'but action is its outcome rather than its essence. Its centre is [...] prayer.'<sup>139</sup> And the loyalty to the 'fellowship of some group' can never be final. It has its meaning and strength only as a loyalty to Christ, 'and in Him to the Church that shall be, of which our shattered Churches and broken fellowships are but shadows that pass.'<sup>140</sup>

The Oxford Group experience obviously challenged and, to a certain extent, contributed to change the contents of Grensted's theology, and not just its function. On his final page, he concludes that 'it is clear that the Jesus of whom

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<sup>135</sup> Grensted 1933:12; 52: experience is 'the fundamental Apostolical Succession upon which all organised and official modes of representing that succession must needs depend for their validity.'

<sup>136</sup> Russell 1932:290.

<sup>137</sup> Grensted 1933:98.

<sup>138</sup> Grensted 1933:51.

<sup>139</sup> Grensted 1933:263.

<sup>140</sup> Grensted 1933:266 f. Cf. the former President of the Modern Churchmen's Union, Dean W. R. Matthews 1969:126, who states that Grensted had been 'captivated' by the Oxford Group, and his theological precision impaired.

we have found traces is very different from the Jesus of an ethical Liberal Protestantism.' He is 'far nearer to the theological Messianic Christ of some recent critics, such as Sir Edwyn Hoskyns and Mr. Davey in this country, and Gerhard Kittel and Hermann Sasse in Germany.'<sup>141</sup>

Though Grensted shared the personalistic attitude of the Oxford Group, and expressed it in a famous statement at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York: 'it is by individuals, and not by ideals, that the world must be saved,'<sup>142</sup> his time in the Oxford Group did not last. He took part in the Canadian campaign in 1933 with enthusiasm, but in 1934 he left the active fellowship. Lean quotes a private memo by Archbishop Lang, which states that Grensted had become disturbed by 'the explosive self-confidence of some of the younger whole-time members insisting that their method is practically the only one by which a man can become a Christian.' He would 'continue to be in full sympathy' with the main purposes of the Oxford Group<sup>143</sup> – i.e. being a Group revivalist without the full and working fellowship. This is confirmed in a letter from Grensted to Frank Buchman, 1936:

I did want to see you, for though it is now clear to me that what I believe about 'guidance' and what I have found in a whole series of people as to the dangers of team pressure do make it really difficult for me to work in simply and naturally with you all [...] am very sure that what you are doing, and what I, more feebly am trying to do for the Kingdom, both have a place [...]<sup>144</sup>

During his days in the Oxford Group, Grensted wrote several prefaces to books on or by the Group. After his leaving the fellowship, in 1935, he wrote the foreword to Robert H. Murray's *Group Movements throughout the Ages*, expressing his special appreciation of the chapter on the Oxford Group, concluding with the hope that many would learn from the book 'how great a heritage the Group Movement of to-day has entered.'<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Grensted 1933:286. Hoskyns concluded in his article *The Christ of the Synoptic Gospels* (1926), that "the characteristic features of Catholic piety have their origin in Our Lord's interpretation of His own Person," rather than in a transformation of early Christian attitudes under the decisive impact of one form of another of Middle East paganism,' and in 1933 he translated Karl Barth's *Commentary on Romans* (Hastings 1987:235, 294). Bebbington 1986:503 sees Grensted's *The Person of Christ* as 'a distinctively Groupist Christology.' I would rather characterize it as a distinctively Christological Groupism.

<sup>142</sup> Grensted [1933]:[3].

<sup>143</sup> Lean 1985:193 f.

<sup>144</sup> Grensted to Buchman 1936, Aug. 2 (Morris Martin's research notes, M.R.A. archives, NLC).

<sup>145</sup> See the forewords to *What is the Oxford Group?* 1933, Shoemaker 1933:7–8, and Murray 1935:IX f. Grensted was also of some importance for the Oxford Group's presentation on the B.B.C. broadcast, see Wolfe 1984:124.



Geoffrey Allen (1902–1982), later Bishop of Derby, was a Fellow and Chaplain of Lincoln College in Oxford, considered as modernist in theology. His books from the early 1930s – *Tell John*, *He that Cometh*, and *Christ the Victorious* – were confessional, edifying, and essayistic, but not very theological. However, Allen’s personal growth is of great interest in our context. In the preface to *Tell John*, he expressed his gratitude to ‘a group of friends,’ and their ‘indebtedness to Karl Barth, and other present leaders of continental theology.’<sup>146</sup> In *He that Cometh*, Allen’s gratitude is directed towards the ‘fellowship with other disciples in the Oxford Group Movement,’ but even here, Barth is quoted.<sup>147</sup> At the same time, Allen was influenced by both the radical objectivism of Barthian theology, and the radical personalism in the Oxford Group.<sup>148</sup> These influences changed his image of God:

The fault of the modern Christian world is not that it has too much theology, nor that it has a formal and dead theology, but rather that it has an untrue theology. Modern theology has taken away the reminder of the anger of God, and has pictured God as an amiable figure, who is allowed to rebuke sin and cannot heal it.<sup>149</sup>

The theological result was that Allen ‘moved far on from Major’s Modernism,’ while he remained in association with the Modern Churchmen’s Union, advocating what he termed ‘a Penitent Liberalism.’<sup>150</sup> His books, especially *He that Cometh*, won great influence even among theologians, for example, the Swedish professor and future bishop Arvid Runestam. In *Christ the Victorious* (1935), Allen was not any longer, according to his own words, ‘completely in harmony with the inner team of the Group.’ Its ‘rather greater stress on freedom and service and gentleness and mercy’ was ‘letting down the more intensive stress on challenge and aggressive evangelism in the Group.’<sup>151</sup> In the same year, Allen left for Canton, and did not return to the fellowship of the Oxford Group.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Allen 1932:Preface. Barth is quoted, p.35, and on p.111, both Barth and Brun ner.

<sup>147</sup> Allen 1933<sup>2</sup>:Preface, 34, 202.

<sup>148</sup> This combination was used in the advertising for the Danish version of *He that Cometh*, which was understood as Allen’s way through Barthian theology into the Oxford Group Movement (see back cover of Russell 1933b). This combination seems to have been frequent especially in Britain. In a letter to Bishop Bell, 1940, Nov. 12, Bishop Henson of Durham accused him of being ‘influenced by Karl Barth and Buchman,’ Jasper 1967:248.

<sup>149</sup> Allen 1933<sup>2</sup>:167.

<sup>150</sup> Stephenson 1984:180.

<sup>151</sup> G. Allen to H. O. Lange [1935; wrongly dated 1933 on the manuscript] March 19 (KBK Ny Kgl. Saml. 3736-4<sup>o</sup>).

<sup>152</sup> See also Lean 1985:436.

In some contemporary analyses, Geoffrey Allen and L. W. Grensted are exposed as representatives of ‘two sides of the Movement.’<sup>153</sup> Erdman Harris groups Allen together with popular writers like Forde, Russell, and Shoemaker as one of ‘the most dualistic Buchmanite thinkers,’ those thinkers who strongly emphasize the difference between ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural’ in their approach to divine guidance. In *He that Cometh*, the view is ‘slightly less dualistic.’ Grensted is placed in a contrasting group with ‘a somewhat more Augustinian absolutist position’ with ‘no excessive dualism, and no undue emphasis on miracle.’<sup>154</sup> The historical value of these judgments is weakened by the fact that Allen and Grensted both left the active fellowship as early as in 1935.

### *Philip Leon*

Philip Leon (1895–1974) was 1923–1954 Lecturer in charge of the Department of Classics at the University College in Leicester, and 1954–1960, Professor at the same university. In the Oxford Group propaganda he was described as ‘a Jew [...] who was converted to Christianity by the Oxford Group.’<sup>155</sup> His *The Philosophy of Courage or The Oxford Group Way* (1939) was dedicated to Frank Buchman. In a personal note on his work, Leon added that this philosophy was just ‘one individual’s formulation of the experience of God.’ Still, his experience was presented as though to be a common one, and the manuscript had been checked by a number of people. Last, but not least, the book was written ‘with the help of the Quiet Time.’ His work was ‘a group *result*,’ but ‘an individual *product*.’ The real answer to the demand for a philosophy of the Oxford Group was: ‘Try the Oxford Group way, share, formulate your own philosophy and compare it with the one offered here, and then you will know.’<sup>156</sup> Leon’s work contains mostly traditional Oxford Group teaching, with the emphasis on guidance and sharing within a personalistic framework. ‘The sin of depersonalisation’ is dealt with in a chapter on ‘Changing Society.’ The outlook may be characterized as idealistic, utopian, and perfectionistic.

Leon describes his change as reflected in his philosophy. Where before he spoke of ‘Goodness or God,’ he now speaks of ‘God or absolute love, wisdom, patience, etc.,’ and instead of ‘the subject,’ he now uses ‘personality’ or ‘the person.’ Where he had used ‘absolute’ in ‘the Hegelian (?) sense of “all-inclusive”,’ he now used it in ‘the Platonic and Oxford Group sense of pure or perfect.’<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> R. H. S. Crossman in *Oxford and the Groups* 1934:116.

<sup>154</sup> Harris 1934:99, 103, 105, 187, 204 f., 210.

<sup>155</sup> See, for example, Howard 1941:[95].

<sup>156</sup> Leon 1940<sup>3</sup>:219 ff.

<sup>157</sup> Leon 1940<sup>3</sup>:216 f. See also Leon 1939:140 f: ‘What idealism and contemporary civilization lack and what will save them is not the Christianity which is a species of Platonism, but Christ. [...] After Plato there is only Christ. In that statement is summed up the measure of Plato’s Greatness.’ For a criticism of Leon 1939, see Carpenter 1939.

Leon's popular attempt at a systematic presentation was for a few years used in intellectual circles of the Oxford Group, where there was a demand for a philosophical foundation for the work, and reprinted several times, but has since been forgotten. He tried to influence writers like Aldous Huxley.<sup>158</sup> Leon made no use of the fundamental idea of Moral Re-Armament. His name is not even mentioned in Leon's biography.

### II.2.3.2. Continental Theology

#### *Emil Brunner*

Emil Brunner (1889–1966) was professor of theology in Zurich, and a Swiss Reformed pastor. He met Group revivalism at the 'Tagung' (House-party) at Ermatingen in Switzerland in August 1932, and in his first article on the Oxford Group, he told of his experiences. He had come to Ermatingen as a critical observer, conscious of his theological responsibilities, rejecting especially the pragmatic attitude to faith, which he had noticed in parts of the Group movement – an attitude which ignored the question of veracity, regarding the contents of faith with indifference, if only the faith was active.<sup>159</sup> But the close contact with the movement convinced him that justification by grace solely, and the power of the Holy Spirit were the main points in its preaching. Its effects were caused by the strong position of the cure of souls, founded on the identification by the spiritual guide with the confessants, as a sinner to sinners. Where preaching turned out badly, this personal way had still undreamt-of possibilities.<sup>160</sup> Despite the fact that Brunner meant that his own theology was not in any need of change, and was better than that of the Group, he realized that he had much to learn for his own part and for his office as professor of Theology. He wanted to keep in touch with the Group people, not to become an Oxfordian, but a better pastor.<sup>161</sup>

In *Um die Erneuerung der Kirche* (1934), Brunner wrote a special chapter on 'Die Gruppenbewegung als Frage an die Kirche.' Karl Barth had been right in regarding such movements as symptoms of illness, but Brunner saw them at the same time as processes of healing.<sup>162</sup> The invisibility of the Church was not to be comprehended in such a way that the new life was made invisible. Luther's vision of the priesthood of all believers had to be realized.<sup>163</sup> The true evangelic

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<sup>158</sup> According to Stolpe 1942d:438, Huxley – through Leon – came into contact with the Group Movement, was strongly impressed, but declined its foundation: the personal reality of God.

<sup>159</sup> Brunner 1934:5, 7. This edition is a separate reprint of Brunner 1932b, originally published in two different issues of *Kirchenblatt für die reformierte Schweiz*.

<sup>160</sup> Brunner 1934:10 f., 13.

<sup>161</sup> Brunner 1934:31.

<sup>162</sup> Brunner 1934b:33 f.

<sup>163</sup> Brunner 1934b:42, 36.

element (i.e. not the Enthusiastic-Methodistic one) in the Group Movement needed to be united with the heritage of the Reformers. This was possible, as the Group did not want to give the Church a new doctrine, but to make the doctrine fruitful.<sup>164</sup>

Early in the autumn 1932, a Swiss group had sent Frank Buchman a letter containing several critical points of view. Brunner's emphasis was 'of this kind: how can the Kingdom of God be furthered by unsound, unbiblical teaching like that of S[am] S[hoemaker]?'<sup>165</sup> Frank Buchman's response to Brunner's rather positive, but academically critical attitude, was rude. Acting on an entirely personal level, Buchman was not open to discussion of theological matters, often being inaccurate at the present stage of personal development. Recognizing the real spiritual needs of a person, he interpreted the suggestion of critical theological discussion as an escape from the urgent personal situation or decision. He lacked understanding of the position and responsibilities of a state professor of Theology on the European continent, and he had no room for Brunner's separation of personal and official matters:

I think your job now is not to criticise the Groups. You are not fully grasping all the setting of the work of different people in the Groups. You write about Sam Shoemaker. His 'Realising [sic] Religion' was written before he studied any theology, immediately after he finished his university course. And the book was written to meet the needs of a very modern person who has come into an experience of Christ. You must ask yourself the question, when have you brought such a modern person without any form of belief into a living experience? [...] There are some people in the Groups who know what the real Gospel is, and what is more, who are living it in their own lives and, by God's grace, have been able to pass it on to other. Criticise yourself. Forget Sam Shoemaker and Ferdinand Laun. [...] You did not live the Gospel you preached, while Sam Shoemaker's Gospel was not as rich as yours, still he lived it more thoroughly. [...] You stop trying to correct the Groups. You live this life yourself. Propagate it in your own home, in your theological hall, among your theological professors, and do not damage the Groups by your preconceived ideas. [...] Let the Holy Spirit teach you in guidance [...] and you must live in the hope that God will change Sam Shoemaker so completely that he will even write better books than yours.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Brunner 1934b:45.

<sup>165</sup> Draft of Brunner and others to Buchman 1932 [before Oct. 8] (ZZ). On Brunner's attitude towards German Group work, see Ch. VI.2.3.

<sup>166</sup> Buchman to Brunner 1932, Oct. 8 (ZZ). Shoemaker's book was criticized by LeSeur 1934<sup>3</sup>:1, as 'recht mager und unbiblisch,' and by the Swiss Lüscher 1934:11 as pragmatic and influenced by William James. Cf. Ernst zur Nieden in Laun & Krumhaar 1935:26, who recommends Shoemaker's book (in German: *Religion der Wirklichkeit*) to everyone 'der eingehender sich mit den hier gegebenen theologischen Fragen beschäftigen und dabei den Blickpunkt über die deutschen Verhältnisse hinaus richten will.' See also Spoerri 1971:124 f. On Shoemaker and his *Realizing Religion*, see Harris 1978:71, who

Brunner was shocked. His difficulties in handling the separation of personal and official matters were obviously neglected. According to Buchman, there ought to be no separation at all. While Buchman showed great spiritual sensibility in stating that ‘a modern person who has come into an experience of Christ’ was not ripe for theological distinctions, he did not understand that Brunner was totally unreceptive to the suggestion that a thorough, spiritual change could make a good theologian out of someone lacking the necessary, theoretical qualifications:

My dear Emil, if the Holy Spirit is once in control of our thinking as well as of our lives, it is remarkable how intelligent He is in giving our theology its correct perspective. [...] I am grateful for all your suggestions, but our whole principle of living in the Fellowship is that it is the Holy Spirit who must be the deciding factor in our actions, checking with those who will live the full discipline of the Spirit. [...] It is about the first time, in all the many criticisms I have had, that I have been thought un-evangelical and un-biblical; the criticism usually is that I lean too heavily on the other side [...] <sup>167</sup>

Brunner kept in close contact with his Swiss friend, the Romanist Professor Theophil Spoerri, who, quoting St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, defended ‘die Amerikaner’ and their ‘quality of life,’ and emphasized that ‘das ist der Dienst, den die Gruppe tut: daß sie uns immer daran erinnert, daß es auf den Botschafter, nicht nur auf die Botschaft ankommt. Nennst Du das Amerikanismus?’ <sup>168</sup>

Brunner’s encounter with Group Revivalism did not change his theological principles, but it reinforced the importance of personal soul-cure and personal fellowship, and his apologetic direction was strengthened. A theological consequence was *Natur und Gnade* (1934), where Brunner emphasized natural theology as a point of connection between God and man. Karl Barth answered in *Nein!* (1934), and – explicitly criticizing the Oxford Group – in *Kirche oder Gruppe?* (1936). <sup>169</sup>

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correctly notes that Shoemaker’s books ‘quite rapidly went overseas, especially to people being touched by his friends in the Oxford Group,’ and Woolverton 1983:53, on Shoemaker’s part in ‘the coming together of low church, Episcopalian evangelicalism, the Oxford Group of Frank N. D. Buchman and Alcoholics Anonymous.’ On Shoemaker completely leaving the Oxford Group in 1941, p. 57, also Belden 1976:380 ff.

<sup>167</sup> Buchman to Brunner 1932, Oct. 14 (ZZ). Buchman’s response to Brunner’s criticism was superficial. Brunner’s point was that Buchman’s theology, while Biblicistic in form and method, was partly un-Biblical in its contents.

<sup>168</sup> Spoerri 1975:126 ff. (to ‘Lieber E.’, February, 1934).

<sup>169</sup> See further Busch 1978<sup>3</sup>:289 on the final discussion between Brunner and Barth at Schloß Auenstein in January, 1936, Schjorring 1976:68 ff., and de Loor 1986:177 ff. Also Barth to Dietrich Bonhoeffer 1936, Oct. 14 (Bonhoeffer 1959:289): ‘Ich denke an die Religiös-Sozialen, an die Wuppertaler Pietisten im Jahrzehnt vor dem Kirchenkampf, zuletzt an die Oxforder samt Emil Brunner. [...] eines gemeinsamen Nenners herausgebildet hat: Resignation gegenüber dem ursprünglichen christologisch-

In a less noted article in 1935, Brunner explained that much of his earlier writings on the Group had been written from the spectator's viewpoint. He described his former position as the one of 'der Schriftgelehrte, der das Wirken des lebendigen Gottesgeistes nicht erkennt, weil es anders ist, als er es sich vorausdachte.' Brunner had not been prepared to get himself compromised.<sup>170</sup> He developed his views in *Die Kirchen, die Gruppenbewegung und die Kirche Jesu Christi* (1936): the Church was to be found where Christ was present through his Word and the Holy Ghost. Only this presence of Christ was essential to the Church, while the ministry, the orders and sacraments, etc., only belonged to her. Each ecclesiastical institution was relative, and at some distance from the ideal. Being neither Church, nor 'Gemeinschaft' or sect, the Group was working through all churches and denominations for the shaping of the true Church of Jesus Christ. In the Group Movement, Brunner recognized the spontaneous, spiritual life of primitive Christianity, characterized not only by faith in the Holy Ghost, but by experience as well. Its mission was to bring the denominations back to this primitive Church.<sup>171</sup>

In his theological anthropology work, *Der Mensch im Widerspruch* (1937), Brunner found that 'Die Sünde Adams ist die Zerstörung der Gemeinschaft mit Gott, die zugleich die Zerreiung dieser Verbundenheit ist, das Wider-Gott-Sein, das zugleich ein Wider-einander-sein ist [...] Wir sind in der Sünde solidarisch verbunden, gerade so, wie wir in der Schpfung solidarisch verbunden sind, nur mit dem Unterschied, da wir eben – das gehrt zur Snde – diese Solidaritt in der Snde verleugnen.'<sup>172</sup>

In a critical report on the Life and Work conference at Oxford, 1937, Brunner emphasized the need for contact between the Life and Work movement and the Oxford movement, and presented a new ecumenical programme, 'Die Christliche Weltoffensive,' with an ecumenical apostolate for evangelization.<sup>173</sup> In this context, Brunner criticized the Oxford Group for their 'groupism,' i.e. 'the idea that the Oxfordgroup [sic] is *the* answer to the problems of the world,' instead of understanding that Christ had 'other agencies as well as he has living members of his body which are not in the Oxfordgroup, even such who for this or that reason are among the critics of the group.'<sup>174</sup>

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eschatologischen Ansatz irgendwelcher (faktisch immer abstrakten!) Verwirklichungen in einem dem Menschen eigenen Raum.' From within the Group, a theology of the future was supposed to grow from Brunner's synthesis of Group experience and dialectical theology (J. F. Laun to Brunner 1934, Sept. 8; ZZ).

<sup>170</sup> E. Brunner: 'Das Aergernis der Oxford-Gruppenbewegung' (Neue Zrcher Zeitung 1935, Nov. 9). On the influence of this article, see, for example, Christen 1936:9 ff

<sup>171</sup> Brunner 1936:5 f., 43 ff., 47 f., 39, 52 f

<sup>172</sup> Brunner 1937:134 f.

<sup>173</sup> 'Versuch einer kritisch wegweisenden Besinnung ber die Arbeit von Life and Work im Rckblick auf Oxford 1937. Von Prof. E. Brunner, Zrich. Januar 1938 (Runestam Coll.II). See further Jarlert 1989:139 ff.

<sup>174</sup> Copy of E. Brunner to F. Buchman 1937, Nov. 8 (ZZ).

In *Wahrheit als Begegnung* (1938), Brunner sharpened his personalistic theology, much due to his experiences of Group revivalism. In this book, based on lectures given at Upsala in 1937, faith is defined as ‘eine reale Personveränderung, ja eine Personumwandlung,’ and the Church as ‘ein rein und ausnahmslos *personal* verstandener Begriff.’<sup>175</sup> As Brunner stated that the Church was a pure personal community, and no institution – it just had institutions – he found the institutional Church to be a consequence of a catholicizing decline. While Brunner’s theological understanding of, for example, Church and sacraments, was subordinated to his theological personalism (‘the personal correspondence’), his methodical approach tended more towards a critical discussion of certain matters in theology, and less towards personalism as a superior principle of attitude.<sup>176</sup>

Brunner’s inability to accept personalism as a superior principle of attitude was made still clearer by his views in political matters, where he emphasizes that the state was not like, for example, matrimony, a ‘Schöpfungsordnung,’ but a ‘Sündenordnung’ – a ‘gottgegebene Ordnung sündiger Wirklichkeit.’ Without sin, no state was needed, and no state could exist. Sin was part of the essence of the state.<sup>177</sup> As Brunner together with the Barthian wing shared this negative view of political orders as such, he was unable of seeing the state as a positive instrument of God, and he had hardly any room for a personalistic attitude in the change of political institutions.<sup>178</sup> This was to a great extent due to his theological-ethical interpretation of society, and his judging political ideologies by their relation to the Christian faith.<sup>179</sup> During the war, one of Brunner’s

<sup>175</sup> Brunner 1938:116, 122. H. H. Brunner 1986:91: ‘Die Aufgabe, die ihm sein großer Schwedischer Kollege und Freund A. Runestam stellte, veranlaßte ihn, das in seinem Schaffen zentrale Thema aufzugreifen, dessen Entfaltung er als seinen originärsten Beitrag zur zeitgenössischen Theologie verstand: Wahrheit und Begegnung.’

<sup>176</sup> Brunner 1938:136 ff. An illuminating example of the contrary attitude is J. F. Laun’s un-theological answer to Barth’s *Kirche oder Gruppe?*, entitled *Die seelsorgerliche Haltung*, being ‘das eigentlich Wesentliche der Gruppenbewegung,’ Laun 1936:324. On Brunner’s ‘Urkirchenromantik,’ see Zahrnt 1988<sup>6</sup>:85; further Jarlert 1989:136 f. Even Barth emphasizes a personalism as ‘God’s objective self-manifestation in revelation and salvation comes to the creature in the form of personal address,’ though strictly theological and theocentric, with a strong eschatological tendency, see Hunsinger 1991:5, 42.

<sup>177</sup> Brunner 1932:430 ff., 1935:10, 12.

<sup>178</sup> In Jarlert 1989:137 f., this negative view is compared to the Lutheran Arvid Runestam’s positive view on the state as an instrument in God’s hand. While the enforced order of the state to Runestam was contrary to the voluntary order of Christian love, it was still an instrument of God’s love, preparing the way for grace or gospel.

<sup>179</sup> Brunner 1932:468, ‘Wir müssen bereit sein anzuerkennen, daß man als Christ sogar Faschist oder Bolschewist sein kann, wenn man diese beiden Richtungen nicht nach ihrer weltanschaulichen Ideologie – die allerdings mit christlichem Glauben unvereinbar ist –, sondern nach ihrem rein sachlich politischen Zweckwillen beurteilt.’ When political ideologies in totalitarian states clashed with the Christian faith, Brunner protested

political statements was criticised even by the Swiss envoy to Berlin.<sup>180</sup>

We may conclude that, while the development of Brunner's theology was much influenced by his personal experience of Group revivalism, his theology was not changed into a theology of experience. The dominance of doctrinal personalism in Brunner's theology did not permit the personalistic attitudes any dominance in theological, ecclesiastical, or political matters.

### *Adolf Allwohn*

Unlike Emil Brunner, professor Lic. Dr. Adolf Allwohn (born in 1893) in Frankfurt a. M., was not one of the dialectical theologians. His base was in liberal theology. As editor of the journal *Kirche im Angriff*, Allwohn, in the mid-1930s, published several articles and comments on the Oxford Group and Group revivalism in general. As regards his own theology, his encounter with the Group led to the discovery of a new theological function: 'geführte Theologie.' This did not imply 'eine mystische Versenkung und nicht der Versuch einer Auslöschung unseres Denkens.' Quietness before God was comprehended as 'Empfangsbereitschaft der Fügung zu stellen.'<sup>181</sup>

Allwohn's experience brought him a new understanding of the expression of personal experience in the dogma. He did no longer experience any incongruity between the parable of the prodigal son and the atonement of Christ, so typical of the liberal tradition of Adolf von Harnack. Instead, he expressed the task of theology in the following way: 'Es gilt, aus den Dogmen und aus den ihnen zugrunde liegenden neutestamentlichen Begriffen den Glaubensgehalt zu erheben und ihn in unsere Sprache und Begriffswelt zu übersetzen. Dazu ist neben der wissenschaftlichen Erfassung ein gläubiges Miterleben Voraussetzung.'<sup>182</sup> As regards the ontological dogma, such as the questions of 'Wesenstrinität' or 'Offenbarungstrinität', which Allwohn found to be theoretical and impersonal, his attitude was one of disinterest. From the Deutsche Christen he demanded a belief in Christ as Son of God, though he was satisfied even with the confession of 'die christliche Wahrheit im Christusgeist' as 'absolute Maßstab.'<sup>183</sup>

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publicly, while Frank Buchman wrote him: 'It would have been so much better if you were going to answer the question to simply say it is the God-controlled country that ought to be the goal of every nation,' 1937, June 21 (ZZ).

<sup>180</sup> Bonjour 1975:126.

<sup>181</sup> Allwohn 1936b:429. Allwohn's attitude was similar to Laun's, 1939:8 f., 'eine von Grund auf andere Haltung, also nicht etwa nur um eine Methode [...] den Intellektualismus zu überwinden [...] durch die *seelsorgerliche Haltung*.'

<sup>182</sup> Allwohn 1936b:430 f.

<sup>183</sup> Allwohn 1939b:94. The Swedish author K. G. Hildebrand 1935:181 found a parallel between the emphasis of the Deutsche Christen on *life* instead of on non-applied, orthodox dogma, and tendencies in the Oxford Group to despise the pure doctrine, while giving priority to activity and practical religiosity, and dealing with personal ethical and psychological trouble.



Allwohn's personalistic theology of experience implied a new attitude in the German Church struggle: 'Kirchenkampf unter Gottes Führung,' trying 'den Kirchenkampf aus der Sphäre der eigenen Standpunkte, Auffassungen, Absichten und Erwägungen herauszubringen und ihn ganz an Gottes Führung hinzugeben.'<sup>184</sup> Referring to Erich von Eicken,<sup>185</sup> Allwohn found that in the 'Pfarrer-Gruppentagungen' in 1936, a new era had begun in the German Evangelic Church, working through 'die Gemeinschaft der Liebe:'

1. Die Überwindung der Diskussion [...]
2. Die Übung der Offenheit [...]
3. Die Ineinssetzung [...]
4. Die positive Einstellung [...]
5. Die Mannschaftsarbeit [...]
6. Die Seelsorge [...]<sup>186</sup>

Allwohn's conclusion was, that 'Die rechte christliche Versammlung, in der der Herr selbst auf dem Plan ist mit seinem Geist und seinen Gaben, ist das, was uns not tut und was allein die Not wendet.'<sup>187</sup> As to the contents of theology, this meant a new emphasis on the 3rd Article of the Creed, as the decisive way out of the conflict between the one-sided emphasis on either the 1st or the 2nd Article. Most important to Allwohn was that the misunderstandings about the theological problem of veracity were settled, as 'Wahrheit' was 'kein Sachverhalt,' expressed in fixed sentences, but 'vielmehr der Geist Jesu Christi selbst [...] d.h. das Geschehen der Berufung, Erleuchtung und Heiligung [...]'<sup>188</sup> Here, Allwohn approaches what Emil Brunner called 'Wahrheit als Begegnung.'

### II.2.3.3. Scandinavian Theologians

In Scandinavia, several theologians were influenced by their encounter with Group revivalism and/or the Oxford Group. Here we will focus on Sigmund Mowinckel (Norway), Aage Bentzen, Paul Brodersen, Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard, Halfdan Høgsbro (Denmark), and Arvid Runestam (Sweden).

#### *Sigmund Mowinckel*

On New Year's Eve, 1934, the internationally well-known Norwegian Old Testament scholar, Sigmund Mowinckel (1884–1965), published a statement regarding his encounter with the Oxford Group, emphasizing that the matter was not to be in favor of or against Oxford, but to be for or against Christ, and

<sup>184</sup> Allwohn 1936:226 f.

<sup>185</sup> von Eicken 1937:110, 114.

<sup>186</sup> Allwohn 1937:11 ff.

<sup>187</sup> Allwohn 1937:20.

<sup>188</sup> Allwohn 1937:19

with God or without Him. Mowinckel experienced that God had again become real to him.<sup>189</sup> What he lacked before his Oxford experience was the essential: to apprehend, receive, and give way to the concrete vocation of God.<sup>190</sup> Through his new experience, Mowinckel saw more clearly than before that his so-called intellectual difficulties concerning faith in God were actually hiding something else, namely an unwillingness to see his sin and to surrender both his sin and himself to God.<sup>191</sup>

Mowinckel's religious break-through led to a renewed interest in theology as such. He did not want to remain just a historian, but to shape a practical theology 'for household use.' In this, he was able to combine the historical method with his new attitude to the Scriptures, received from the Oxford Group, in the mediation of an encounter with the reality of religion.<sup>192</sup>

In his book on the Old Testament as the Word of God, Mowinckel states that only from a positive, Christian view is it possible to see and solve the problem of the Old Testament as both a revelation of God and a very human book. It is not possible to demand an answer to this question as a prerequisite for the acceptance of Christian faith – on the contrary: Jesus tells us first to search for the Kingdom of God, and then to illuminate theological and religious problems of mind.<sup>193</sup> Neither can the problem of relativity be solved without the individual's full surrender. The assurance that Christ is the Son of God implies this personal faith.<sup>194</sup> Instead of the dream of certain Barthians of an 'automatic' preaching, the need was for realism. The view or opinion that the Bible is the Word of God, does not mean anything until it becomes more than an opinion relying on authority. And it does not become the Word of God for me until it starts acting as an instrument for God's judging and saving acts, i.e. when the Spirit of God, which is in the Word, starts acting in me. In this process, sharing

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<sup>189</sup> S. Mowinckel: 'Mitt møte med "Oxford"' (Morgenbladet 1934, Dec. 31).

<sup>190</sup> Mowinckel 1938c:4.

<sup>191</sup> Mowinckel 1935b:125. See also, for example, Mowinckel to H. Blomberg 1936, Nov. 14 (UUB) on his renewed experiences of 'klentro' and 'vantro,' i.e. failing confidence and practical faith, without reference to the objective faith.

<sup>192</sup> Oftestad 1981:250. Johnson 1971:111 notes 'a totally new spirit' in Mowinckel's practical, religious direction, but no fundamental theological change. Cf. Welle 1948:340, who wrongly states that Mowinckel started a revision of his whole theological work after being changed at Høsbjør. Cf. also propagandistic reports in Germany of a 'Wendepunkt der norwegischen Theologie' or a 'Kursänderung in der theologischen Fakultät,' etc. (see, for example, Das Evangelische Deutschland 1935:402). Holte 1992:112 relates Ivan Engnell's seminary talk in Uppsala, on the poor Mowinckel, who at first had introduced the Ideology of Kings in the interpretation of the Psalms, but retreated after his involvement in the Oxford Group. Holte adds that despite the frequent repetition of this statement, the causal connection remained unclear to the students.

<sup>193</sup> Mowinckel 1938:16 f., 1938c:4.

<sup>194</sup> Mowinckel 1938:61.

has an important part. The only apology that works is the honest, realistic and personal testimony.<sup>195</sup> We need to get so acquainted with the profets and the other authors, that they can share their experiences of God with us. Theology thus has a double task: first to clear up the historical situation, then to transform it, to show analogies with our situation. Relying on the background of a historical-critical view, the book of Daniel, for example, may become a contemporary message from God to us.<sup>196</sup> The theory of a verbal inspiration is rejected, but Mowinckel finds no need for any distinction between God's word and human words in the Old Testament. Instead, the answer is surrender and readiness to let God say what man needs to hear.<sup>197</sup>

In a speech at the University matriculation in the autumn, 1936, Mowinckel emphasized the need of a new mind. If the students started with themselves, they would be able to change the world. The future leaders were those who had found the power of a life which gave them control of themselves.<sup>198</sup>

Sigmund Mowinckel never went 'ortodoxford.' In an article on the Oxford Movement and the Church (1935), he stated that the movement aimed at a renewal of the churches, with an opportunity for a renewed society, recreated with more social justice and more fellowship.<sup>199</sup> This article was subsequently published in Sweden, together with a discourse by Arvid Runestam. While Runestam was much afraid of anything tasting of legalism, Mowinckel's attitude was more pragmatic and less hesitant. For example, he used 'evangelic' not as a contrast to 'legalistic,' but as a description of the contents of the Gospels. He concluded that the Group movement was absolutely unselfish, and wished nothing but to revive individual Christians from all churches to conscious, personal Christian life, working as spiritual powers in their own circles and denominations. The movement had built bridges over confessional, organizational or historical antagonisms.<sup>200</sup> In a letter to Manfred Björkquist, 1939, Mowinckel admits that even those who have been active in the Oxford Group from the beginning must receive criticism, as well as practice criticism, but in the spirit of identification, pointing to the ideal intentions and the common responsibility of

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<sup>195</sup> Mowinckel 1938:118 ff., 1938c:4.

<sup>196</sup> Mowinckel 1938:126 f., and in a review of Bentzen 1938 (Norsk Kirkeblad 1939:37). See also S. Mowinckel: 'Oxford försvarad av profeten Jeremias! Från en bibeltimme' (NL 1941 Nr. 20:5, 7 f.).

<sup>197</sup> Mowinckel 1938:19 ff., 137. See also Mowinckel 1938b. In a letter to Jarl Hemmer, 1939, Feb. 23 (ÅAB), Mowinckel tells about his private difficulties in sharing and of his reservations against showing his family total confidence.

<sup>198</sup> S. Mowinckel, 'Førerskap' (TT 1936, Sept. 7).

<sup>199</sup> S. Mowinckel, 'Oxfordbevegelsen og kirken' (Morgenbladet 1935, Jan. 22); also in *Oxfordbevegelsen i Norge* 1935:9 ff.

<sup>200</sup> Runestam & Mowinckel 1935:25. Searching for the supernational church, Runestam's need was simultaneously the need of a revival (the Oxford Movement as a 'mighty ecumenical movement') and of an ecclesiastical organization in the ecumenical work (Runestam 1935c:94).

realizing them. He emphasized, too, that the Oxford Group did not want to be separatistic or sectarian, but to work in a vivifying way in the existing churches and organizations.<sup>201</sup>

### *Aage Bentzen*

Like Sigmund Mowinckel, the Dane Aage Bentzen (1894–1953) was an Old Testament exegete, already before his Oxford experience influenced by Mowinckel.<sup>202</sup> In 1933–1934 he had been involved in a debate on the principles of religious education in Danish schools, in which he had emphasized the results of the historical-critical method.<sup>203</sup> A clear influence from the Oxford Group may be found in some of his theological writings, for example, the vision of God's plan, or the observation that the writer of the book of Daniel seems to value spiritual rearmament higher than the material rearmament of the Macabees.<sup>204</sup> The Christian hope is a hope for the destruction of this world, but also – if the Spirit of Christ gets the dominion in us – a hope for the improvement of the intervening time through daily Guidance.<sup>205</sup> A few years later, Bentzen quotes Streeter's views on 'inspired editing': The individual's personal encounter with the revelation of God in its historical form would always be of decisive importance.<sup>206</sup>

However, the most important influence of the Oxford Group on Aage Bentzen was not a matter of theology, but of the theologian's attitude in his work with his students, and in the relevance of theology to present day Church life. Bentzen was not satisfied with knowledge only as the result of university education. He wanted the university to impart love and character to use the knowledge, while the contemporary mentality regarded the duty of the teacher as fulfilled when he evaluated situations and phenomena from the outside. Instead, Bentzen searched for a more personal relation between professors and students. This did not mean preaching sermons at his lectures, but, through the love of Christ, a radical transformation of the character of the teacher, to enable him to give unsentimental, creative, and infectious love.<sup>207</sup> At the international Undersåker conference in Sweden, Easter 1939, Bentzen was one of five professors signing a message to the world, in which the need of rebuilding the moral and spiritual foundation of society through the creation of a new type of man was stated. The responsibilities of the university teachers were emphasized.<sup>208</sup>

In an article on Sigmund Mowinckel's work in Old Testament research,

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<sup>201</sup> S. Mowinckel to M. Björkquist 1939, Feb. 20 (SIB).

<sup>202</sup> Søe 1965:133.

<sup>203</sup> See Bugge 1968.

<sup>204</sup> Bentzen 1938:36 f.

<sup>205</sup> Bentzen 1938b:22.

<sup>206</sup> Bentzen 1941:421.

<sup>207</sup> Bentzen 1937:12, 14.

<sup>208</sup> See further Ch. V.3.4.

Bentzen raised the question if the understanding of worship in Mowinckel's research could gain importance to a greater extent 'for our own life in the worship of the Church.' As Bo Giertz had shown in *Stengrunden*, revival and churchliness, propheticism and a life of worship supplemented, and were not able to spare each other. A task for Mowinckel would be to connect his hymn research with his work on prophetism in contemporary Church life.<sup>209</sup>

*Paul Brodersen*

Of all the Scandinavian theologians influenced by the Oxford Group in the 1930s, Paul Brodersen (1892–1974) most clearly identified himself with the international fellowship. He was in many ways well prepared for the 'Oxford' message. Through his background in the Student Movement and in liberal theology, he was well acquainted with the moral appeal, and he preached about the possible change of man already before his encounter with the Oxford Group.<sup>210</sup>

Brodersen's most important prerequisite was his studies of philosophic personalism. As no other Scandinavian theologian, he was prepared by his scientific work for Group experiences. His doctoral thesis (1931) deals with the concept of God in newer English and American philosophy. In it, he examined the form of theistic philosophy called 'personalism,' which denotes a doctrine, in which true reality is regarded as consisting exclusively of persons and their mutual relations. The younger personalistic school (Borden Parker Bown, George Trumbull Ladd, James Martineau, Hastings Rashdall) stated that theistic personalism was the classical and normal type of personalistic philosophy.<sup>211</sup> Brodersen's concept is idealistic: perfection has its place not at the beginning, but at the end of the world. In the beginning is only the godly idea, to be realised through life in the world.<sup>212</sup> In his analysis of personalism, Brodersen quotes Henry Drummond and B. H. Streeter.<sup>213</sup> He draws the line between

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<sup>209</sup> Bentzen 1944:173.

<sup>210</sup> P. V. Hansen 1979:560.

<sup>211</sup> Brodersen 1931:277 f. Cf. Mounier 1950:183 (published in Copenhagen), which states that Walt Whitman was first, using 'personalism' in 1867. Mounier defines the word as seeking the person instead of the system (p.185, 190 f), not really being a system, but rather a whole group of themes, whose connection, from one viewpoint and for certain purposes, does not exclude different lines of development. Yet another variety of personalism is the one represented by the Russian philosopher Nicolas Berdyaev.

<sup>212</sup> Brodersen 1931:355.

<sup>213</sup> Brodersen 1931:297 ('we could with Henry Drummond use "involution" [...] and say, that evolution in its ascending line is dependent on the raising involution of God's being in the moving of things'), 370 (Streeter is quoted on 'the inmost mystery of creative Power unveiled in the figure of a man hanging on a cross for the sake of an ideal'). Cf. Mounier 1950:185 explicitly preferring Scheler and Jaspers to 'the last supporters of idealism.'

philosophy and religion at experience: the moral conflict and need is a matter for philosophical reflection, while the faith in God's salvation and the experience of its spiritual reality is a matter for religion. This line is not uncrossable: reflection on moral need opens the way for the thought of a salvific relation to God, and indicates a possible room for the testimony of God's saving self-communication ('selvmeddelelse') in spirit and love.<sup>214</sup> 'Inspiration' is regarded as concentrated in one's conscience, but also as a hidden, direct inspiration of God in the depths of spiritual life.<sup>215</sup> God's presence in our lives is the uniting spiritual power in life, calling forth love and common will. The 'absolute' is not a system or a consciousness, but an unrestricted will, transitive in its works. God enters the life of humans to create a fellowship with them. Through the love of God, we are united with Him and with each other in a spiritual fellowship.<sup>216</sup>

These philosophical views obviously prepared the way for the Oxford Group teaching on guidance and fellowship in Brodersen's life and thought. In 1935, Brodersen's correspondence on religion and science with Professor Jørgen Jørgensen, revealed him as an apologist of importance. As Jørgensen demanded a scientific, impersonal foundation of meaning, while Brodersen emphasized the undissolvable synthesis of metaphysics and personal religion, as well as the authority of God's revelation in Christ through a personal relation to God, no real dialogue was realized.<sup>217</sup>

In an essay on the message of the Oxford Group (1935), Brodersen declared that here religion had moved from the world of theory into the reality of life: Only that was alive which could be experienced as real, and become of personal importance in the lives of contemporary men. The central contents of the message was:

1. The spiritual revolution with the Holy Spirit as dictator of human life.
2. Christ, the living saviour, whose spirit and love could make men new. This was the teaching of the New Testament.
3. Full surrender as the way to new life. Not only the thoughts and the feelings, but also the will and the inner self had to be crossed with the sign of the Cross. God's demand was absolute.
4. God has a plan. We should listen and let Him guide us, with Christ as the true 'Führer.' The road in the obedience of faith to God and sharing of love as the road of the Cross, where the self is broken.<sup>218</sup>

The impression of the 'Oxford' experience on Brodersen is clearly noticeable also in a collection of sermons from 1937. Here, personalism is supplemented by the idea of God's plan with the individual, the need of quietness before God,

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<sup>214</sup> Brodersen 1931:360.

<sup>215</sup> Brodersen 1931:375 f.

<sup>216</sup> Brodersen 1931:377, 382 f., 388. On the development of existential personalism, see also Mounier 1950.

<sup>217</sup> Brodersen & Jørgensen 1935: 181 f., 207.

<sup>218</sup> Brodersen: 'Oxford-Gruppens budskab', Oxford i Danmark II 1935:9-35.

guidance, etc.<sup>219</sup> There is no break with philosophical personalism – the emphasis is still on fellowship in love, though here it is more practical, with surrender and guidance leading the way. The idea of original perfection is still implicitly rejected. The Fall was that ‘we did not want to let ourselves be purposed by God to fellowship in love.’ God had a plan to make our business, our office, our place of work a real fellowship.<sup>220</sup> The Holy Spirit did not want either our criticism or our sympathy, but our surrender. And the current revival in the world was not about a human thing or a human movement.<sup>221</sup> As Brodersen was one of the very few Oxford Group theologians well acquainted with Anglo-Saxon philosophy and way of thinking, it is not surprising to find that he puts emphasis on the *moral* choice *for* Christ, already before the proclamation of Moral Re-Armament. Religious difficulties were no excuse for not wanting to choose morally. No one could reach life with God by musing. The deepest understanding of temptation was not to regard it only from a moral viewpoint, but to see everything in life in relation to God.<sup>222</sup> The life with God *is* in Christ, and comes close to Him, especially in the Eucharist.<sup>223</sup>

After the launching of the programme of a moral rearmament in 1938, Brodersen asked whether the Nordic churches and countries needed a mobilization to win the peoples for obedience to God’s purpose and will, and what such a mobilization would demand of the individual and of the Christian fellowship. A mobilization of lay people to active Christian life and responsibility for others was in progress. Brodersen emphasized the Church as a living, testifying, and missionizing fellowship. The demand was not for just a religious revival, but for a Christian popular rising in the Nordic countries, with a minority that had surrendered as the instrument of God.<sup>224</sup>

Brodersen joined the international team on their journey to the United States in the summer, 1939. After working in the team, he explained Moral Re-Armament as built on God’s work through life-changing. It was to be interpreted as a rejoinder in a given situation, and as ‘Anknüpfungspunkt,’ specifically distinct from social and humane idealism. It was a question of ‘*Theocracy*’. But, instead of losing contact with the masses, the Group wanted to present a few simple truths, as possible first real steps in leading the peoples to God. The work had to consist partly in giving people ‘a working relationship with Christ’ (Ken Twitchell), partly in working on the whole mentality in the peoples, towards a spiritual, new orientation, and a national education on a broad scale, which created a new atmosphere. Brodersen explained this work as an act in the spirit of St. John the Baptist, preparing the way for the Lord to the

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<sup>219</sup> Brodersen 1937:23 f., 27, 29.

<sup>220</sup> Brodersen 1937:31 f.

<sup>221</sup> Brodersen 1937:104 f.

<sup>222</sup> Brodersen 1937:153.

<sup>223</sup> Brodersen 1937:93 f., 99.

<sup>224</sup> Brodersen 1939:11 ff.

peoples.<sup>225</sup>

During the first part of the Second World War, Brodersen emphasized the need for spiritual preparedness through listening to God, renewal of the individual's responsibility, mutual concord and faith. The second part of his first article on this subject was published on the very day of the German occupation of Denmark, April 9, 1940.<sup>226</sup> Subsequently, he described the new mentality of fellowship and freedom under the true authority. To act in this new mentality, guided by God, was to become a pioneer for a new social order. The impersonalism and the mechanization had to be broken through as far as was possible in modern, complicated society life. This new order is not defined through its objective structures, but described through its opposites: the liberalistic-individualistic system of competition, and the collective class struggle, both leading to the ruin of societies. We may describe Brodersen's strategy as a social personalism, working on the personalization of society. The most important contribution of the Church to society was new men, who bore the new mentality, and worked as changing forces among the people.<sup>227</sup>

### *Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard*

Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard's theological connections and his fellowship with the Oxford Group were of a different kind. In his book on psychology of religion (1933), Fuglsang-Damgaard (1890–1979) rejected the dissolution of religion into psychology, as well as psychology of religion as a foundation for systematic theology, while he gave psychology of religion an independent task, stating that theological systems must pay attention to the results of psychology of religion. Agreeing with the opinion of Emil Brunner, Fuglsang-Damgaard found that a real anthropology could not do without psychology. The latter was not normative, and could not state what men ought to believe or how they ought to act, but it could say much about what they in fact believed and how they did act, and it could throw light on many questions posed by priests and spiritual guides.<sup>228</sup> To Fuglsang-Damgaard, Group revivalism offered a supplement to Barth's

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<sup>225</sup> Brodersen to Halfdan Høgsbro 1939, Aug. 30, Sept. 16. Brodersen also spoke of the two ways of God's work: the old way of the Gospel with personal preaching, conversion and life, and another way, beginning with the demonstration of God's power and love' (Georg Bartholdy to Høgsbro 1939, Oct. 9; Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>226</sup> 'Vort aandelige Beredskab,' BeT 1940, April 8, 9, after a radio speech on April 2. See also Brodersen 1940, 1940b.

<sup>227</sup> Brodersen 1940, 1940b, 1941:71, 74 f., 97, 99 f., 105, 110. For Brodersen's later view, see P. Brodersen: 'Da Oxford-gruppen i 30'rne indledte sit vækkelses-fremstød i Danmark' (BA 1948, Nov. 15).

<sup>228</sup> Fuglsang-Damgaard 1933:291 ff. For further references to Fuglsang-Damgaard's connection with Brunner's theology, see Schjørring 1976c:180. In 1933, Fuglsang-Damgaard wrote the foreword to the Danish translation of Brunner's *The Word and the World* (*Gudsordet og Verden*).



theology, as expressed by Emil Brunner. As J. H. Schjørring has emphasized, this sympathy for Brunner had nothing to do with Brunner's political ethics, but emanated from Fuglsang-Damgaard's need to find a theological foundation for psychology of religion.<sup>229</sup>

In 1933, Fuglsang-Damgaard published a small book on the renewal of private confession, which contained two discourses delivered at a meeting for theologians, arranged by Föreningen Norden in the summer, 1933, at Trondheim. It was not presented as a Group book, but the practice of sharing was treated as an interesting effort at a renewal of private confession. Fuglsang-Damgaard's Group sources were publications by Begbie, Russell, Thornton-Duesbery, Rowlands, and Brunner.<sup>230</sup> The importance of absolution was emphasized, but he did not take any notice of the lack of direct absolution in the Oxford Group doctrine of sharing.<sup>231</sup> The book was translated into Swedish and German (1933 resp. 1934).

During the Oxford Group phase in Denmark, Fuglsang-Damgaard on the one hand tried to persuade the Swedish archbishop, Dr. Eidem, to welcome the Oxford Group in Sweden, while he on the other hand asked Professor Runestam for help with the somewhat unclear matter of the position of the Oxford Group Movement in relation to Luther.<sup>232</sup> Only two weeks later, December 10, 1935, he lectured on the Oxford Group as a new road to the old Gospel, at the Evangelisch-lutherische Konferenz in Berlin. The main problem was still the need of the Church, and the main question was what the Church could learn from the Group Movement. He was satisfied with Frank Buchman's declaration that the atonement was the core of the Gospel of the Group, and the justification by faith in Buchman's own personal, spiritual life, but he did not ask the question how the atonement and the justification were comprehended and interpreted.<sup>233</sup> In the Group, Fuglsang-Damgaard found Luther's vision of a common priesthood realized as never before, but he wanted to remind the Group of the importance of the absolution in the soul-cure.<sup>234</sup> He characterized the Group Movement as a movement from the periphery towards the centre. Its moral approach was to be regarded as such a move, and thus it was irrelevant to criticize the peripheral elements of its work.<sup>235</sup> Change had in practice meant different kinds of contact with Christ: a revival, a new joy in the faith in the love

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<sup>229</sup> Schjørring 1976c:180.

<sup>230</sup> Fuglsang-Damgaard 1933b:24 ff., 44.

<sup>231</sup> As observed by Werkström 1963:191 f., it is significant that the heavy emphasis on absolution in Fuglsang-Damgaard's personal testimony of the blessings of private confession (BeT 1935, Aug. 20) was omitted in the English version (Buchman 1948:47), though it does occur in the Swedish edition (Buchman 1955<sup>2</sup>:20).

<sup>232</sup> Fuglsang-Damgaard to E. Eidem 1935, Aug. 18 (EEA C II:7, ULA), to A. Runestam 1935, Nov. 26 (Runestam Coll.I).

<sup>233</sup> Fuglsang-Damgaard 1936Da:10.

<sup>234</sup> Fuglsang-Damgaard 1936Da:18.

<sup>235</sup> Fuglsang-Damgaard 1936Da:11, 29.

of God in Christ, or – among many old believers – what appeared as a new conversion. Many new Bible circles in Denmark, with hundreds of new, formerly churchless participants, as well as the rising number of communicants, were taken as examples of what the Movement could mean to Church life. Neither the international, working fellowship nor the vision of a national and supernational revolution and renaissance were mentioned.<sup>236</sup> The booklet was published in five languages.<sup>237</sup>

In a speech to the Conference of Nordic Bishops, subsequently published in German, Fuglsang-Damgaard discussed the Group Movement and the Nordic countries. As before, he put emphasis on the importance of absolution in private confession.<sup>238</sup> He rejected the question of a choice between Church and Group as they both needed each other, with the Church as the common ground. The Church was where men were guided to Christ.<sup>239</sup>

While Paul Brodersen met and interpreted his personal experience on the basis of a theological-philosophical, personalistic system, with close connections to the doctrine and mentality of the Oxford Group, Fuglsang-Damgaard as a psychologist of religion took a more observing and descriptive attitude to his Group experiences. And as he, during the preparations of the Oxford Group campaign in Denmark, was elected Bishop of Copenhagen and Primate of the Danish Church, his very positive but independent attitude was strengthened as a consequence of his new position.<sup>240</sup> As J. H. Schjørring states, Fuglsang-Damgaard went very far in pronouncing the Oxford Group Movement as the last resort of the Church against Communism, National socialism, amorality, materialism, etc, but he always regarded the Oxford Group from the viewpoint of the Church, and without interest in its political ambitions.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>236</sup>Fuglsang-Damgaard 1936, 1936Da. Before delivering this lecture, Fuglsang-Damgaard asked Halfdan Høgsbro for facts on the Group work in Sønderborg and elsewhere in Denmark (Fuglsang-Damgaard to Høgsbro 1935, Nov. 26, Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK). In the Swedish edition, 1938, the 'Oxford' name, inserted for the Danish publication, was removed, and a very open subtitle was added ('Från Grupprörelsens arbete i Danmark').

<sup>237</sup> In German (two editions) and Danish 1936, in Dutch (two editions) and Finnish 1937, in Swedish 1938.

<sup>238</sup> Fuglsang-Damgaard 1937:398.

<sup>239</sup> Fuglsang-Damgaard 1937:407.

<sup>240</sup> Compared to the Norwegian primate, Bishop Eivind Berggrav, a psychologist of religion as well, Fuglsang-Damgaard was both publicly and in private more of a Group man, acting personally for the Oxford Group even in other countries (see, for example, Fuglsang-Damgaard to Dr. Eidem 1935, Aug. 18., EEA C II:7, ULA). Thus, Berggrav is not treated here as an Oxford Group theologian, but in Ch. III.3.5, 4.1. But none of them took an active part in the working fellowship of the international team. On the appointments of Fuglsang-Damgaard and Brodersen, see below Ch. IV.2.

<sup>241</sup> Schjørring 1980:44. See also Schjørring 1976c:180 f.

Halfdan Høgsbro (1894–1976), at the time vicar of Sønderborg, and an independent Church Barthian,<sup>242</sup> published some practical articles on Group work in *Kirche im Angriff* and *Kirke og Kultur*. In *Kirche im Angriff*, he stated that this movement ‘von Natur aus echt volksgemeinschaftlich ist. Ihr Ziel ist Umfassung des ganzen Volkes, Durchdringung und Veränderung des gesamten Volkslebens, und das dadurch daß sie es unter den Herrschaftsanspruch und die Verheißung Gottes stellt.’ He also spoke of ‘eine glückliche Vereinigung des pietistischen Ernstes dem einzelnen gegenüber mit der Breite der Volksgemeinschaftlichen Aufgabe.’<sup>243</sup>

Høgsbro’s popular introduction, *Oxford-noter*, has many nuances in its presentation of traditional Group practices, as regarded from a sacramental, un-pietistic viewpoint. Høgsbro states that confession can take place without a human listener, but must always be a confession before God. Confession to another human being is not regarded as a Biblical, but as a psychological necessity. The importance of the direct declaration of forgiveness of sins in the absolution is emphasized, with reference to Luther.<sup>244</sup> Contrary to what has often been stated in the Oxford Group, Høgsbro says that the trouble with men without peace often was not hidden sin, but that God and his grace, as well as Christ and his Cross were hidden.<sup>245</sup> Høgsbro regards daily renewed surrender as a renewal of baptism, and states that full surrender is not faith in one’s own surrender, but liberation from one’s surrender and all trust in oneself. Quiet time is not a listening for voices or revelations, but a two-way prayer concerning coming tasks. Guidance is emphasized, but always as connected with distinct situations, and primarily for internal, and not for external use. Constantly speaking of one’s guidance was regarded as unnecessary.<sup>246</sup>

The final aim was more than an international revolution and renaissance, as even a worldwide national renewal was temporary, and must vanish together with this world. Even a renewed nation needed the prayer for God’s Kingdom to come, for daily bread, etc, and had not found Paradise. The final aim was a

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<sup>242</sup> Høgsbro described himself as being brought up in Grundtvigianism, awakened in the Student Movement, having worked in the K.F.U.M [Y.M.C.A.] and the Home Mission, and come to a life in faith through Barth (Høgsbro to [J. H.?] Wandall 1935, May 30. Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK). He was regarded as a Barthian during and after his Oxford Group period as well, see Lindhardt 1966:137, 205, 207, 211, 216, 280 f., 318. The designations Home Barthians for the Tidehverv party, and Church Barthians for theologians like Høgsbro or Søre, are translations of Schwarz Lausten’s descriptions, 1983:310, ‘den hjemlige Barthianisme’ and ‘denne kirkelige barthianisme’ respectively.

<sup>243</sup> Høgsbro 1936c:365.

<sup>244</sup> Høgsbro 1936:25, 29, 28, 34. See also Høgsbro 1936d.

<sup>245</sup> Høgsbro 1936:34.

<sup>246</sup> Høgsbro 1936:43 f., 48, 55.

new heaven and a new earth, according to the promise.<sup>247</sup> While Høgsbro's emphasis on the eschatology was welcomed by some, it made a strange impression in other Oxford Group circles, and his book was not propagated by the Copenhagen team. In a later letter, written in English, he explained his eschatological understanding of the Oxford Group message and work:

[...] the message of Jesus Christ had a transcendent reach, resurrection, the coming of the kingdom, his return, a new heaven and a new earth. His message must be the message of the church; I am quite aware, that a Christian world revolution is a part of this message, and therefore of the work and the duty of the Church. A real part, but only a part of it, getting its strength and conviction from this whole all-dominating victory over sin and death of which the Christian world revolution only is a part. I had hoped, that it should be more and more evident, that the Oxford movement meant its message about the Christian world revolution only as a part of the whole transcendent message of the Church; I talked with Frank about it, when I first met him in Sønderborg, and I am sure, that he and you and others mean it that way; but when I see, how carefully anything in this direction is omitted from what I read and hear from our Danish headquarters I wonder [...] <sup>248</sup>

In a publication dedicated to the Danish Reformation jubilee in 1936, Høgsbro wrote on the Group Movement in Denmark, as illuminated by the heritage of Luther. He found the movement working both as an activator and as an assault party. From a Lutheran view, it had its dubious points, with its roots in many different churches, and it carried along remainders of the theological deterioration in the Evangelical churches. Its gift of grace had not been theological criticism, but something concerning theological criticism, i.e. that only that criticism which is humble before the truth and admits its own sins, is a legitimate child of the congregation of Christ, and leads to fellowship, because it comes out of fellowship, through identification.<sup>249</sup> As Barth had helped the Danes to a better understanding of the Gospel of Luther, Frank Buchman now helped them to see the deviations in their own lives. The movement had given them back private confession, and it had implemented the common priesthood. Its strong ethical emphasis had created sinners in need of the Gospel, and perhaps – as God's law always does – created 'Pharisees' as well. The Group Movement needed to examine itself through the heritage of Luther. Especially the practice of sharing had to be kept free from compulsion or torment of conscience, and instead become firmly established in the absolution and Holy communion. The Lutheran heritage, on the other hand, had to learn from the ecumenicity, learn from its faith in one holy, catholic Church.<sup>250</sup> Høgsbro's combination of Barth

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<sup>247</sup> Høgsbro 1936:71, 73 f.

<sup>248</sup> Høgsbro to Cuthbert Bardsley 1938, July 19 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>249</sup> Høgsbro 1936b:226 f.

<sup>250</sup> Høgsbro 1936b:227 ff.

and Buchman is the combination of personalism in theology and in human attitudes, the combination of a theocentric and an ethical personalism.

During the early years of the Oxford Group phase in Denmark, Høgsbro believed in the political consequences of Group work. He had seen the positive effects of the Oxford Group on the relations between Danes and Germans in the border region of Sønderjylland/Schleswig, and believed in its possibilities in Germany, too, stating that

Alles, was nordisch ist, hat in Deutschland einen guten Namen. Wenn Oxford dorthin gebracht wird, durch hohe, blonde Skandinavien mit der gleichen lutherischen Erziehung und mit dem gleichen Hintergrund, wie ihn das evangelische Deutschland hat, dann wird die Bewegung sich viel leichteren Zugang verschaffen können.<sup>251</sup>

In addition, Høgsbro understood Church and national forces as opposites. To stop the Church from giving way to the national element, three conditions had to be fulfilled: an evangelic preaching, neither rejecting the national element in a pietistic-nihilistic way nor making it religious, but saving it through God's forgiveness and dominion; further a direction of the Church ministry that did not abuse the Church by using it for national enlistment, and finally a Church revival.<sup>252</sup>

Høgsbro's reaction on the programme of a moral rearmament was critical, as he found that social improvement and cultural renewal were made the main thing, with faith and personal renewal only as instruments, which was contrary to Biblical teaching about the Kingdom of God.<sup>253</sup>

#### *Arvid Runestam*

Arvid Runestam (1887–1962), professor of (dogmatics and) moral theology at the University of Uppsala, from 1938 Bishop of Karlstad, was dependent on Luther and on contemporary theologians like Nathan Söderblom (his father-in-law) and Einar Billing. Runestam was further influenced by the Swedish 19th century philosophy of personality ('personlighetsfilosofi') of E. G. Geijer, with its significant mutuality ('utan du – intet jag') and by the Roman Catholic moral philosopher Max Scheler. The national *Volkskirche* ('folkkyrka') was the self-evident base of Runestam's thinking, though he was not ordained as a minister until 1932 after being Professor for almost a decade.

Runestam's social ethical thinking was clearly influenced by Scheler's 'ethisches Personalismus',<sup>254</sup> with the purpose to create personalities which

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<sup>251</sup> Junge Kirche 1935:1182 f.

<sup>252</sup> Høgsbro 1938:23 (printed 1:0 in KoK 1937).

<sup>253</sup> P. Brodersen to Høgsbro 1939, Sept. 16 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK). See further below, Ch. IV, and, on Høgsbro's relations to Ronald Fangen, Ch. II.3.10.4.

<sup>254</sup> See Scheler 1916.

combined life in eternity with life in the world. This meant a ranking order of values, with the religious values at the top. Working for economical justice was important, but still more for the creation of Christian personalities. The rules of social life should help man to lose his life, i.e. to develop the individual and the personal fellowship through human kindness and unselfishness as fundamental principles. The individual's liberty of fellowship with God was regarded as the purpose even of the state.<sup>255</sup>

Runestam's ecumenical reflection had its basis in Söderblom's visions and work, with clear connections to the Stockholm Meeting 1925, and the programme of Life and Work. Especially Söderblom's vision of a supernational Church was of great importance to him. To Söderblom, personal religion had been primary to the institutions. Already before his encounter with Group revivalism, Runestam emphasized the need of a change of focus, and a shifting of emphasis from 'work' to 'life,' as well as the need of the sacrament of fellowship (*'gemenskapens nådemedel'*).<sup>256</sup> His encounter with Group revivalism meant such a shift of emphasis. Runestam did not describe his experience as a change, but as a living assurance of the relevance and victorious possibilities of the life and demands of Christ in his own life and generation.<sup>257</sup> This did not give him a new theology, but a new way of practising it. In an article in the autumn, 1933, on the then current resignation of theology, Runestam let Geoffrey Allen's *He that Cometh* raise the unpleasant question regarding theology: Does it work?<sup>258</sup> That question remained vital to him, and in his pastoral letter, 1938, he interpreted the theological isolation of his time as a question of moral theology, since neither theology nor the Church any longer permeated the moral consciousness.<sup>259</sup> To Runestam, the subjective emphasis in Group revivalism did not mean a contradiction of Luther, but taking advantage of a forgotten heritage in Luther's theology.<sup>260</sup> In his critique of the German 'Ordnungstheologie,' Runestam explicitly pointed to the personalistic strategy

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<sup>255</sup> Bexell 1981:40 f.

<sup>256</sup> Runestam 1932b:214. In Runestam 1938b:175 f., the supernational Church is regarded primarily as a revolutionary weapon against narrow nationalism. See further Jarlert 1989:135 and *passim*, Persenius 1987:52, 231. Runestam 1932a:7. In his search for the supernational Church, Runestam's need was simultaneously the need of a revival (the Oxford Movement as a mighty ecumenical movement) and of an ecclesiastical organization of the ecumenical work (Runestam 1935c:94).

<sup>257</sup> Runestam & Mowinckel 1935:6. Runestam later recalled a break in his former vacillation between faith and doubt, which took place on a Sunday morning in September 1933 (Runestam 1956:25). See also Runestam 1935e:117 on the need of the ecumenical movements of the strong and victorious mentality of the Oxford Group Movement.

<sup>258</sup> Runestam 1933:184.

<sup>259</sup> Sandahl 1986:28.

<sup>260</sup> Runestam 1938:43. Here, Group revivalism provided Runestam with experimental arguments against the objectivistic interpretation of Luther in Lundensian theology.

of the Oxford Group, supplementing it not only with the wide influence of certain key persons on social conditions, but with the importance of their individual examples, which opened possibilities for the effects of the Word of God despite the egotism of men.<sup>261</sup>

Over the years, a shift of emphasis is recognizable in the contents of Rune-  
stam's ethical thinking. The emphasis on individual confidence, surrender, and  
character, is being supplemented by a strong emphasis on the common human,  
fundamental values, and there is a shift of emphasis from his earlier emphasis on  
the inner man, i.e. conscience and character in man, to a greater appreciation of  
acts and active emulation, with an observable retroaction from the acts to the  
inner character.<sup>262</sup>

In his preface to Anders Frostenson's Swedish translation of Halfdan Høgs-  
bro's *Oxford-noter*, Runestam recommended Høgsbro, as he was deeply rooted  
in Lutheran faith and strongly influenced by Barthian theology. This had given  
Høgsbro a watchful eye for the greatest danger of the Oxford Group: the self-  
centredness always lurking on those who aimed at the realization of the Chris-  
tian faith in life.<sup>263</sup> These words point to a basic problem in Runestam's rela-  
tions to the Oxford Group: his wish to combine a total identification with the  
Oxford Group way of life with a more or less independent position tending to-  
wards the international fellowship and its work for national change. His attitude  
was theocentric and revivalistic, while somewhat hesitating as regarded to  
Group practices, which was clearly noticeable in his discourse on the Message  
from the West, published in 1935 together with a discourse by Sigmund Mow-  
inckel. It is remarkable that it was republished unchanged as late as 1940.  
Shortly before the Visby meeting in 1938, Runestam did identify himself even  
with the Oxford Group as such, but he did not participate in the touring work  
of the international team in other countries, and his attitude to the programme  
of a moral rearmament was at times somewhat ambivalent, and he finally em-  
phasized that the demand for honesty should include admitting mistakes of the  
fellowship.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Runestam 1938c:17 f, 23. The continuing revelation of the higher life and the truth is made dependent upon the individual Christian example.

<sup>262</sup> Bexell 1981:29 f. In recognizing the influence of the Oxford Group on Runestam's theology, Bexell is one of the few theologians who clearly observes the relevance of this influence for the theological development of the 1930s.

<sup>263</sup> Runestam in Høgsbro 1937:5 f

<sup>264</sup> Runestam & Mowinckel 1935. On Runestam's ambitions for the identification of other bishops, for example, Archbishop Eidem, and the bishops Jonzon and Ysander, see Ch. V, also Runestam to Max von Bonsdorff 1935, July 21, Sept. 30 (ÅAB), concerning the identifications of the Finnish bishop von Bonsdorff and the Danish bishop V. Ammundsen. In the third Swedish edition of Runestam's book on psychoanalysis and christianity, 1954, a long chapter on Christian soul-cure as practised in the M.R.A. movement was added, but in the English edition, 1958, the chapter was rewritten, with total omittment of the M.R.A. See further the criticisms in Runestam 1956:26. In a

As we have seen, the apprehension of the Oxford Group doctrines, as well as their theological consequences, were to a large extent dependent on the theologian's former doctrinal views. To a liberal theologian, the Oxford Group doctrines meant a personal and practical application of (a mostly subjective) theology, sometimes involving a change of theological views and position, while to a Barthian the same doctrines meant an ethical and practical complement to an objective theology, which sometimes created a theological complement or corrective to a one-sided objectivism.

As stated from within the Oxford Group, and from many of its critics, the theology of the Group cannot be treated without consideration of its mentality and function. In writing a separate chapter on doctrine and theology, we have emphasized the importance of doctrinal views even in the Oxford Group. Now we will examine its mentality and function.

## II.3. Mentality and Function

### *II.3.1. The Oxford Group Way of Life as a Mentality*

The Norwegian statesman C. J. Hambro described the world crisis of the 1930s as a crisis of mentality, which found an answer in the Oxford Group's work for the creation of a life-changing atmosphere.<sup>265</sup> As we have noted in Chapter II.2., it is impossible to draw further conclusions from the development of the doctrinal principles of the Oxford Group without considering their actual application in the mentality of the Group. Its ethical principles – the four absolute standards – are defined mentally and practically, but not theoretically. In the Oxford Group, matters of dogma were normally treated in this manner. The veracity question or Christological problems were regarded exclusively on the basis of their function in the personal act of faith. The absolute attitude remains fundamental as a mental and practical attitude. In his book *Aktuelle Moralprobleme*, the Roman Catholic professor Werner Schöllgen of Bonn, recalling his own experiences from Caux after the Second World War, certified that the M.R.A. was neither a philosophic nor a dogmatic system, but a 'religiös-sittlichen Lebensstil rein praktischer Art.' Though this 'Lebensstil' pointed to some consequences of thinking, M.R.A. declined any formulation of this mental side of its work. The great power of the M.R.A. seemed to be that it 'dem

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review of Howard's *Frank Buchman's Secret*, Runestam was critical towards the mistakes of M.R.A., though still positive to its framing of vital questions to Christianity ('Frank Buchmans hemlighet', SvD 1962, Feb. 2).

<sup>265</sup> Hambro 1934:27, 33. On the crisis of mentality, see also Hambro 1937.



christlichen Ethos soziologisch greifbare Macht wiederschonkt.<sup>266</sup>

We understand a mentality as a conscious expression of the thoughts and faith of men of different theological, political or social abode, composed of common attitudes and ways of thinking, which are not articulated into doctrines. These attitudes may be divided into cognitive attitudes, affective attitudes, and attitudes of action. The Oxford Group mentality is characterized by the domination of its attitudes of action. This mentality may be described as a pattern of voluntaristic, personalistic, activating attitudes of fellowship towards God and men, aiming at a life in conformity with the words of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, living the Christian faith, thereby changing the lives of men and peoples. Its voluntaristic strain is obvious.<sup>267</sup> It is personalistic in both approach and action. The personalistic approach means thinking first in terms of people, then in terms of ideas or structures, while the exclusive personalism in action is revealed in searching for the solutions to problems exclusively in personal relations to God and men.<sup>268</sup>

This pattern of attitudes has its roots in a radical, unconventional cure of souls. Shunning religious emotionalism, it has only a very slight resemblance in mentality to traditional, evangelical revivalism. The influences from the Holiness Movement prepared the ground for the personalistic mentality.<sup>269</sup> Although differing personalistic views were common in the theological debate of the 1920s and 1930s, the distinctive personalism of the Oxford Group mentality

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<sup>266</sup> Schöllgen 1955:177, 179. Schöllgen noticed a need of complementing the M.R.A. too, in three important fields: 1) The absence of cult and institution, 2) The absence of ethical principles for the objective 'Wesensgehalt' of the orders of community life, and 3) The absence of a scientific-systematic protection of its ethical values. The importance of the M.R.A. was to act as a bridge to full Christianity, and to feed the minor Christians with the spiritual milk (Schöllgen 1955:183, 180). Cf. Suenens 1953:106, 137 f., who repeats the significant, pre-war Catholic view on the Oxford Group (see further Ward 1937, Browne 1939, Carpenter 1939, Merke 1940). According to Suenens, Caux was inevitably transformed into a new Céacle by Frank Buchman, heralding a second Whitsun, thus opening a new era in the already long history of religions. On the subsequently changed attitude of Rome towards the M.R.A., see Lean 1985:516 ff.

<sup>267</sup> Hambro 1934:6. 'The heart of the matter is a voluntary decision of the will,' Lean 1990:73. Keene 1937:44 (Werkström 1963:206, 216) notes that since Buchman's Keswick experience had been 'one of the will primarily and he saw that in the will is the center of all religious experience,' the movement got a strong voluntaristic strain.

<sup>268</sup> An example of the dominion of this personalistic attitude of action in the Oxford Group is given by Norborg 1962:166, who recalls how Frank Buchman – despite Norborg's severe reservations and criticisms of the subordinated importance given to the veracity questions and doctrinal matters – wanted him in the fellowship because of his stubbornness. Norborg characterizes Buchman as theologically unknowing and a fanatical experience-subjectivist, though a genial psychologist (p.165 f.).

<sup>269</sup> 'The atmosphere [of the Keswick Convention] was very similar to that of the "house-parties",' Harris 1934:84. Cf. Herberg 1960:133, 'a kind of sophisticated pietism in a house-party atmosphere.'

is its exclusive and practical function. The personalistic attitude is given such an exclusive role since it is not regarded as a method, but as a way of life. Though the method or strategy may vary widely in details, it is similar in its personalistic approach under all differing circumstances. Personalistic religion is made relevant to society without any weakening of the concentration on the personal, as the personal ethical possibilities are regarded as the basis of cultural and social ethical practice.<sup>270</sup> The very close relation between the personalistic attitude and practical activity is significant to the Oxford Group way of life, and gives it its special characteristic, in German: 'Sondergeist.' This 'Sondergeist' gives the participants a common pre-comprehension, and works as well as a structure of expectation through which new experiences are being interpreted.<sup>271</sup> The distinctive characteristic of the fellowship of the Oxford Group is neither the terms, nor the 'techniques' of its way of life, but the *combination* of certain 'techniques' – practised in personal, daily experience – with a personal, working fellowship, where the mutual terminology serves as a unifying bond.<sup>272</sup> Thus, the American term for the Oxford Group, the 'First Century Christian Fellowship,' gives an apposite description of the Oxford Group way of life as a mentality at work in the network of the Oxford Group.

### *II.3.2. The Function of the Cure of Souls in the Service of Life-changing*

The distinguishing combination of experienced 'techniques' and fellowship is revealed in the cure of souls practised in the Oxford Group. When this practice has been criticized for its radical, sometimes even rough techniques, it has often been forgotten that this 'method' is not an isolated one, but aims at the incorporation of the confessant in the working fellowship of the Oxford Group. Unlike most revival movements, the Oxford Group did not start with preaching, but with the cure of souls. Therefore, its significant method is not found in

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<sup>270</sup> See Oftestad 1981:71.

<sup>271</sup> See further Paasi 1986: 103 f., Eister 1950:214.

<sup>272</sup> Pfortner [1934]:5: '*Ich erlebte, daß die Einzelerfahrung unvollständig ist, daß Gott uns unlöslich an den Nächsten bindet.*' 'The convert learns a language and a life-style which becomes a part of himself as he takes on a new definition of his own individuality and personality and of the social collectivities in which he participates,' Wilson 1982:119. Clark 1951:27–36, 26, is aware of the fact that the mere philological difficulties cannot be separated from the questions of meaning, i.e. that terminology is also theology. Clark's conclusion, that not so much the 'techniques', but the terms are most distinguishing, is obviously wrong. Really distinguishing is neither the terms, nor isolated 'techniques,' but the combination of 'techniques' and the personal fellowship in teamwork, with the mutual terminology as a unifying bond. This was clearly grasped by the Danish critic, P. Helweg-Larsen 1935:132 f., who states that neither quiet time nor guidance or sharing as such were new. The new element in the Oxford Group was the way everything was practically systematized and made functional through 'team work.'

traditional evangelization, but in the mutual talk in sharing.<sup>273</sup> This cure of souls has a still wider purpose in changing the confessant into a life-changer. This is emphasized especially when the confessant is already living in the fellowship. The underlying question is how to lead the individual into a new experience, releasing new, life-changing activity. Even questions of meaning, forgiveness, or certainty are regarded as inferior to life-changing. The personalistic attitude is of such basic importance, and the personalistic soul-cure has such a fundamental and dominant place in the Oxford Group way of life, that the solution to varying theoretical or practical problems, when expressed in a negative, complaining, or merely complicated manner, is searched for primarily as a solution to the assumed personal problem of the complaining person. When his personal problem is solved, these other problems are easily solved or no longer experienced as problems.<sup>274</sup>

As the personal, working fellowship is both the basis and the aim of the soul-cure, *separation* works as a key-word in the Oxford Group's understanding of sin. Sin is separation, disruption, conflict between God and man, between men, or even within the individual. Consequently, change is a transition or conversion from a separating to a uniting mentality in activity, with *restitution* as its normal consequence. Restitution has often been omitted in the Oxford Group's own descriptions of its principles,<sup>275</sup> but since it formed an important part of Frank Buchman's Keswick experience, it has remained an almost inescapable consequence of personal surrender and change, working at the same time as an act of penance, as an experienced confirmation of God's forgiveness, and as a testimony to outsiders. Since both the amount and the number of repaid taxes were remarkably large, they were much noticed, and useful in the propaganda.<sup>276</sup>

In cases where an individual did not become fully certain of God's forgiveness after restitution, or otherwise suffered from doubts and uncertainty, the standard advice was a yet deeper sharing. Through ruthless, reiterated, loving and patient sharing and deep-sharing (Swedish: 'djupdelning'), the cause of religious paralysis was searched. If the incision had cut deep enough, the will to

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<sup>273</sup> Goeßel 1956:16. After the war, A. Runestam (1954<sup>3</sup>:165 ff., 181 f.) explained the Oxford Group soul-cure based on its three 'weapons': 1) The vision of a new life in freedom and power already here on earth, 2) The possibility of changing human nature through the faith's command over the person, 3) The experienced solidarity in the new life, which means a changed situation. For a comparison between the Oxford Group soul-cure and psycho-analysis, see Runestam 1954<sup>3</sup>, Ch. XI.

<sup>274</sup> See, for example, Stolpe 1939:64: criticizing discussions only sharpen the conflicts, while the Christian life-changer listens for the unsolved personal conflict under the host of arguments. Cf. Stolpe 1949:10 ff.

<sup>275</sup> See, for example, Napier Forde [1927], Day [192?], Rose [192?], Thornton-Duesbery [192?], 1947. In the wide-spread *What is the Oxford Group?* 1933, Restitution is treated in a separate chapter, between Surrender and Guidance.

<sup>276</sup> On the public interest, see Lean 1985:199 (Canada), 221 (Norway), 245 (Switzerland).

life, the contact with God, and the life-changing ability would return.<sup>277</sup> If this unontological way of framing and answering questions in the soul-cure is understood as a reply to the pastoral question how to deal with the individual's original sin, as often was the case in the Scandinavian or German Lutheran environment, the conclusion is bound to be that it is legalistic or moralistic.<sup>278</sup> If the matter instead is understood as a question of life-changing equipment and activity, the conclusion might be that the Oxford Group in its soul-cure was limited to the purpose of life-changing activity. From a traditional Lutheran point of view, this does not necessarily give the soul-cure a legalistic or moralistic impress, but exposes its activist mentality as Reformed, Methodistic or at least American. The Lutheran answer, on the other hand, which states that man after his conversion is *simul justus et peccator*, could not satisfy all 'Groupers,' as they considered it to be used as an excuse for keeping old besetting sins. In other words: since many Oxford Group people saw the misuse of this central, Lutheran doctrine, they had no regard left for the doctrine itself. When, for example, Arvid Runestam tried to combine Lutheran soul-cure with the one of the Oxford Group, he emphasized their mutual complementary function: the personal soul-cure in the team could not do without the institutional one in form of the confession and absolution of the Church. On the other hand, to Runestam the M.R.A. was the Church in action – the Church marching on.<sup>279</sup>

H. A. Walter's *Soul Surgery* – the classical Oxford Group book on the topic – was first published in 1919. Walter states that the convert's work to win others is both the test of the reality of his new experience and one of the surest safeguards against its soon becoming unreal. Life-changing is regarded as a service in the interests of the Kingdom of God.<sup>280</sup> Thus, the Oxford Group answer to

<sup>277</sup> Stolpe 1941:187 (printed 1:0 in Nytt Liv 1940:11), also Stolpe 1939:87 f. Another example is given in Hartman 1984:119 f. Cf. Høgsbro 1936, who – though positive to the Oxford Group – states, that peacelessness might often be caused not by hidden sins, but by the fact that God and his grace, as well as Christ and his Cross, were hidden to the person concerned. Cf. Norborg 1936:38 f., who states that full surrender is faith itself, adding that this is not up to ones capability, but: 'Behold the Lamb of God.' Cf. also Stolpe 1949:53 ff. on the need of a second conversion, quoting St. Cathrine of Siena, Johann Tauler, and St. John of the Cross, and – most explicit – Stolpe to Runestam 1948, Jan. 6 (Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB), where he states that when people try to rearm morally, in the belief of having unerring guidance from God just because of their sharing, they go on sharing till they share themselves in pieces ('De delar och delar, tills de går i tusen delar!'), and emphasizes that no one *ann* morally rearm.

<sup>278</sup> That the question of how to deal with original sin often was a very practical matter, especially to young persons in early Swedish Group revivalism, and not just of theoretical interest, is shown by Giertz 1983:78 f. In dealing with the question of certainty, Jonzon 1934b:17 touched upon change as taught by the Oxford Group, though without making any further analysis.

<sup>279</sup> Runestam 1954<sup>3</sup>:188. Cf. the English edition, 1958, where M.R.A. is omitted.

<sup>280</sup> Walter 1919 and following editions, Ch. II:5, 1936(Sw.):101. Walter's book

the functional question whether the individual's faith does work is that it depends on his ability to change the lives of others. The answer to the question how the faith does work is simply that it works life-changing among others, and that this work continually enlarges the fellowship of life-changers.

In his famous book on the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, Max Weber has emphasized that the Calvinists thought themselves able to identify true faith 'by a type of Christian conduct which served to increase the glory of God.' The good works are 'indispensable as a sign of election.' Thus the Calvinist himself creates the conviction of his salvation.<sup>281</sup> In the course of its development, Calvinism added 'the idea of the necessity of proving one's faith in worldly activity.' The later Puritan saw God's finger in all the details of life. 'And, contrary to the strict doctrine of Calvin, he always knew why God took this or that measure. The process of sanctifying life could thus almost take on the character of a business enterprise.' The consequence of this 'methodical quality of ethical conduct' was a 'thoroughgoing Christianization of the whole life.'<sup>282</sup> Sven Stolpe discussed Weber's theory with emphasis on selfishness and egoism sneaking into Christianity through a back door, and the interpretation of profit as a Christian virtue. Stolpe stated that Weber's theory worked as a schematic summary of the actual development in the West, with its consequence of a strange, Christian attitude to social problems, regarding poverty as necessary or self-inflicted.<sup>283</sup> Still, Stolpe had not liberated him-self from this 'protestant ethic' and its 'spirit of capitalism.' Even in his own system, selfishness and egoism were sneaking into Christianity, by interpreting profit as a Christian virtue, though here transformed to a spiritual level. The answer from the Oxford Group to the functional question whether the individual's faith did work or not, was that it depended on his ability to change the lives of others. Consequently, spiritual poverty was often regarded as self-inflicted.<sup>284</sup>

Here the question has to be raised whether the Oxford Group mentality is a forerunner of the Word-Faith teaching of the 1980s and 1990s. The primary answer is negative, as the Oxford Group did not teach Christian faith as a road to economic or social success, and the question of the Cross was important in testing guidance. However, the interpretation of the Cross as a way to moral and spiritual efficiency, the individual's faith as a road to successful changes of other people's lives, and these successful changes as a test of the reality of the individual's experience, do emphasize a common instrumental view of faith as a road to spiritual success.<sup>285</sup> The corrective is the personal Kenosis, in sharing,

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emphasizes the worth of personal work in both home mission and foreign missions.

<sup>281</sup> Weber 1968<sup>9</sup>:114 f.

<sup>282</sup> Weber 1968<sup>9</sup>:121, 124 f.

<sup>283</sup> Stolpe 1940:152 f.

<sup>284</sup> Later on, Stolpe criticized this view, see Stolpe 1941:233 f., 1949:52 ff.

<sup>285</sup> See, for example, the debate in the Danish *Præsteforeningens Blad* 1935–1936 (Haahr 1935, Nordentoft 1935, and *Præsteforeningens Blad* 1935:425, 729 ff., 824; 1936:17 f., on the successful Church). There are individual relations too; see, for example, Nilsson

and asking for a concrete Cross through guidance in the imitation of Christ.<sup>286</sup>

### II.3.3. *The Education of the Fellowship Man*

A personal and methodical use of quiet time, guidance, and sharing in schools was officially presented in 1933 by Olive M. Jones, former president of the National Education Association in New York. Long before practising guidance and sharing, Miss Jones had applied ‘the group system’ in her education, working with reform pedagogy.<sup>287</sup> She experienced her conversion through the Oxford Group in 1927, and applied its principles on religious education, working with Sam. Shoemaker in the Calvary Protestant Episcopal Church on Manhattan, from 1928 as superintendent of the Church school.<sup>288</sup> Its religious mentality was revivalistic and evangelistic, centred around prayer and guidance. The guidance derived from quiet times in teacher’s meetings could break, amend or discard any law of curriculum or method.<sup>289</sup> The keeping of quiet time in class was generally recommended to the teachers:

Teacher then suggests in a cheerful and friendly tone and manner, ‘Let us ask God to guide us in today’s lesson. Maybe God will tell us something to share with one another.’ A period of absolute silence should follow, children and teachers seated. The length of the period will vary from one to ten minutes, according to

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1986:32 ff.

<sup>286</sup> ‘The third signpost is a question: “Where is the Cross?” [...] In seeking God’s will through daily life we are constantly confronted by the Cross in one aspect or the other’ (Napier Forde [1927]:20).

<sup>287</sup> Olivia Mary Jones was born 1871, principal in New York City schools 1905–1929, director at Calvary House 1928–1934, and worked for the Oxford Group 1932–1941. She was member or chairperson of several City or State Commissions, an honorary life member and director of the N.E.A. and other associations (Who Was Who in America 1973:378).

<sup>288</sup> Jones 1933:IX f., 6, 8 f. As early as 1909, she had published a book on ‘the Group system’ applied to the teaching of children (Jones & Leary & Quish 1909).

<sup>289</sup> Jones 1933:77 (‘Let him choose his doctrinal creed and his mode of church organization if you wish, for neither is basic to the reality of the spiritual life, but teach him to know God in prayer and in guidance’), 115. Still, ‘certain fundamental principles’ were regarded as conditional to ‘a vital spiritual experience’: Conviction, Confession, Restitution, Conversion, Sharing, Surrender, and Guidance (135 f). Jones 1938, which contains stories of childhood and youth from Canada, Egypt, England, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Japan, Norway, Scotland, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United States, is less traditionally revivalistic, with an emphasis on world-change (153 f., 166 f), and states that the book of 1933 was ‘not as complete as it ought to be, for there are some things I did not know about when I wrote that book’ (IX f). Jones 1938 was not translated, and not very much read in Scandinavia, while *Inspired Children* was translated into Danish by Gerda Mundt in 1935, and into Swedish by Karin Stolpe in 1940.

the age and grade of the children. Even with the oldest children the length of this quiet time should rarely exceed five minutes. With the young children it should rarely exceed two minutes. [...]

The quiet time should be ended by prayer. As confidence and spiritual feeling grow, children themselves can and will make prayers themselves. Teachers should encourage them to do so. Following the prayers, opportunity should be provided for sharing the thoughts, the directions received, during the quiet time. Teachers should share with their children.<sup>290</sup>

Even habits common in the homes of many Christian traditions, such as individually formulated, spontaneous prayers, are being treated as consequences of the Oxford Group way of life. Keeping quiet time in school seems to have been limited to religious schools. Similar ideas were practised and propagated in several countries.<sup>291</sup> In the German *Kirche im Angriff* 1937, Willy Zeller, a teacher in Zurich, reported about his experiences of keeping quiet times in school as resulting in a better contact, without demarcations, between parents, pupils, and teachers.

Olive Jones was present at the 1935 Easter house-party in Danish Haslev, and her influence was spread over Scandinavia.<sup>292</sup> At the New Year's meeting for seventy Danish Oxford Group workers in Kolding, 1936–1937, the educational system was said to have been worked out from the spurious idea that knowledge was more important than preparations for encountering the problems of life. True education was a life under the guidance of God, which created characters in touch with life.<sup>293</sup> The Danish Oxford Group work with its new profile and direction for a national change continued at the house-party at Haderslev during Easter 1937. The theme of the meeting was: The Country's Youth – the Country's Future; God-guided Education – God-guided Youth; New Youth – a New Denmark. A result of the meeting was that the nationally limited vision was replaced by a new and Nordic one: The Nordic countries guided by God.<sup>294</sup>

Sven Stolpe's 'Oxford' anthropology, *Människan självt* (1939), had its background in the individual Psychology of Alfred Adler. In his search for a Democratic man,<sup>295</sup> Stolpe presented four different categories of men: the Mask man, the Protest man, the Spectator man, and the Christian Fellowship man.

The Mask man might be a supercilious intellectual, hiding his chaotic life, or

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<sup>290</sup> Jones 1933:137 f.

<sup>291</sup> A widespread example is Kitchen 1934, Ch. X.

<sup>292</sup> See Hela 1935:88 ff., and also Selvig 1935:51 f.

<sup>293</sup> Nytaarssamling i Kolding [1937]:15 ff.

<sup>294</sup> LTV 1937 Nr. 15, Apr. 10, Nyt Liv 1937, April, p.2 'Landets Ungdom – Landets Fremtid.'

<sup>295</sup> In a report from the Larvik house-party (StTD 1936 Sept. 2 'Oxford i arbete'), Stolpe stated that true democracy was that everyone before God admitted that they were sinners. In fiction, Stolpe's ideas were transformed by Blomberg 1939:219, 221.

a pathetic philanthropist, hiding his misanthropy and contempt of man, or an animated emotionalist, hiding the dryness of his entire organism. He might be a frivolous person, always ready to tell so many scabrous stories – in order to hide his fear of his instincts and lack of experience. Or the apathetic person, with his drab, frozen faze, hiding his overheated dream-life.<sup>296</sup> In contrast, the true Christian resolutely throws off his mask, becomes powerful in his honesty, anonymous in his unselfishness, and identifies himself with the other person, in active responsibility for his fellow-man's throwing off his power-draining mask, and becoming simple, unambiguous, open and strong.<sup>297</sup>

The Protest man is an idealist with a gap between his life and his ideology, his social ideals and his private morals, expecting social change without personal change, while the Christian does not demand of others what he does not want to demand of himself – morally re-arming to become able to deal with problems greater than his own.<sup>298</sup>

The Spectator man does not want to see that the idea that he himself is outside of the drama and outside responsibility is a misleading illusion. The present need of the world is a consequence of the implementation of only apparently democratic principles. Spectator humanism speaks of its faith in the human – to be found in themselves, not in their opponents. Critical discussions only sharpens conflicts, while the Christian life-changer listens for the unsolved personal conflict under the host of arguments.<sup>299</sup> In the very moment when a man gives up his thoughts on the wrongs of others and directs the demands to himself, he is able to change and help others.<sup>300</sup>

The so-called Christian Fellowship man is secure, strong, open, and living in fellowship under the guidance of God. His fellowship is built on a concrete experience of all men's destiny being one, with a common possibility to share the grace of God through a radical surrender. Men have searched for guarantees for their certainty of belief in intellectual theories, in mystic or ecstatic states, in their philanthropy, or in a legalistic, 'Pharisaical' etiquette. To the marching, active Christians of today, the sign of the function of their Christian life is something else: only that man is a true Christian, who through his life can change other men into Christians.<sup>301</sup>

Stolpe's analysis was neither as new nor as radical as it might seem. In Alva and Gunnar Myrdal's famous book on the population crisis (1934), criticisms of the unreflecting, obedient Medieval man and of the individualistic, capitalistic

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<sup>296</sup> Stolpe 1939:25 f.

<sup>297</sup> Stolpe 1939:30, 32, 35 f.

<sup>298</sup> Stolpe 1939:41 f., 45, 48 f.

<sup>299</sup> Stolpe 1939:58 f., 64. Cf. Stolpe 1949:10 ff., relates the total failure of this attitude when applied to Ronald Fangen's statements regarding human sufferings.

<sup>300</sup> Stolpe 1939:66 ff.

<sup>301</sup> Stolpe 1939:73, 77, 85 f. The title of the Danish edition, *Frihed og Fællesskab*, does more justice to its contents. The chapters on the Spectator man and the Mask man were reprinted separately with small changes in Stolpe's memoirs, 1975:149 ff., 214 ff.



Competition man were introduced together with the search for a new, independent and co-operative man and a new mentality in the education for a new world.<sup>302</sup> Though Stolpe referred to Myrdal's book, his set of values was different, as were his methods, but the direction away from individualism towards the utopian education of new, co-operating men for a new world was a common feature with Stolpe, Myrdal, and reform pedagogy, for example, the school reforms in Austria, and the so-called Jena plan.<sup>303</sup> Stolpe declared that when teachers and individuals morally rearmed, this was excellent, but to make a revolution, a new school, the creation of a new type of schools was necessary, with emphasis on the creation of the new man.<sup>304</sup>

Stolpe's thoughts were first presented as part of a new pedagogical programme, at the University conference at Swedish Undersåker during Easter 1939. Already in 1938, the young Norwegian Vemund Skard published a pamphlet with modern school-stories, in the style of Olive Jones. Skard emphasized that personal problems had a negative influence on the whole activity of a person, and that when they are solved, for example, through open confession, the result was good. Other recommended practices were mutual openness between teachers and children, and the keeping of quiet time before doing the homework.<sup>305</sup> The Oxford Group was interpreted as a dedication to responsibility, and with God as the real authority, all differences were solved when both parts accepted his authority.<sup>306</sup>

From the Undersåker conference, a message about rebuilding the moral and spiritual foundation of society was sent out to the world, emphasizing the need for a new type of man: open, free, fearless, responsible, living in fellowship, loving his country, and obeying God. The responsibilities of university teachers were emphasized, and the message was signed by the professors Haaken Gran

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<sup>302</sup> Myrdal 1934:262 ff., also 302 f. on the working fellowship. At the General Assembly of the Church of Sweden (Allmänna kyrkliga mötet) in Stockholm, May 1935, Arvid Runestam and the 'atheist' Gunnar Myrdal had expressed mutual respect, though Runestam criticized Myrdal's ideas of liberal sexual morals (*Vårt folks framtid* 1935:55 ff., 62 ff.; for Runestam's earlier critique of Myrdal's book, especially its combination of collectivistic social reforms and individualistic calls for liberal morals, see Runestam 1935b:14 ff.). Contrary to some conservative churchmen, Runestam did not fear an increased state responsibility for the bringing up of children. See Lenhammar 1977:122 ff. On the utopian character of Myrdal 1934, see Hirdman 1989.

<sup>303</sup> Stolpe 1939:82. Criticisms of the Oxford Group for propagating 'the dictatorship of the romantic type of man' are not appropriate in the case of Stolpe's psychological anthropology. Its utopian character both in the understanding of the nature of man and in the plans for a new education are more rational than romantic, springing as they do from the mystical rationalism of guidance. Cf. Gemer 1937:90. On the Austrian school reforms and the Jena plan, see Myhre 1972<sup>2</sup>:380 ff.

<sup>304</sup> Stolpe 1939:82.

<sup>305</sup> Skard 1938:10 f. Miss Jones had been introduced in Norway as early as in May, 1935, by R. Selvig in Oslo og omegns barnevernslag (see Selvig 1935).

<sup>306</sup> Skard 1938:15.

and Eiliv Skard, Oslo, Aage Bentzen, Copenhagen, Ebenezer Cunningham, Cambridge, and Herbert Turnbull, St. Andrews, who represented different faculties, Dr. Bentzen being the only theologian.<sup>307</sup> In treating the matter of creating a new type of man, the conference stated – in a millennialist direction – that if a new man was created, the new world would be here with the millennial peace: the new man ‘creates confidence, producing the social and economic conditions where divorce, industrial conflicts, or war are both impossible and unnecessary.’<sup>308</sup> In the same way as the Undersåker conference gave what was called the philosophy of a new education – its appeal was published in several languages, broadcast, etc. – the Ljungskile conference in August 1939, aimed at showing how the new opinion was built on ‘the fundament of listening to God as the deciding factor in the life of men and nations’.<sup>309</sup>

In *The Philosophy of Courage or The Oxford Group Way*, Philip Leon included a short chapter on childhood and education, stating that ‘unchanged education = the inculcation of fear,’ while ‘changed education = sharing.’ When a child is brought up by people ‘who have placed their own lives under the direction of absolute love,’ education is creative. Children can get their guidance directly from God – even more strikingly than grown-ups. There is no danger of idolizing parents or educators, ‘for from the beginning he knows them as open sinners who refer to God.’<sup>310</sup>

In *Slægten som kommer* (1940), a Scandinavian equivalent of Miss Jones’ books, the Danish Cand. mag. Grethe Morthorst wanted to promote the knowledge of a special form of development of character.<sup>311</sup> Her examples were

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<sup>307</sup> ‘Oxfordbudskap till hela världen,’ ‘Universitetet vägen till ny kultur,’ StTD 1939, Apr. 5.

<sup>308</sup> ‘The new type of man’ (dupl), 1939:3. Henning Österberg, ‘Oxford i fjällen,’ StTD 1939, Apr. 15. The choice of problems was not original with the Oxford Group. The World Conference of Christian Youth in Amsterdam, July–August 1939, dealt with the questions of Christian youth and education, including the qualities of leadership in Christian organizations, even with the ‘Christian cell’ system. The cells could be used ‘to give people both a personal religion which is a source of real power for victorious living, and also a strengthening fellowship with others who have already found this power to face common tasks in social and personal life’ (Christus Victor [1939:]141). Källström 1939:14 f. stated, that while Oxford – like primitive Christianity – had a pronounced catastrophe theory, it totally lacked an eschatology. While primitive Christianity was directed towards the parusy of Christ, the catastrophe theory of the Oxford Group was immanent in this world.

<sup>309</sup> [Dupl.] ‘Konfidentiellt. Får ej tryckas. P. M. Ljungskile II,’ the appended duplicated letter signed by S. Fraenki, N. Karlman, and D. Grimshaw (1939, July 25). According to Howard Blake’s report on Moral Re-Armament in Scandinavia since the outbreak of war (dupl., Caux Archives), the Ljungskile conference was inspired by the message sent by English educationalists to the World Assembly for M.R.A. in California.

<sup>310</sup> Leon 1940<sup>3</sup>:177 ff.

<sup>311</sup> Morthorst 1940:35. Morthorst had visited Stolpe in December, 1939 (Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1940, Jan. 8, UUB).

collected from homes and schools in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, with only a few stories from England or America. Miss Morthorst referred to Myrdal's book on the population crisis, and what it says about individually strong collectivists,<sup>312</sup> and showed the way from self-assertion to a feeling of solidarity, closing her book with the Undersåker Report of 1939, including the different types of man presented by Sven Stolpe.<sup>313</sup> An important prerequisite was the sharing of teachers and parents with the children, the latter taking the responsibility for grown-ups as well.<sup>314</sup> Restitution leads the way to certainty of God's forgiveness, shown by an example from Olive Jones' *Inspired Children*. Many examples were given from quiet time in class. The aim is a clear, thorough change of character, described as a revision and a new creation in the mind, which develops an inner discipline.<sup>315</sup> Compared to *Inspired Children*, the context of *Slægten som kommer* is less Church-centred, though clearly Christian, and built on the Oxford Group vision of a cultural and national renaissance.<sup>316</sup>

In the following year, Paul Brodersen, in his book on Denmark's destiny and the voice of God, wrote on education for fellowship, getting to know the joy of helping others and working with others for something good. This upbringing should be linked to an education for true liberty and for the life under the true authority<sup>317</sup> – words that got a wider, political meaning during the German occupation of Denmark. In an article published in 1943, shortly before the German occupation forces took over all administrative power in Denmark, Vald. Hvidt adapted the democratic educational ideas to social life on a broader scale. He emphasized the need for a third alternative beside the public and private initiatives: the private-social one, with the citizens spontaneously acting for the best of society. He was well aware that a Christian society might never become a reality, but as a life, lived by individuals, it was something dynamic, realized as an effort.<sup>318</sup> In 1945, a booklet on educational questions was published as a help for talks in smaller circles, by Brodersen, Grethe Morthorst, some school people and parents, concentrating on seeking solutions to distinct problems, but

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Blomberg 1940, Jan. 8, UUB).

<sup>312</sup> Morthorst 1940:98 f.

<sup>313</sup> Morthorst 1940:23 ff., 103 ff., 100. On the Swedish edition, see S. Stolpe: 'Framtidens människa,' SvM 1941, May 2, which emphasizes the aim of the democratic school to educate the Fellowship man. In the Swedish edition, Morthorst 1941b, the teachers' appeal was also printed. On the Swedish Ljungskile conference, 1939, and the work for a new education, see also Fraenki 1979:29 ff.

<sup>314</sup> Morthorst 1940:46 f. To a critical reader, the practice of quiet time among children gives the questions of guidance and authority new life, as children in their quiet times often seem to 'get' exactly what their parents want.

<sup>315</sup> Morthorst 1940:64 f., 69, 95.

<sup>316</sup> Morthorst 1942:24 emphasizes Christ in me = liberation, We in Christ = fellowship.

<sup>317</sup> Brodersen 1941:110.

<sup>318</sup> Hvidt 1943:5.

without even mentioning the Oxford Group practices of guidance and sharing.<sup>319</sup>

In Sweden, Margit Cassel-Wohlin, in her book on the rescue of the family, wrote a chapter on training for freedom and fellowship, emphasizing the habit of cooperation, openness and honesty, and inner authority.<sup>320</sup> The honesty had to be mutual, parents admitting their wrongs as well as children. The quiet time is presented as honest thinking, practised by some teachers together with their children, thinking over the day or a certain situation of conflict, or a positive question, for example, how to get a better spirit in class or more peace during meals.<sup>321</sup> The standards needed were found in the Sermon of the Mount, explained as love, unselfish serving, and respect for human dignity, sociologically motivated as allowing the richest personal development together with the most unlimited cooperation. By thinking honestly, i.e. listening to God, children were trained to be free, independent human beings.<sup>322</sup> This emphasis on education of the personality and life-training instead of traditional teaching of different subjects only, meant a higher value put on the traditional female role in education in homes and schools. Dr. Wohlin further appreciated the break with individualism in Myrdal's book, and discussed concrete social reforms, with examples as a new family allowance system, proposed by the Gotthard-Bund in Switzerland, or the Beveridge Plan in Britain.<sup>323</sup>

#### *II.3.4. The Function of Group Guidance and Sharing as Alternative or Complement to Sermon and Sacrament*

More topical than the question of whether the Oxford Group was deliberately trying to separate itself from traditional Church life is the question whether Group practices themselves worked as alternatives to or substitutes for regular Church services, or if their function was complementary.

First, we must observe that the cheerful atmosphere at the meetings of the

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<sup>319</sup> Nogle Opdragelses-Spørgsmaal. 1945. Co-editors were School Director E. Carstensen, Training College Principal Alfr. Christiansen, Civil Engineer J. Halse, Cand. mag. Miss Else Hansen, Deputy School Director I. Jeppesen. Mrs. Annabeth Krarup, the teacher Tage Mortensen, and Cand. mag. Aage Nielsen.

<sup>320</sup> The emphasis on mutual honesty and fellowship is found already in an early booklet on little children, Cassel-Wohlin 1932:33 ff., 55 ff., apparently without any inspiration by Group revivalism. See also M. Wohlin: 'Ungdom av i dag,' StTD 1940, Dec. 28, with subsequent contributions to the debate in StTD 1940, Dec. 29, 30, 31; 1941, Jan. 2.

<sup>321</sup> [Cassel-]Wohlin 1943:216, 220 f.

<sup>322</sup> [Cassel-]Wohlin 1943:222 ff. On the practice of quiet time in Swedish schools, see Värmlands Posten 1944, Jan. 14: 'Diskussionen om «tänkeböckerna» i Kristinehamn,' discussed further in Ch. V.3.4.

<sup>323</sup> [Cassel-]Wohlin 1943:144 f., 148 f.

Oxford Group was clearly meant to stand out from liturgical services and revivalistic meetings. This was a consciously psychological move to reach people otherwise unfamiliar with the forms of churches and denominations.<sup>324</sup> In this sense, the intention was to form an alternative, though simultaneously the function was complementary.

Secondly, we must ask if sharing as an act of initiation in the practice worked as a substitute for Baptism, and if the continuing soul-cure, especially Group sharing, worked as a substitute for sermon or Holy Communion. There are clear examples of interpreting sharing either as a complement or as a substitute.<sup>325</sup> In his essay on the Oxford Group Movement from a missiological point of view, Bernt Oftestad states that sharing is the foundation of the ecclesiology of the movement, as it constitutes the group. The practice of the Oxford Group is worked out as a communication – testimony and sharing are carriers of the message of sins and victories, while the receiver answers, confessing his sins. Delivered as a testimony, this then in itself functions as a message. Oftestad finds the real contents of this communication in sharing – carrying and receiving the mentality of openness: communication itself is the message of communication. This implies that the method properly used includes a way of life in mutual openness. Oftestad concludes that sharing – working as a process of social interaction – may be compared to psycho-analytical therapy, and as such must be regarded as more modern than often stated.<sup>326</sup>

The relation between sharing and the sermons and sacraments of the Church may also – in this context – be compared to the relation between different therapies and Church worship: sometimes working as a substitute, though without institutional consequences. As communicating a way of life is only one of the functions of Christian worship, sharing works as a complementary challenge to the preaching and the liturgy of the Church, rather than as a substitute. In another context, communicating a new way of life may easily work as the only function of worship, and traditional services may then easily be substituted by group sharing. When sharing is stated as the foundation of the ecclesiology of the Oxford Group, this is not to be understood as if the Oxford Group as

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<sup>324</sup> Schjørring 1976:65 on a 'Stimmung bei den Kundgebungen [...] diese [heitere] Stimmung, die bewußt als Alternative zum Gottesdienst hervortritt.'

<sup>325</sup> Oehler 1932, Vorwort: 'Gruppenbewegung und Predigen! – Viele werden sagen: Das geht nicht zusammen! Aber es geht, muß sogar gehen. Die Forderung heißt nicht mitteilen *oder* predigen, sondern sie heißt Predigt *und* Bekennen. [...] Die Gemeinschaft der Gruppe soll zum Wort hinleiten und das Wort in die Gemeinschaft der Gruppe führen. [...] Dieses Neue, das im Grund etwas Uraltes ist, der Gemeinde nahe zu bringen und gleichzeitig zu zeigen, wie gut biblische Predigt und Gruppengeist sich miteinander vertragen, und wie sie sich gegenseitig befruchten, ist Zweck dieser Predigten.' Cf. Russell 1933:224: '[...] I had experienced no noticeable quickening from baptism or Holy Communion, I did get almost immediately a renewed sense of the Holy Spirit's burning and glowing indwelling after I had frankly shared.'

<sup>326</sup> Oftestad 1972:19 ff., 32.

such regarded itself as a Church. Instead of ecclesiology we could use 'groupology,' only subsequently asking the ecclesiological question whether the Group or individual Group members regarded the Group as a Church or even as *the* Church. Here the given answers are very much divided. Extreme examples like that of Bill Sunday (the Church as identical to the fellowship of life-changing men)<sup>327</sup> are frequent, though not representative. The point is that the ecclesiological doctrine of the Oxford Group – if there be such – is of less importance than the actual ecclesiological function in its practice.

The lack of special Oxford Group churches or chapels forms an obvious and important element in the structure of the Group, especially as Group members took part in the worship of their respective denominations.<sup>328</sup> Much due to a noticeable indifference towards traditional worship, the Oxford Group has sometimes been accused of replacing Church services by sectarian worship. In Cambridge, 1932, the Oxford Group made a formal approach to the President of the C.I.C.C.U., suggesting the transformation of daily prayer meetings to daily sessions for sharing, and of Sunday Bible readings and evangelistic sermons into team meetings.<sup>329</sup> A more general observation is that the emphasis on the soul-cure is so heavy that sermons and sacraments are being overshadowed.<sup>330</sup> Though house-parties or conferences often took place at Easter or Whitsun, they sometimes almost totally lacked the doctrinal or liturgical character of these feasts, and were criticized as poor and churchless.<sup>331</sup> Sometimes, new Group members without ecclesiastical background valued Group fellowship much higher than Church attending.<sup>332</sup> Viktor Södergren even states that the Group – i.e. the local team – was the practical sacrament of the Oxford Group. Such a terminology is significant of other personalistic ideas as well. For example, Arvid Runestam spoke of the sacrament of fellowship already before his acquaintance with Group revivalism.<sup>333</sup> On the other hand, Holy Com-

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<sup>327</sup> Stolpe 1938:107 f.

<sup>328</sup> See Fjellbu 1937:129 f. on the need in every movement for special rooms for worship, as an explanation of the stream of newly awakened Group people into the churches; Høgsbro 1936:43 f. on daily surrender as a daily renewal of baptism.

<sup>329</sup> Pollock 1953:240.

<sup>330</sup> See Werkström 1963:225 f.

<sup>331</sup> For example, the Danish Ollerup party, Easter 1936, was criticized by the principal of the local, Grundtvigian folk high-school, Lars Bækhoj, as a poor Easter for Danish Christians, with much talk on what Oxford had done and what a changed Denmark should do, but only a little on God's saving acts, the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ. The singing of the Royal Anthem had drowned the only Easter hymn that was sung, Ammundsen 1936:103 f.

<sup>332</sup> Ramm 1938:399 ff. shows – in fictional form – a good example, when a small group in Oslo on Whitsunday held their own 'service,' instead of attending church, on the rather egocentric ground that they would get more out of the day by a joint talk on their future way, than by sitting 'passive' in a church.

<sup>333</sup> Södergren 1945:233, Runestam 1932:7, 1933b:24, also 1935:104, 128 ('das Sakrament

munion was often, at times always, celebrated during House-parties, and the number attending traditional Church services grew in many places, even when the local Group work was started without cooperation with the congregations. During the August campaign in Danish Jutland in 1935, daily celebrations were administered to the English team.<sup>334</sup> Special Oxford services were arranged in churches, at least in Norway, Denmark and Sweden, for short periods only, while the influence on preaching and hymn writing was deep, lasting for decades. The modern circles of Bible studies were to a great extent inspired by Group revivalism, especially in the Church of Sweden, as was the Small Church Movement on the Swedish West coast.<sup>335</sup>

The attitudes of the churches towards the practices of the Oxford Group varied. After leaving the fellowship, Sven Stolpe found that, while the Church of England regarded the Oxford Group as a special, somewhat suspect form of Christianity, with cooperation difficulties as a consequence, the Church of Sweden was almost submissive in her generous and thankful receiving attitude, and could thus be forced by the Group into a precarious situation. The Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, stated that the Group was splendid, must be supported and taken care of, as the Spirit surely was at work in its action – though it was not Christian, but what it said: a moral rearmament!<sup>336</sup> We may add that, while the working practice of the Oxford Group could remind of Methodism, its lack of ecclesiastical structure troubled the Anglicans, while Swedish Lutherans often interpreted the Oxford Group as a new revival inside the ecclesiastical structures of the Church of Sweden.

Some of Ernst Troeltsch's descriptions of the sect type are clearly recognizable in the Oxford Group's statement that it revived Christian fellowship in its original form, emphasizing the subjective work of the apostles, and uniting the religious individualism preached by the Gospel with the religious fellowship. Still, as the Group had no office of the ministry, not even the function of a ministry, it cannot be classified as a sect in the meaning of Troeltsch.<sup>337</sup> In a personal letter to Buchman, Emil Brunner criticized the 'underlying "groupism",' defined as 'the idea that the Oxfordgroup is *the* answer to the problems of the world,' which was 'exclusiveness or sectarianism,' while Theodor Haug's reaction was against all forms of 'Gruppengesetzlichkeit,' including the demand of a complete sharing as introduction to team membership.<sup>338</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr described the Oxford Group as 'akin to the perfec-

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des lebendigen Christen').

<sup>334</sup> S. Linton to A. Lehtonen 1939, Jan. 30 (RAH).

<sup>335</sup> See Eckerdal 1992:119 ff., 225, and further Jarlert 1994.

<sup>336</sup> Stolpe to A.Runestam 1948, Jan. 6 (Okat.saml. Runestam, UUB).

<sup>337</sup>Troeltsch 1981:342, 339: 'This does not mean that the spirit of fellowship is weakened by individualism; indeed, it is strengthened, since each individual proves that he is entitled to membership by the very fact of his service to the fellowship.' The full-time workers in general cannot be regarded as holding a ministry.

<sup>338</sup> Copy of Brunner to Buchman 1937, Nov. 8 (ZZ). Brunner emphasized that 'Christ

tionist sects of all Christian ages, though it is a movement rather than a sect, which is to say that it has no real social cohesion but relies upon the promoting skill of its founder and leader, Frank Buchman.’<sup>339</sup> Applying the terminology of Bryan Wilson, David C. Belden discusses ‘non-separatist sects’ and ‘pre-sectarian movements.’<sup>340</sup> As a movement it may in an informal way appear more or less sectarian.

Max Weber’s definition of the purest form of charismatic authority as realized in the Prophet may be appropriately used as a description of Frank Buchman, and some of his full-time-workers, as representing a totally new order, indifferent to the present economical order, even to the question of economical order, being subject to legendary descriptions, living on spontaneous gifts, etc. Bengt Holmberg’s criticism of Weber’s theory, that Weber tends to neglect the cognitive substance in the message of the charismatic leader, despite the fact that charisma is constructive in aiming at a new fellowship and even a new society, is relevant in our context as well.<sup>341</sup> While Buchman did not actually emphasize classical Christian doctrine, his own experiences were transformed into a tradition with cognitive moments, having their own inherent rationality.

### *II.3.5. God-Guided Economy*

After 1921, Frank Buchman received no salary. His decision was followed by the founding of A First Century Christian Fellowship in 1922.<sup>342</sup> The solution to the economical problems of Group work as well as of individuals in the Oxford Group was expressed by Buchman as ‘If everyone cared enough and everyone shared enough, everyone would have enough,’ accepted as ‘the economic creed of the Oxford Group,’ interpreted as ‘the modern version of early apostolic practice.’ The funds of the Group had come from four main sources:

1. Donations which people give as they are able from time to time.
2. Regular gifts made under covenant for a period of seven years or longer.
3. Legacies and interest on them.
4. The Group has also made use of literature as a means of spreading its Christian message as widely as possible and any funds from this source are available for the

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[...] has other agencies as well as he has living members of his body which are not in the Oxfordgroup [sic], even such who for this or that reason are among the critics of the group.’ Th. Haug: *Mein Beitrag für Marburg*. 1946, Feb. 5 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>339</sup> Niebuhr 1955:62. In *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (1936, 1948<sup>4</sup>:188 f.), Niebuhr classified the Buchman movement as ‘the final and most absurd expression of the romantic presuppositions of liberal Christianity,’ and focused on the effort to ‘apply the law of love to politics without qualification.’

<sup>340</sup> Belden 1976:27 f.

<sup>341</sup> Holmberg 1978:144 f.

<sup>342</sup> Lean 1985:97 ff., with details of Buchman’s economy.



general purpose of the Group's work, but in fact the greater part of the proceeds have been used again to extend the publication side of the work.<sup>343</sup>

A manuscript from the house-party at Lund in 1944, shows a strong confidence in God's plans and guidance even in the details of furnishing private homes, or daily food purchases, group members often checking their material needs with friends. It is emphasized that safety is provided by God, not but money or life insurances, but by obedience. It is stated that God provides culture, clothing, and comfort, and does not demand ascetism.<sup>344</sup> In a Swedish, duplicated letter on guided economy (1943), the essential point in Christian economy is explained not as everyone getting his God-guided needs satisfied, but each one getting them satisfied in such a way that men are changed and surrender their lives to Christ. Thus, the purpose of guided economy was guided men.<sup>345</sup> Another important point was not to rest in economical surrender to God, but to dispose of money in new, unconventional ways.<sup>346</sup>

The full-time workers formed a special category in the Group work. Like Buchman himself, they received 'no salary, bonus, pension or endowment from the Group.' Each was dependent on 'his own faith and prayer – on the truth, tested in experience, that where God guides, He provides.'<sup>347</sup> An example of detailed information is found in the accounts of one of the full-time workers in Scandinavia. A duplicated, confidential letter mentions a total sum of 8,189:60 Swedish Crowns in 312 entries from 121 givers during 1942, compared to remunerations for lectures, etc. of 2,144 Swedish Crowns minus expenses for travels (650 Sw. Cr.). Detailed lists of gifts confirm the impression of many small gifts (10–25 Sw. Cr.) from many regular givers. Larger sums (100–350 Sw. Cr.) came more irregularly from very few persons. Only very few, and no large sums seem to have come from abroad.<sup>348</sup>

In a duplicated letter in November 1945, Miss Laila Persson described her experiences in financial matters. When she started her work as responsible for the administration and economy of the Swedish Oxford Group office Vänd Strömmen in 1940, she found it a matter of course to ask for money in duplicated letters, but the more experienced workers taught her that this would only render superficial or delay the friends in their sense of responsibility. Instead, she learnt just to explain the actual needs and trust that others were seeking guidance, which was something different from begging. This method worked.<sup>349</sup>

<sup>343</sup> Thornton-Duesbery 1947:13 ff.

<sup>344</sup> Ms. 'Gudsledd ekonomi' by Sten Westling and Elin Westling (Villa Alnäs).

<sup>345</sup> Hartman 1984:116, with Swedish quotations from a letter of Silas Rydgård, April 2, 1943.

<sup>346</sup> 'Kära vän!' Stockholm 1945, Feb. 23 (dupl., EPC).

<sup>347</sup> Thornton-Duesbery 1947:12.

<sup>348</sup> '(Konfidentiellt!)' 1943, Jan. 14 (dupl.); 'Gifts received 1941,' '1943 Inkomster,' 'Inkomster 1944,' 'Inkomster 1945' (DWC).

<sup>349</sup> Laila Persson to 'Kära vän!' 1945, Nov. 10 (dupl.).

Of all people involved in the Oxford Group, with the exception of the unemployed, the writers probably lived under the most irregular and unsure economic conditions. In June 1938, Sven Stolpe described his economical problem as one to be shared with the team. In the previous year, he had not written any book. Then he had taken advance on his new novel, which was now spoiled. This was due to guidance, but meant an acute economical crisis, as he could not live by his journalism only. If it was guidance, he was not worried, and considered a bank loan.<sup>350</sup> In January 1940, Stolpe wrote that he and his wife had no security, as he gave all his time to Oxford, and only his nights to work for a living. As he had given financial help to others, the house must now be closed until Summer, the two maids were discharged, etc.<sup>351</sup>

In November 1939, one of the leading workers in the Swedish Oxford Group, Ernst Roos, complained to Harry Blomberg, that Blomberg and Thure Oskarsson, while having placed their lives at God's disposal, being literary Oxford prophets, still lived in economical fear, keeping double occupations, and lacking time for joint listening to God.<sup>352</sup> As the artist's need of seclusion was a constant difficulty for the writers in the Oxford Group, the most sore point probably was Roos' declaration that Blomberg lived a comfortable life, and that social peace could not be created by putting down the receiver when people were looking for help.<sup>353</sup>

It has been said that Frank Buchman 'received far more opposition from

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<sup>350</sup> Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1938, June 3 (UUB): 'Jag har offrat hela förra året utan att skriva ngn bok. I år satte jag till alla klutar och tog förskott på min roman. När den nu går åt pipan – vilket jag har ledning tro är riktigt, trots att det svider /för första ggn på många år var jag i de rätta tagen och har skrivit delar av boken, som Bertil Malmberg anser vara det bästa jag ngsin lyckats med!/- så betyder det akut ekonomisk kris; jag är nämligen icke i stånd att klara mig på bara journalistiken. Jag känner ingen oro; naturligtvis kommer det att klara sig, om det är ledning. Jag överväger alltså – förr i världen skulle jag aldrig ha gjort det – att ta upp ett lån i en bank, vilket går lätt, som skyddar mig för det värsta under den tid Frank gör landet osäkert, dvs kanske de närmaste månaderna. Jag tror mig också om att till hösten få klar en liten oxfordbok, som länge sysselsatt mig, och som kanske kan ge litet.'

<sup>351</sup> Stolpe to Blomberg 1940, Jan. 8 (UUB).

<sup>352</sup> Ernst Roos to Blomberg 1939, Nov. 16 (UUB): 'Läs apostlagärningarna 5–1 så får du se vad som fordras av en Kristi apostel. Tood och Bill ha full täckning i sina liv för sitt budskap men icke du och Thure – Det är Ni som blockerat arbetet – Säg det en annan gång. Du kan tillsammans med andra vara med och arbeta fram en ny ordkristendom och även skaffa dig en ny stor religiös läsekrets trots din fruktan – ty så dant hör världen till.'

<sup>353</sup> 'Ditt motiv för mötena har du ingen täckning för i ditt eget bekvämlighetsliv. Social fred kan icke skapas genom att lägga av luren när folk vill ha hjälp. Ditt budskap blir därför en ny falsk växel på Demokratins konto och ökat kaos. [...] Inför mig har du icke velat leva som du brukade säga – "På öppna fältet" – i ekonomiskt avseende. [...] Jag är villig att offra en falsk vänskap för Guds krav på ärlighet. Om jag framställt mina tankar brutalt förlåt mig [...].'

homosexuals than he ever did from capitalists, and for good reason: he was uncompromising in opposing one kind of “sin” but not the other.<sup>354</sup> However, this criticism does not reveal the real differences in Buchman’s attitude. He was, in fact, as uncompromising in opposing what he understood as economic sins as sexual sins, as far as they were on a personal level. The difficulty is that, while sexual sins (apart from the porn industry, etc.) always have a personal character, economic ones may to a great extent be suprapersonal, and not perceived by either the social personalism or the subsequent democratic ideology of the Oxford Group.

### *II.3.6. Moral Re-Armament as a Fundamental Idea, Subsequently Given an Ideological Function*

As a structure may imply or generate a common mentality among individuals involved, it may also imply or generate a common ideology. This lesson, emphatically taught to the Oxford Group by the confrontation with pronounced doctrinal, non-Christian structures, in practice forced a distinction between structures of mentality and structures of ideology. During the 1930s, the structure of the Oxford Group had been an absolute structure of mentality. It is interesting to note that the confrontation with pronounced doctrinal, Christian structures did not bring about any such distinction between structures. As even this absolute structure of mentality postulates the individual’s encounter with an idea, the structure itself was not built on any fixed doctrine or ideology, but on a common mentality, with very few ideological elements, being supernatural and superdenominational, but also super-Christian. This is clearly stated in Frank Buchman’s broadcast speech from Boston, October 29, 1939, in its explicitly open attitude: ‘Think of the vast forces available – Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Gentile; think of the spiritually re-armed everywhere who may be the pacemakers for the pacemakers of to-morrow! M.R.A. is open to all and bars none. It is a quality of life.’<sup>355</sup>

The fundamental idea<sup>356</sup> of Moral Re-Armament was neither a theory nor a formula, but a strategy, working through a mentality or way of life. It was modelled as a religious answer to political questions raised by the situation of current military rearmament and imminent risk of war.<sup>357</sup> During the war, the

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<sup>354</sup> Belden 1992:7.

<sup>355</sup> Buchman 1942:44.

<sup>356</sup> ‘A fundamental idea [Swedish: ‘grundmotiv’], in the sense in which we use the term, is an answer given by some particular type of outlook to one or more [...] questions. This answer need not necessarily take the form of a theoretical proposition or formula; it can equally well be a way of life, which implies the taking up of an attitude with regard to these questions,’ Nygren 1932:28.

<sup>357</sup> In the foreword to Buchman 1942:IV, Arthur H. Baker and J. P. Thornton-Duesbery still wrote about ‘the world-wide programme of Moral Re-Armament,’ lacking the

need for a democratic, alternative ideology to Fascism and Communism changed the interpretation of these questions and their answers into political, ideological answers. While the fundamental problem all the time was an ethical one, it was used in differently coloured 'motif contexts' or structures: first in a mainly religious, then in a mainly political context.

In Stolpe's anthropology, *Människan själv*, the democratic problem was still one of social personalism, that democracies did not produce democrats, but self-ish individualists. Not only their implementation, but the very principles of democracy were criticized as insufficient. The enemy was private, atheistic materialism rather than political, atheistic totalitarianism, and the alternative to political -isms was personalistic, and not political: the Christian fellowship, and a personal 'revolution' rather than an ideological 'rearmament' was the key-word.<sup>358</sup>

There was a danger that the strategy of a moral rearmament could be interpreted as a matter of ethics in a secularized context lacking the Oxford Group way of life – a danger growing with the importance of the political function of the M.R.A. This has often been put forward by its critics, but was emphasized from inside as well, as early as 1939, by Stephen Foot, asking Frank Buchman for 'the key thought' how to move those who had 'now approved of the idea of Moral Re-Armament [...] on to the idea of listening to God or guidance.'<sup>359</sup>

From 1943, the fundamental, ethical idea of Moral Re-Armament was interpreted as an answer to preferably political questions, with the emphasis more on its political function as a moral foundation for democracy, side by side with its religious function of permeating and changing Christianity – and other believers – i.e. as an ideology with democracy as a self-evident presupposition as important as religion. The increasing emphasis on this moral foundation of democracy rather than on Christian faith is clearly recognizable from 1943 onwards, for example in Frank Buchman's speeches: 'Take the four absolutes, honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. To arm a people you must give them these simple basic standards. You must have that emphasis on morals, plus the saving power of Jesus Christ.'<sup>360</sup>

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ideological interpretation.

<sup>358</sup> Stolpe 1939:15, 59, 69 ff. Here (59) 'ideologies' still is an expression of the realization of only apparently democratic principles. Cf. Christofferson 1956:143, who underlines the importance of Stolpe's book for Frank Buchman's subsequent vision of a new type of man.

<sup>359</sup> Foot to Buchman 1939, June 20 (M.R.A. Archives, NLC).

<sup>360</sup> Speech at Mackinac Island, Aug. 1943, quoted in Thornton-Duesbery 1947:8. The listeners were probably all Christians. Von Goëssel 1956:87 comments: 'Die MRA hat so völlig ungewohnte Wege beschritten, daß seitens der Theologie der Verdacht entstehen mußte, es handele sich hier um einen neuen politischen Idealismus in religiösen Gewand, ja noch mehr; um einen dämonischen Versuch, die Welt zu verbessern und mit einer Ideologie zu gewinnen. *Die MRA muß sich an die vorderste Front wagen, aber sie darf nicht*

At the same time, an open, national attitude was adopted, for example, in Switzerland, where the Gotthard-Bund was built on a Christian view of man, open to non-Christians as well. When Th. Bovet – on behalf of the Gotthard-Bund – emphasized the need of strength through personal faith and decision, whether Christian or not, the consequence was that faith was interpreted as a totally personal thing, focusing on fidelity, while its doctrinal contents were neglected or privatized.<sup>361</sup> In this, the personalistic emphasis remained on an altered framework. This partly new interpretation was dependent on a revised analysis of the actual situation, with new emphasis on the function of ideology, as Dr. Siegfried Ernst explains it:

Die Umfunktionierung des Verhaltens durch die totalitären Ideologien ist ‘Moralische Abrüstung’, die Ersetzung der ganzen Wahrheit durch Teilwahrheiten und Pseudowissenschaft ist ‘Geistige Abrüstung’, und die Zerstörung des Glaubens an Gott und sein Ersetzen durch den Aberglauben des Materialismus und Atheismus ist ‘Religiöse Abrüstung’. [...] Der Weg aus der Sklaverei führt deshalb über eine neue Willensentscheidung zur Hingabe unseres Lebens an den Willen und Plan Gottes. Daraus kommt die neue Motivation und die Bereitschaft, absolute moralische Verhaltensnormen anzunehmen, sich ständig daran zu messen und danach auszurichten. Der Prozeß der ‘religiösen und moralischen Aufrüstung’ muß aber auch zu einem neuen Denken führen, also zu einer ‘Geistigen Aufrüstung’.<sup>362</sup>

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wird ihre ganze Arbeit.’ Cf. the Roman Catholic professor Karl Adam of Tübingen, who, in his essay on *Die ‘Moralische Aufrüstung’ und das abendländische Christentum* (1952), in his analysis of Moral Re-Armament based on the new situation in Europe after World War II, stated that Frank Buchman in focusing on the four absolute standards strove for the ethical prerequisites of any religious faith: ‘die persönliche Erfahrung des ethischen und religiösen *Aprioris*’. Moral Re-Armament was to be regarded as the best possible nursery-school for Christian faith, though its political possibilities were limited. The nucleus of Buchman’s message was Christian. Behind the pious subjectivity of Caux was the objective, the Christian revelation, the Christian dogma, and the Christian Church (Adam 1952:7 ff.). The positive views of the Catholics Adam and Schöllgen were of decisive importance to B. Lund Yates’ popular presentation of Buchman and contemporary religious thought, 1958:4 ff.: Buchman’s first contribution was the attempt ‘to isolate and present the universals of faith,’ the first universal of faith being its ‘moral basis.’ The first step to faith was the restoration of absolute moral standards – a question of uncompromisingly applying to himself the moral standards a man already recognizes with the roots of his being. Thus, this step could be taken alike by men of strict faith or no faith at all. The second universal of faith was that ‘obedience to the Holy Spirit’ is the key to change. And obedience is open to anyone, whatever their actual beliefs or unbeliefs. The third universal was ‘the normality of God’s power at work in a man’s heart.’ Buchman’s second major contribution to religious thought was ‘the far-reaching intellectual effort to remould the whole machinery of life under the categories of faith.’

<sup>361</sup> Bovet 1943:7.

<sup>362</sup> Ernst 1982:154 f., 150: ‘Einer “Bekehrung” des einzelnen aber muß einer “Bekehrung

Some of the critics of the Oxford Group had for a long time criticized its lack of a social programme. Within the Oxford Group too, the encounter with the totalitarian ideologies had revealed the limits of social personalism. There was a need for a widened foundation, with new possibilities of ‘conventional’ thinking and cooperation with political forces outside the working fellowship of the Group.

The use of Moral Re-Armament as a designation for the fellowship, network, or organization around it, is of very late origin. As late as in 1939, *The Oxford Group* obtained legal incorporation, in 1941 Peter Howard wrote on ‘the Group’s Moral Re-Armament work,’<sup>363</sup> and in an account of the principles and growth of its work, in 1947, Julian Thornton-Duesbery still used *The Oxford Group* as the summarizing term. Up to some years after the Second World War, while Moral Re-Armament was regarded as a fundamental idea, and from 1943 interpreted as an ideology, it was not used as a designation for the organization or the fellowship.

As the function or use of the Oxford Group mentality changed from an entirely personalistic one into a mixed personalistic/ideologic one, the structure of the Oxford Group fellowship, too, developed from an absolute structure of mentality into a mixed structure of both mentality and ideology. As we have seen above, the basic, personal experiences of change and guidance were the same after as before the Second World War. As with strategies and doctrine, the development of mentality may be described as a change of interpretation and function, not as a change of the mentality as such. On the contrary, the distinguishing combination of ‘techniques’ – practised in personal, daily experience – with personal fellowship in the Oxford Group, was strengthened as the personal experience of guidance was adapted to the guidance of the team, and to the guidance of Frank Buchman himself. Still, the emphasis was different.<sup>364</sup>

### *II.3.7. The Dictatorship of the Holy Spirit, Promoting ‘True’ Democracy*

#### II.3.7.1. A spiritual Dictatorship as Answer to the Need of Leadership

The need for strong leadership was commonly urged in the 1930s, even in the democracies. We may regard their position as an answer to a question framed by totalitarian regimes, on their conditions, and with their terminology, though still with another main purpose. Correspondingly, the need for a strong, spiritual leadership may be observed in the Christian Youth movements of the early 1930s, with Bo Giertz’ *Ledaren* (1934), emphasizing Christ as the Leader, as one

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der Strukturen” parallel gehen.’

<sup>363</sup> Howard 1941:38 f.

<sup>364</sup> Hartman 1984:119 – ‘Det hade med *tonvikten* att göra,’ aiming both at the legalistic character and at the *change* of emphasis.

example. During the Oxford campaign in Denmark, Paul Brodersen stated that the Germans with the 'Führer' concept had expressed a prevalent need, and a search for a guiding authority. The true leader was Christ, since God revealed his will through him.<sup>365</sup> A direct connection to political dictatorship is made by Eivind Berggrav, who states in a private letter – perhaps jokingly – that his book *Legeme og sjel i karakterliv og gudsliv* (1933) could be used as a psychological basis for the new German mentality, especially for its 'Führer'-principle and discipline, since he introduced this principle in character life itself. This had to be 'gefundenes Fressen' to the Germans – if they only omitted the two last chapters.<sup>366</sup>

In a statement from Oxford, July 1934, Frank Buchman defined the aim of the Oxford Group as 'a new social order under the dictatorship of the Spirit of God,' in the following years used alternatively with 'God-control.'<sup>367</sup> The 'true dictatorship of the living God' was to be realized through a government by 'men under instructions from God, as definitely given and understood as if they came by wire.'<sup>368</sup> This was the spiritual 'Führer'-principle of the Oxford Group. Frank Buchman had spoken of the dictatorship of the Holy Spirit even before 1934. In Autumn 1933, the young Swedish scholar Hans Cnattingius, returning from the Oxford house-party, wrote an article on the Oxford Group, emphasizing the dictatorship of the Holy Spirit, comparing Group work to the Communist cell state.<sup>369</sup> In his Oxford-inspired version of the hymn 'Kristus, hjälten, han allena' (1934), J. G. Thorsell wrote about Christ as the dictator of the human spirit.<sup>370</sup> In his book *Gycklare och apostlar* (1934), the Finno-Swedish author Hans Ruin wrote a chapter on the dictatorship of the Holy Spirit, defining dictatorship as a higher impulse in every person.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Giertz 1934; Brodersen in Oxford i Danmark II 1935:28 f.

<sup>366</sup> Copy of E. Berggrav to [V. H.] Günther 1934, Jan. 13 (Pa 320:4, RAO): "Legeme og sjel" er pussig nok en bok som jeg syne[s] kunde være det psykologiske grunnlag for den nye tyske mentalitet, spesielt i dette med Führer-princip og disiplin. Jeg innfører jo før[er] princippet i selve vårt karakterliv. Der måtte etter mitt skjønn være Gefundens fressen. Man måtte bare utelate de to siste kapitler.' [The typescript errors in Berggrav's letters are several.]

<sup>367</sup> Buchman 1942:1, 3 ff., 8 (1934–36).

<sup>368</sup> Buchman 1942:10 f. (1936).

<sup>369</sup> Cnattingius 1933:197. Dr. L. P. Jacks found 'the authoritarian tendency in politics repeated or echoed in the current proclamation by the Group Movement of the Dictatorship of the Holy Spirit.' The attempt to reconcile the ideals of dictatorship and group life was 'precisely what some exponents of Fascism have claimed for their own experiment' (Oxford and the Groups 1934:118).

<sup>370</sup> See Förslag till psalmbok... 1936. SOU 1936:11, Nr. 455:2 ('Friden ger han; men till striden Kallar han, min själs diktator [...]'). The verse was excluded from the Hymn book proposal of September 1936, and from the Hymn Book of 1937. See further Ch. II.3.9.

<sup>371</sup> Ruin 1934:215. Ruin compares Group work and the comradeship of the Oxford Group with National Socialism, stating that Fascism, Nazism, and Communism demand things that presume the existence of a new man, p.218 f. The efforts to state, on this

The question of a new, God-guided or God-controlled leadership in the democracies was to the Oxford Group a current one from the mid-1930s. According to Frank Buchman, many ‘ardent advocates of democracy’ reserved for themselves ‘the right to be dictators in their own homes,’ i.e. a selfish leadership. Through their private wars, they made democracy miss ‘the experience of a God-led nation.’ In contrast to this, the dictatorship of the Holy Spirit was built on unselfishness and personal direction by God.<sup>372</sup> The ideal of the changed leader was presented in a widely circulated pamphlet, *New Leadership*, by Garth Lean and Morris Martin, which declared that new leadership ‘springs from free individuals,’ and develops ‘through free individuals working together,’ in obedience to God. Consequently, Lean and Martin avoided ‘dictatorship’ – instead they spoke of ‘the generalship of the Holy Spirit.’ They emphasized the role of the new leadership in creating true democracy as well. The free initiative made the new leadership a democratic one.<sup>373</sup> This contrasts with, for instance, Sven Stolpe’s positive view of the resolute, powerful minority changing the development of the world.<sup>374</sup>

### II.3.7.2. A Charismatic ‘Führer’-Principle

In Germany, the charismatic leadership of the Oxford Group was described within the Group as a democratic leadership – though without using this term. Ferdinand Laun wrote (1931) that Shoemaker, Buchman and Sherry Day

stellen einen neuen Führertyp dar: einen Führer, der keine Anhänger sucht, sondern die Menschen zu Christus führen will [...] Darum ist jeder berufen zum Führer. [...] Führer ist, wer führt, wer führen kann. [...] Die jeweilig Führenden treten freiwillig und von selbst zurück beim Offenbarwerden des im Augenblick zum Führer Berufenen. Der Führer steigt nicht herunter zur Masse, sondern alle sind zu Führern erhoben, da alle direkten Zugang haben zu der Führung des heiligen Geistes.<sup>375</sup>

However, this ‘democratic’ principle of guidance raised problems of authority and leadership. These problems are clearly noticeable in the experimental work

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basis, that the early articles in *Bymisjonæren* of the Oslo Home Mission secretary, Lars Frøyland, on the dictatorship of the Holy Spirit etc. disposed (‘disponerte’) him to his future support of the Norwegian NS-Church during the war, seem to be rather superficial. See further Ch. III.4.2.

<sup>372</sup> Buchman 1942:34 f. (1938), also p.7 f., 13 (1936).

<sup>373</sup> Lean & Martin [1936]: 8 ff., 19 ff. This pamphlet was widely circulated and translated. Its view was that true democracy is a result of God-listening. Democracy is not treated as an ideology in the later Oxford Group sense.

<sup>374</sup> Stolpe 1940:148. The problem of a nation, God-controlled through a human, God-controlled dictator, is treated in Ch. VI.3.4.

<sup>375</sup> Laun 1931:169 f.



made among children according to Oxford Group principles – like children getting the guidance their parents or teachers wished them to get, etc.<sup>376</sup> The same problems could occur in a team, or between regional or national teams and the international team, or between the international team and Frank Buchman. The latter's charismatic leadership was important to the Oxford Group, and well-known outside of it, as expressed in a joke by Karl Barth: 'Wie Buchman in der Oxfordgruppe, herrscht Knorr in jeder guten Suppe.'<sup>377</sup> The independent *Groups* magazine observed that while the episcopal hierarchy was known to work also in private and pastoral matters, a 'self-constituted authority (perhaps unknown to the first enquirer and unnamed)' occurred in the Group fellowship, sending down 'some very strict instruction or prohibition which runs contrary to the initial guidance, until at length it seems as though a new Lambeth had sprung up, like a mushroom in the night, at some London hotel.'<sup>378</sup>

Frank Buchman's leading of a quiet time in group often resulted in his rewarding the guidance of other people ('Splendid!', 'Good!') etc. His difficulties to take criticism are well-known.<sup>379</sup> To Sam. Shoemaker, Group guidance became, in the hands of Buchman, not a 'guided democracy' but 'an engine of self-will,' and Shoemaker's theological critic, Emil Brunner, accused Buchman of not checking his guidance, even asking if he thought he was 'the holy spirit in persona.'<sup>380</sup> Examples of Buchman's personal censorship are given in other parts of this study.<sup>381</sup> The guiding authority of Buchman was further emphasized in private sharing, for example, when Harry Blomberg shared certain temptations as the cause of his irritation during the Visby meeting in 1938, and Sven Stolpe thought that Blomberg ought to find out if this should not be shared with either Howard Blake or Frank Buchman personally.<sup>382</sup>

In sharing or statements of identification, Oxford Group people often spoke of an identification with the Oxford Group way of life only, though loyalty was demanded as well to the persons and groups 'that have been used to reveal

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<sup>376</sup> Morthorst 1940:46 f.

<sup>377</sup> Busch 1978<sup>3</sup>:423.

<sup>378</sup> *Groups* vol. I:279. Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group had their headquarters at Brown's Hotel in London.

<sup>379</sup> Søren 1935c:784, Lean 1985:172 f. Cf. the opinion of Segerstråle 1967:11, that the person taking the greatest responsibility, living closest to God in reality becomes a leader.

<sup>380</sup> Woolverton 1983:58. Copy of Brunner to Buchman [Winter, 1934] (ZZ).

<sup>381</sup> See, for example, Chs. II.2.3.2 (Buchman and Brunner), II.3.10.4 (Buchman and Fangen), IV.3.4 (*Vort møde med Oxford-Gruppen*). Other examples are the decisions of which publications were to be accepted at parties (see E. Brunner to Lydi De Trey-Brunner, undated, that the Swiss publications by Brunner, Oehler, and Spoerri were not accepted at a Dutch party, despite the fact that the Dutch preferred them to the Anglo-Saxon ones; ZZ).

<sup>382</sup> Stolpe to Blomberg 1939, Feb. 26 (UUB).

Christ to us.’ One could not be loyal to Christ, while acting disloyal to ‘those who are incarnating His teachings.’<sup>383</sup> The identification worked as an identification with the Group as such.

Joseph Nyomarkay’s theories of totalitarian and non-totalitarian movements rest on a distinction between two types of social movements: the *charismatic* and the *ideological* movement, respectively. He states that ‘in contrast with Marxist parties, where ideology provides the highest source of authority, the Nazi party was based on charismatic legitimacy.’<sup>384</sup> The seminal point in his discussion is the identification of the sources of legitimation as the key to the explanation of different schismatic patterns.

In a non-totalitarian group the principle of legitimacy is pluralistic [...] and factions can exist without destroying the group. In a totalitarian movement the principle of legitimacy is monistic – i.e. based on an almost total identification – and factions can exist only if they do not attack the principle of legitimacy. In a charismatic totalitarian movement, factions do not necessarily attack the principle of legitimacy; in an ideological totalitarian movement, they necessarily do so.<sup>385</sup>

As a charismatic totalitarian movement, the Oxford Group of the late 1930s was more tolerant of different opinions and factions within the fellowship, than after its ideologization during the Second World War. Simultaneously, its ‘refusal to consider the social context that gives rise to social problems’ was regarded as making it ‘inevitably anti-democratic.’<sup>386</sup> While emphasizing democracy as its ideological basis, it was gradually transformed into a mixed charismatic and ideological totalitarian movement, with increasing emphasis on ideology. Together with the democratic ideology, the spiritual ‘Führer’-principle prepared the way for a more authoritarian and centralized direction of the whole work of the Oxford Group, realized after the Second World War.<sup>387</sup>

### II.3.7.3. A Spiritual ‘Führer’-Principle and a Theocratic Democracy

The Swedish philosopher Paul Gerner recognised the following, similar features of the Oxford Group and National Socialism: the reaction against hesitation and relativism, a salvation to certainty, activity and unity, further an ignorance

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<sup>383</sup> Day [192?]:8 ff. Cf., for example, H. Blomberg to J. Hemmer 1939, Apr. 1, which emphasizes the importance of not confusing the voice of God with the voice of the team.

<sup>384</sup> Nyomarkay 1967:4.

<sup>385</sup> Nyomarkay 1967:150.

<sup>386</sup> Cantril 1941:168.

<sup>387</sup> This is confirmed by David Belden 199?:10, who states that ‘close teamwork [...] and an absence of formal structure are a recipe by which a charismatic leader can dominate a group almost totally,’ and further emphasizes that contrary thoughts ‘are not forbidden, they are just very hard to develop, for they need quiet, aloneness, and discussion with a few like-minded friends who do not dub these doubts “negative”.’

of theoretical conflicts, and an impassioned subjectivism, in important matters denying reality.<sup>388</sup> In descriptions positive to the Oxford Group, too, the comparison with National Socialism occurred, as when Torsten Ysander characterized the Oxford preaching of the dictatorship of Christ as a combination of spiritual 'Nazism' and harsh, healthy realism.<sup>389</sup> In his critical publication *Oxford och vi* (1939), the Norwegian author Helge Krog described the social phenomenon of the Oxford Group as Christian Nazism, especially in its spirit and structure, while the Dane Martin Andersen Nexø found both Nazism and Oxfordism to be social substitutes, dwelling in false mysticism, medieval in origin. The road to Nazism was said often to lead by way of the Oxford Group.<sup>390</sup>

In his study of the fundamentals of the National Socialist system of justice, Diemut Majer draws a line between the Nazi principle of absolute leadership ('das Prinzip des *absoluten Führertums*') and a traditional 'Führer'-principle. The National Socialist principle was legitimated by the idolizing of political power.<sup>391</sup> Our point in Majer's study is the existence of such a traditional, non-Nazi 'Führer'-principle.<sup>392</sup>

In the German Group, the alternative character of the Oxford Group 'Führer'-principle was emphasized. H. M. Gericke described the pastor's development into a spiritual leader as a step from being a 'Wegweiser' to becoming a 'Führer,' which meant a step from the second to the third Article of the Creed. The main principle was that the pastor could not become a 'Führer' until he himself was being guided by the Spirit.<sup>393</sup> In speaking of 'the Existential Authority' in the Oxford Group, David C. Belden has emphasized this leadership as an alternative to the intellectual approach to religion.<sup>394</sup>

The Danish Church Barthian Halfdan Høgsbro contrasted the group as a political cell or a social collective – in which the organization or the collective has unlimited authority over the individual – with the group as a visible expression of the Body of Christ, in which the individuals are held together in openness, love, and responsibility. Here, the individual's unmediated obedience to Christ is primary to the fellowship, and the whole is connected with and lives in

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<sup>388</sup> Gerner 1937:79 ff. Cf. Ivar Wennfors, 'Kulturkrisen och moralen. Moralen och grupprörelsen' (SvM 1937, Nov. 26), which criticizes Gerner's subjectivism.

<sup>389</sup> Ysander 1934:75.

<sup>390</sup> Oxford och vi 1939:107 (Krog, 'Kristlig maskerad': 'Som *socialt fenomen* kan Oxfordrörelsen kort och gott karakteriseras såsom *kristlig nazism*. [...] dess tendens, dess "anda", bevisar att den till hela sin inre struktur är nazistisk.) 108 ('Oxfordrörelsen är till hela sitt väsen *totalitär*. Den kräver – nej, den *erbjuder!* – en obetingad underkastelse under en absolut auktoritet'), reprinted in Krog 1947:164. Oxford och vi (Andersen Nexø, 'Oxford och nazismen') 1939:17 ff., 28 f.

<sup>391</sup> Majer 1987:77 ff., 85 ff.

<sup>392</sup> Cf. Ahlstrom 1972:925 f., who regards the Oxford Group as a pro-Fascist movement.

<sup>393</sup> Gericke 1936b:331.

<sup>394</sup> Belden 1976:234 ff.

the congregation of Christ.<sup>395</sup>

An extreme but representative example of social personalism leading to a theocratic social order, was presented in a typewritten summary of the aim and instruments of the Christian revolution, by the young Swedish priest Anders Tauson-Hassler (1942). He attacked both materialism, which regarded only economic and social problems as real ones, and human idealism which was unable to realize freedom, equality, and a fair social order. Only the radical application of the authority and absolute commandments of God could give a people full freedom, justice, and social order. In the God-led world radical freedom was tied to the highest leader alone. The Christian state accepted the dictatorship of God, letting Christian quality of life and capability decide the leadership. This was Democracy in a deeper meaning, since majority decisions were substituted by the decisions of those seeing clearest, and having the full confidence of the people. The autocratic problem was solved through guidance and team work, and party politics substituted by a politics of tasks ('sakpolitik'). The four absolute standards worked as social fundamentals. The consequences were economic democracy, a new education, full cooperation between Christian leaders and denominations, new foreign policies of the outstretched hand, the renewal of the homes, etc.<sup>396</sup> Here too, the 'Führer'-principle is an alternative, spiritual one, to be clearly separated from the one of the National Socialists, but in this, it implies an alternative view of democracy as well, transforming it into a guided theocracy. From 1943 onwards, such extremely personalistic social views were influenced by the mixed personalistic/ideological ones, giving western democracy an ideological value as such.<sup>397</sup> The Oxford Group was growing into democratic idealism.

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<sup>395</sup> Høgsbro 1936:69. Cf. Bebbington 1990:5, who compares the Oxford Group to modernist art, for example the music of Webern, and its predetermined patterns in order to eliminate human subjectivity.

<sup>396</sup> A. Tauson-Hassler: 'Vår väg. Kort sammanfattning av den kristna revolutionens mål och medel,' completed in Sigtuna 1942, Dec. 12 (EPC), p.1–11 (p.3 f: 'Den accepterar dock samtidigt Guds diktatur och låter den kristna livskvaliteten och dugligheten bli avgörande för ledarskap. Härmed kommer man åt en av svagheterna i det nuv. demokratiska systemet, den att partisynpunkter och olika slag av hänsyn kan diktera beslut och utnämningar. Vidare har majoritetsbeslut och masspåtryckningar ersatts av det "högre förnuftets" beslut, fattade av de, som sett klarast och som samtidigt har folkets fulla förtroende. [...] Genom ledning och lagarbete, har man en lösning på diktaturstaternas enväldesproblem.' The second chapter, on the instruments of Christian revolution, is more conventional, dealing with matters like quiet time, life changing, and team-work. On the third chapter, dealing with current tasks, see Ch. V.4.4. This extremely personalistic view of democracy and decision corresponds to the practice of voteless decisions among the Quakers, see Sheeran 1987<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>397</sup> Tauson-Hassler 1943:282, in stating that ideologies played a small part, shows that the ideological influence was still small or nonexistent.

### II.3.8. *National Differences in Mentality and Terminology*

The Oxford Group mentality may be described as a supernational mentality confronting different, national mentalities, and transformed into national variations of function in several countries. In its obvious activism, this mentality is an exponent of the complex phenomenon called 'American Religion.' Nils Ehrenström, once Archbishop Söderblom's secretary at the Stockholm conference, described the difference between American and European mentality in the following manner:

The American, more concerned with immediate practical applications [...] the European deeply interested in principles [...] the American sitting somewhat loose to the existing churches, the European deeply aware from the start of the problem of the churches with their varying confessions and widely different approach to social problems, the American more empirical, the European more theoretical, or, as the European would have said, more thorough, in its approach.<sup>398</sup>

In his analysis of America, André Siegfried presents a more generalizing view, noticing the 'amazing change from the quasi-mediaevalism of Luther to the practical idealism of the American. From this arises the feeling of social obligation that is so typically Anglo-Saxon.' He emphasizes 'the Calvinist point of view that the group and not the individual is the social unit and the foundation of the religious structure,' and continues:

Every American is at heart an evangelist [...] He cannot leave people alone, and he constantly feels the urge to preach. [...] His self-satisfaction as a member of God's elect is almost insufferable, and so is the idea that his duty toward his neighbour is to convert, purify, and raise him to his own moral heights. [...] Efficiency was looked upon as a Christian virtue, and one could no longer separate what had been accomplished for God from what had been contributed to the development of the country. [...] One often hears it said that a good Christian makes the best citizen, as he is more efficient in the office and the factory.<sup>399</sup>

Siegfried further points out that 'scores of European things reach the New World only through the medium of England. There is no denying it, the Americans are never entirely at ease with Continental peoples. [...] they turn to the easy method of adopting the British point of view, though no one has ever tried to force it on them.'<sup>400</sup> The point in Siegfried's often superficial views is

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<sup>398</sup> In Rouse & Neill 1954:554 f. Cf. Hutchison 1979:(358 Speer!), 1982.

<sup>399</sup> Siegfried 1927:34 f., 37, 40. Cf. Brunner 1925:26 ('Weder ist das, was man heute Calvinismus zu nennen beliebt (ich meine den evolutionistischen Optimismus der Welterneuerung, den man auch als christlichen Amerikanismus bezeichnen kann), auf Calvin zurückzuführen [...]').

<sup>400</sup> Siegfried 1927:312 f.

their function as exposers of a European, continental mentality, and their attitude to American religion, thus explaining many of the later, doctrinal confrontations and misunderstandings with the Oxford Group.

In his article on Moral Re-Armament (1939), H. A. Hodges found that M.R.A. was a good slogan: 'It has everything to commend it to the British people at the present moment in their history. For we are a people greatly given to political idealism, a people which has made Blake's *Jerusalem* almost a second national anthem.' He also remarked on the resemblance between the idea of a moral rearmament and 'a Pelagian-minded nation like our own.'<sup>401</sup>

The mentality here described is obviously more close to the common religious mentality in the U.S.A. than to the sceptical or private attitude to religious matters so often demonstrated, for example, in Sweden. J. H. Schjørring notes that in the Oxford Group the religious modesty of older, Scandinavian revivalism was replaced by Anglican functionalism.<sup>402</sup> In 1933, Adolf Keller described the Scandinavian countries as 'the most uniform ecclesiastical territory of World Protestantism,' and made a most appropriate comparison between the Scandinavian countries, recalling the reference to the 'Church' of Sweden, the 'congregations' of Denmark, and the 'Christians' of Norway. He also notes that the influence of the 'Group Movement' in Denmark (i.e. Group revivalism before the arrival of the international team), was limited to 'small groups of the converted.'<sup>403</sup>

Some differences in mentality became noticeable in the international Oxford Group work. During the American tour of 1939, Sven Stolpe reported of his friendship with the British Bill Rowell, and of their common reactions to, for example, American changed ladies keeping quiet time at 11 a.m., when the changed butler came in with the morning team [tea?], or the Washington team, which – to the annoyance of Mrs. Roosevelt – did not want to have changed black people at their team meetings.<sup>404</sup> Another example is given of 'a sort of mechanical pietism,' described by Gabriel Marcel in the story of how a lady from Colmar, in need of testifying publicly, though doing it in a hesitating way, was 'brutally called to order by an American harpy who cried out: "Faster, faster! Testimonials should follow one another like machine-gun bursts!"'<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> Hodges 1939:324, 328, also 330: 'It is believed by the ordinary man, and even by the ordinary Christian, that Christianity obliges its adherents to believe uncritically and sentimentally in the goodness of man and in the substantiality of the moral principles commonly proclaimed.' It is interesting to note that the report of the Church Assembly 1955:14 criticizes the 'practical, this-worldly character' of M.R.A., most clearly seen in 'the comparative lack of emphasis on eternal life or on heaven or hell or judgment to come,' without any allusion to British religious mentality.

<sup>402</sup> Schjørring 1976:67.

<sup>403</sup> Keller [1933]: 111 f., 113.

<sup>404</sup> Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1939, May 19 (UUB).

<sup>405</sup> Marcel 1984:53 f. Marcel was shocked, and decided that very evening to break off all relations with the Oxford Groups while preserving his friendship with persons who were

Though the Oxford Group terminology has been adequately characterized as a spiritual esperanto,<sup>406</sup> translations often reveal nuances and shiftings in mentality between countries and cultures. When Russell's *For Sinners Only* was translated into French, it was given the almost reverse title *Ceci n'est pas pour vous*, revealing a difference in mentality. Through different translations, or through the use of an English word in a foreign context, a term may be stripped of its original cultural connotations, and given new connotations through a combination of its Oxford Group function and its new national, religious and cultural environment. Besides, during the 1930s, the knowledge of the English language was rather limited in the Scandinavian countries as well as in Germany.

The translation of the typical Oxford Group terms further depends on the phases of development of the Group. The first translations, made during the information phase or the revival groups phase, were in some cases replaced by the English terms during the first year of the Oxford Group phase, and then again by new translations.<sup>407</sup> In other cases this replacement took place already during the revival groups phase, due to the influence of some neighbouring country, and at an early stage, the English terms were used alongside the translated ones.<sup>408</sup>

The English 'change' and 'changed' had appeared in many earlier religious contexts, such as John Wesley's record of his conversion. In one of the first Swedish publications on Group revivalism, 'life-change' was translated – by a Methodist pastor – as 'livsförändring,' 'changed' as 'förändrad,' and 'life-changer' as 'själavinnare.'<sup>409</sup> In the translation of *For Sinners Only*, made by another Methodist, 'change' was translated as 'omdana,' explained as synonymous with 'omvända' (convert).<sup>410</sup> The one year older Danish translation has 'forandre,' and 'Livsforandrer' for 'Life-changer,' while the Danish translation of Begbie's book has 'forvandled.'<sup>411</sup> In a Lutheran environment, the emphasis on 'change' and 'changed' might easily get a flavour of a sudden, unrealistic moral perfec-

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not responsible for 'this ignoble outburst.'

<sup>406</sup> Byström 1939:191 f.

<sup>407</sup> Johnson 1971:83 has – though not discerning the different phases – noticed that the earlier Norwegian terms were replaced by the original English ones when the international team arrived, then by other Norwegian terms. Another example is the Danish 'kreds' (= 'circle') for 'group,' used in Russell 1933b, later replaced by 'gruppe.'

<sup>408</sup> So was the case, for example, in Sweden, with the use of Swedish translations or explanations in Norborg 1933Sw (translated from the Norwegian), but with the English words used for some, and Swedish translations for other terms, in Strömstedt 1933 (originally in Swedish).

<sup>409</sup> Strömstedt 1933:16 f.

<sup>410</sup> Russell 1934:8. The early Swedish everyday translation 'att göra om dem' was probably not printed (Ö. Arbin to M. and A. Lehtonen 1933, Nov. 15, RAH).

<sup>411</sup> Russell 1933b:1, Begbie [1933]. See also Norborg 1936:29, who reaches the conclusion that what is not done by God, that is not changed ('forvandlet'), however altered ('forandret') it may be.

tionism, which neglects the need of daily conversion, especially when translated anew as the Swedish 'förvandlad' (transformed) instead of 'förändrad' (altered).<sup>412</sup> Halfdan Høgsbro, too, criticized the use of 'being changed,' 'a changed person,' etc. as un-Biblical, while the Biblical way was to speak of change as an act, never as a state or a condition.<sup>413</sup> In popular, secular circles, Lutheran theology often left no awareness of a need for daily conversion, but only a doubtful or sceptical attitude towards sudden, religious alterations. This is skilfully dealt with by the Danish author Kaj Munk in the tenth short story of his *10 Oxfordsnapshots* (1936). He contrasts the popular, secularized Danish reception of 'changed' (wrongly spelt and pronounced) with a realistic and moderate reception of 'change' as a liberation of the personal will, first of all from religious cowardliness to a tactful yet fearless testimony in the framework of a radical, daily continuing Christian way of life.

Another example is 'sharing,' with its double meaning of 'confession' and 'testimony.' In one of the first Swedish presentations, it was translated partly as 'bekännelse' (confession), partly as 'vittnesbörd' (testimony), sometimes even as 'skriftermål' (sacramental confession). All these words have a more religious, partly a more ecclesiastical character than the original 'sharing.' The correspondingly open Swedish 'delning' obviously seemed too general and vague, and the Swedish vocabulary had no word analogous to the newly created Danish 'samdeling.'<sup>414</sup> Instead, 'sharing' was translated as 'delgivning' – a juridical term of serving notice.<sup>415</sup> Surprisingly, this cold and unattractive word was widely used, and it did work, which shows that even the literary Oxford Group use could give a new 'context of meaning' to old words.

In the Scandinavian Oxford Group fellowship, such a new connotation was given to 'renaissance' as well. In Frank Buchman's use of the word, it was contrasted to 'revival,' and has a connection to what McLoughlin names 'awakening,' i.e. something that 'alters the world view of a whole people or culture.'<sup>416</sup> In the Scandinavian languages, 'renässans' has a much narrower

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<sup>412</sup> Høgsbro 1936:35 f. preferred 'forandre' as more Biblically striking, and sober. Cf. Ussing 1935:41, who prefers the Danish 'forvandling,' since 'forandring' is found to be too weak, while Stolpe 1941:230 prefers 'förändrad' for changed.

<sup>413</sup> Høgsbro 1936:37.

<sup>414</sup> Russell 1933b:1 and Hee Andersen 1934:10, have 'samdeling,' while Ussing 1935:39 has 'bekendelse.' The early Swedish everyday translation 'skära' – an equivalent to a Danish everyday translation in Munk 1936 – was probably not printed (see Ö. Arbin to M. and A. Lehtonen 1933, Nov. 15, RAH).

<sup>415</sup> Hans Cnattingius in his introduction to Norborg 1933Sw:13, incidentally mentions also 'delgivning.' Strömstedt 1933:43 explains sharing as both 'bekännelse' and 'personligt vittnesbörd,' still using the English word. Both Russell 1934:7 and Laun 1934:219 have 'delgivning.'

<sup>416</sup> McLoughlin 1978:XIII. Awakenings are described as 'periods of cultural revitalization that begin in a general crisis of beliefs and values and extend over a period of a generation or so, during which time a profound reorientation in beliefs and values takes



meaning. Beside its special, historical use, it is commonly used for 'revivification,' not seldom in a rather superficial way of being 'à la mode.' When the English 'renaissance' was translated with the Swedish 'renässans,' this difference in use and meaning was neglected, with misunderstandings of the Oxford Group message as a superficial one as its inevitable consequence among outsiders. At the same time, the Swedish 'renässans,' to the people in the fellowship, got a new and deeper connotation.

The most problematic word in the late 1930s was, of course, the English 'moral.' In the Scandinavian languages, words like 'moral' or 'perfection' are often coloured by, or confused with 'moralism' and 'perfectionism,' respectively. In the Germanic languages, 'moral' is used as the opposite of 'unmoral' or 'immoral,' and not as a contrast to 'material' or 'outward.' From his continental viewpoint, the Romanist and Oxford Group man Theophil Spoerri expressed the difference as follows:

'Moral' heißt im Englischen nicht 'moralisch' sondern 'geistlich' als Gegenbegriff zu 'materiell'. Darum sagte man am Anfang immer 'moralische und geistige Aufrüstung'. Der Kürze halber heißt es nun 'Moralische Aufrüstung'. Dabei wird das 'Moralische' überbetont, was für viele ein Stein des Anstoßes ist [...]<sup>417</sup>

This difference in nuances may be exemplified by the translation of the four absolute standards as well. 'Honesty' was translated into Swedish 'ärlighet,' Danish 'redelighed,' and German alternately 'Ehrlichkeit' or 'Redlichkeit.' This can easily be interpreted as dealing mostly with the outward actions and the inward attitude, respectively, and while absolute 'Ehrlichkeit' may be realized as a ruthless frankness, absolute 'Redlichkeit' is seldom interpreted in such a direction.

W. H. Clark puts heavy emphasis on the terminology, 'the technical jargon' of the Oxford Group, and finds that the best method available for determining who 'belongs' to the Group, is to note whether a person uses Group 'language' or not. However, the significance of this terminology is primarily a negative one. Although it cannot be used as an exclusive criterion of belonging to the Oxford Group, the lack of this terminology may often be used as a mark of the absence of any closer fellowship with the Oxford Group.<sup>418</sup> The terminological choice may reveal the relationship between a certain Group revival and the Oxford Group.

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place.'

<sup>417</sup> Spoerri 1971:131. For a representative interpretation of 'moral rearmament' as just outward, not identical with 'spiritual rearmament,' see Metodistkyrkans i Sverige årsbok 1939:50. Further, the Scandinavian languages have the same word for both 'moral' and 'morale.'

<sup>418</sup> Clark 1951:26 f. Cf. Werkström 1963:236, who, without attempting any analysis, states that Clark's method of determining the affiliation to the Oxford Group is superficial.

Even the translation of one single book title may reveal a certain difference in mentality. The title of Begbie's *Life Changers*, in Danish: *Forvandlede mennesker* (Swedish: *Förvandlade liv* = Changed Men and Lives, respectively) exposes such an important difference. The English title implies, together with the stories of changed lives in the book, that the changed person himself is a life changer. This stress on an immediate change into activity is lacking in the Danish and Swedish titles. As we have seen above (Ch. II.1.2.), the immediate change into personalistic activity was significant in Frank Buchman's basic vision. To several of the early, independent groups in Denmark and Sweden, traditional Lutheran interpretation of faith and vocation prevented such a representation. First of all, the Danish and the Swedish book titles reveal the kind of Group environment in which they were produced as an Oxford-inspired Group revivalism more than a working fellowship of the Oxford Group. Subsequently, translations improved, as Oxford writers often translated each other's books.

Interpreters sometimes 'simplified' the speeches of, for example, Frank Buchman. At the Danish party at Ollerup, Easter 1936, Buchman stated: 'Denmark a worker of miracles among the nations!' translated as 'Danmark, Mirakelmageren blandt Nationerne!', which means 'the magician' rather than 'a worker of miracles.'<sup>419</sup> A special circumstance is the claim by individual Oxford Group people that certain terms were invented by Frank Buchman. This is sometimes the case because the Oxford Group fellows themselves first heard a certain term from Buchman.<sup>420</sup>

### *II.3.9. The Mentality Exposed in the Oxford Group Hymns and Songs*

The Oxford Group mentality is hard to grasp from sermons rarely labelled 'Oxford.' However, Ebenezer Macmillan of South Africa, in his prefaces to two editions of sermons, reveals the function of his new-found experience in preparing and selecting sermons:

The way in which sermons come to me now is so vastly different. The early morning Quiet Time [...] is luminous with Divine inspiration and direction. [...] Not all these sermons have come in this direct or spontaneous way, but most of them have. [...] In each case the spoken word proved to be life-changing. This has been the test of selection, in the faith that the same will be true of the printed word.<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> Bækhøj 1936:266.

<sup>420</sup> According to Howard 1946:98, 'supernational' was 'forged' by Buchman, then 'taken up as a keynote by many who plan the future.' Here, the national languages may reveal another origin. In Swedish, 'övernationell' appeared with Nathan Söderblom as early as in 1919 (Söderblom 1919:110).

<sup>421</sup> Macmillan 1933:X. See also Macmillan 1935:IX.

The importance of songs as a source for the knowledge of popular mentalities has been emphasized by, among others, Michel Vovelle, in his studies of the French Revolution. In a similar way, spiritual songs form an important source for the knowledge of the spirituality and mentality of a religious tradition.<sup>422</sup>

The Oxford Group mentality is notable only in a few Church hymns. Of the four hymns in the Swedish hymnal inspired by Group revivalism, Gustav Thorsell completed Nr. 581 in 1934, Anders Frostenson wrote Nr. 39 in 1935, and in 1936 Nrs. 40 and 102. Already in his first version, printed 1920, Thorsell sang about total obedience, praying that He, who worked the change in him, should direct every thought, word and deed. In 1934, Thorsell, inspired by Group revivalism, revised the hymn, with a stronger emphasis on fellowship, on sharing both the good things of this life and its sorrows, on confessing the wrongs, on guidance by the voice of the Spirit through prayer in quiet times, and on Christ as dictator of the human spirit.<sup>423</sup> The third verse of Frostenson's 'Jesus från Nasaret' was inspired by the first chapter of Geoffrey Allen's *He that cometh*,<sup>424</sup> and the fourth verse of 'Kristus vandrar bland oss än' describes the

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<sup>422</sup> Vovelle 1985, Jarlert 1992:126 f., and the literature there referred to.

<sup>423</sup> *Unga Psalmer*. 1919. No. 581 in *Den svenska psalmboken*. 1986 – vv. 1 and 3:

Kristus, hjälten, han allena  
Då vi livets goda delar,  
har mig löst ur trådomsbandet.  
delar sorgerna som bränner,  
Skulle jag ej honom tjäna  
beder varmt för dem som felar,  
all min tid i främlingslandet?  
villigt våra fel bekänner,  
Han som verkar min förvandling,  
då av Andens röst vi ledes  
Herre över herrar alla,  
under bön i stilla stunder,  
varje tanke, ord och handling  
genom lydnad vi beredes  
vill han styra och befalla.  
till att se Guds dolda under.

Thorsell's 1934 version had one more verse (Förslag till psalmbok... 1936. SOU 1936:11, Nr. 455:2), which emphasizes Christ as the dictator of the human spirit, but which was excluded from the Hymn book proposal of September 1936, and not included in the Hymnal:

Friden ger han; men till striden  
Kallar han, min själs diktator,  
ständigt korsfäst här i tiden,  
en gång evigt triumfator.  
Fienden med fräcka händer  
må hans rikets grundval hota:  
en gång alla folk och länder  
skall han lägga sig till fota.

See also Thorsell 1934 (review of Russell 1934), and reviews of books by Strömstedt and Sverre Norborg in *Församlingsbladet* 1934:55, 64.

<sup>424</sup> Interview with A. Frostenson 1988, March 25.

Öppna ditt hjärta i bön och bot,  
upplåt vart hemligt rum.

Oxford experience of victory over personal sins. In 'Tung och kvalfull vilar hela världens nöd på Jesu hjärta,' Frostenson uses the same metre as Thorsell in 'Kristus, hjälten,' with emphasis on sharing both happiness and suffering, as well as on guidance through obedience. Both hymns have been sung to the same tune and have sometimes even been confused with each other.<sup>425</sup> Frostenson's 'I mörker sjönko lyckodrämmens länder' (Nr. 268 in the 1937 Swedish hymnal) has the Oxford Group definition of sin ('Från Gud och människor min synd mig skilt'). It was written on the direct order of Ronald Fangen.<sup>426</sup> Frostenson was influenced especially by the thought of Christ as active in the present – the activity of Christian faith in everyday life.<sup>427</sup>

While these hymns had an important function in spreading a Group revivalistic message in the churches, they were not regularly used at Group meetings. At these meetings, the singing was originally of minor importance, often just closing with a Church hymn or the National Anthem. At the Easter party at Ollerup, Denmark in 1936, a new kind of Oxford Group activity was displayed, as described by one of the foreign participants: 'The youth march – the special songs – these are all new in the history of the Oxford Group.'<sup>428</sup> Else Printz' marching hymn 'Der kaldes paa Danmark,' set to music by Vilfred Kjær, and Elisabeth Tuxen's 'Frem paa Marsch' were examples of this new genre, but the most victorious one was the Bridge-builder song, written by John Morrison in Denmark, set to music by George M. Fraser, sung at the big Oxford Group meeting in London's Albert Hall July 7, 1936, and soon spread over the world.

While traditional revival songs had never been used in the Oxford Group, it is still of notable interest that the special Oxford Group songs did not appear while the visions and strategies were limited to the change of individuals and the creation of personal fellowships. The Oxford Group songs were created in the service of the widened emphasis on national change. This is made very clear already by the first phrase of the Bridge-builder song:

On sure foundations  
Build we God's new nations;  
Strong and clear  
Tells each year  
Of new-bridged relations.  
As land reaches to land  
On a world-front will we stand,

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Red dig att taga Guds Son emot,  
tro evangelium:  
himmelriket är nära.

<sup>425</sup> On the importance of Thorsell for Frostenson's hymn writing, see Olofsson 1981:38 f. On the Group revivalistic inspiration, see also Arvastson 1959:154.

<sup>426</sup> Frostenson 1956:148 f.

<sup>427</sup> Olofsson 1981:40, from an interview in SvD 1936, March 10.

<sup>428</sup> Dorothy Prescott to Halfdan Høgsbro Apr. 16, 1936 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

And build together  
What none shall sever,  
Bridges from man to man  
The whole round earth to span.<sup>429</sup>

At the house-party at Visby, August 1938, a special collection of songs was published: National anthems, Church hymns, Nordic songs ('Saml dig, Nord!', 'Der kaldes paa Norden'), Oxford Group songs (Bridge Builders, and New Frontiersmen: 'Fathers we had, who dared'), as well as two new songs by Harry Blomberg ('Lyfter sig vågor,' and 'Liksom lyftad med torn och murar').<sup>430</sup> Of major importance to the Visby party were two new songs: Bertil Malmberg's serious 'Nu är din kallelse stund,' and Anders Frostenson's enthusiastic 'Vi ha sett den nya synen' to a significant marching tune. They were both included in the new edition of the Oxford Group songs in 1939, together with the Danish translation of Bridge Builders ('Fast i Klippegrunden'), Fraser's humorous 'Oh, I've Got a Wise Old Horsey,' and a few other songs. During the World War, further songs were added, for example, Lennart Segerstråle's Vår lösen ('Vi ha ett bud till dem som trötta söka').<sup>431</sup> Together with Kaj Munk's 'Saml dig,

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<sup>429</sup> Songs of the rising tide. 1938. There are two different Swedish versions of the Bridge-builder song. The first one has a heavier, more revivalistic emphasis on guidance than the English original, while the revised one, by A. Frostenson, A. Tauson-Hassler, and O. Seger, shares the national emphasis of the original version. The clearest differences are in the refrain ('Vad tro rår bygga, kan intet rygga,' and 'Vad här förenas skall vitt förgrenas,' respectively), in the first verse ('I Guds ledning trygga på Guds grund vi bygga,' and 'Broar mellan länder byggs med fasta händer,' respectively), and in the third one ('Din ande dag för dag tale själv genom vårt jag' and 'Giv tron styrka av stål. Led oss själv fram mot vårt mål!,' respectively). However, the Danish text (with the original, national emphasis) was preferred and printed even in Sweden; see, for example, Oxford Gruppen. Sånger 1939, Sånger. Oxfordgruppen 1946.

<sup>430</sup> Oxford-gruppen. Sånger 1938.

<sup>431</sup> Oxford Gruppen. Sånger. 1939; Sånger. Oxfordgruppen. 1946. Another collection was *Andlig beredskap*, edited for the Gränna party, August 1940. Malmberg's verses were:

Nu är din kallelse stund,  
ödesbeskuggade Nord.  
Hör den Allsmåktiges röst:  
Hör Guds befallande ord!

Något av omätlig vikt  
lägger Gud i din hand:  
ansvar för hela vår värld,  
Öster- och Västerland.

Vakta dig Nord att du ej  
sviker bestämmelsens bud,

Nord!', the songs of Malmberg and Frostenson were published in 1939 as *Syng det nye Norden frem*, in their original languages, with Finnish translations. All three songs were set to music by the Danish composer Vilfred Kjør. The title indicated the importance of the songs for the creation of a new Nordic North. In his preface, Kjør says that the Nordic North could be made a unit through a new spirit, expressing confidence, love, and the will to concord, but free from hate, egotism, enmity, and competition. This was to be built on the foundation of new men creating new homes. If the Nordic homes solved their own problems, they could solve the problems of the world, too. Through the guidance of God, the new, united Nordic North could become the reconciling spiritual force between the nations of the world. This demanded a new art, created by artists who had a new experience and new motives for their artistic efforts.<sup>432</sup>

Frostenson's 'Vi ha sett den nya synen' was translated into English by John Morrison:

We have heard the marching orders.  
We have seen the vision clear.  
Certain are we,  
One in purpose  
That shall enhance all we hold dear.  
Forward, Northmen, forward!  
Join the fight 'gainst selfishness and hate,  
One united force will conquer.  
One is Master of our fate.

We have will to serve our country  
Whate'er the cost may be.  
Revolution  
Waits our decision.  
Fire each heart, and set men free.  
Forward, Northmen, forward!  
All the future's lying in our hand.  
Into battle for a Kingdom  
That embraces every land.

With high expectation, onward,  
Daring all, we fearless go.  
Clear the plan  
From God in the stillness  
Of our hearts. Its bulges blow –  
Forward, Northmen, forward!  
Raising high, for all, the word of peace –

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sviker din kallelse stund,  
sviker din Herre och Gud.

<sup>432</sup> Syng det nye Norden frem. 1939:2.

God's control in home and nation.  
In this war shall all wars cease.<sup>433</sup>

At the end of the first verse, the translation shifted the emphasis from the original stress on personal change as the instrument of national change to that of God as the 'Master of our fate.'

The new songs were soon used as important instruments of the Oxford Group work. This did not alter the principles of the Group. Like other activities, the singing was dependent on guidance. Still, it brought a new expression and a new sentiment to Group work. Sentimentality was still alien to the Group, but the teaching and singing of the new songs strengthened the personalistic attitude at a time when the national and world-wide emphasis easily could have brought a preponderant rationality to the work. This is illustrated by the following duplicated instruction for teaching a song:

1. Idea. [...] The more time you give for guidance, and the more thought and hard preparation you put into your teaching, the more effective it will be.

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<sup>433</sup> Morrison 1949:172. The Scotsman Morrison had studied theology at New College, Edinburgh, and in Germany under Barth and Bultmann, before joining the Oxford Group (Lean 1985:156). He spent some time in Scandinavia during the campaigns in the 1930s. Frostenson's original verses were:

Vi ha sett den nya synen;  
vi ha uppbrottsordern hört.  
Samma längtan, samma förvisning,  
samma mål oss sammanfört.  
Ungdom, Nordens ungdom!  
Kom, slut opp, ryck in i Guds armé!  
Genom min och din förvandling  
skall vårt lands förvandling ske.

Eld, som slocknat, åter flammar.  
En förmörkad värld skall se  
Honom, som åt folk och länder  
ensam kan försoning ge.  
Ungdom, Nordens ungdom!  
Morgondagen i din hand är lagd.  
Fram till fronten! Du är kallad  
till historiens största bragd.

Allt vi vänta. Allt vi våga.  
Utan fruktan fram vi gå.  
Nu den kristna revolutionen  
tändas skall och alla nå.  
Ungdom, Nordens ungdom!  
Lyssna, hör i dag vår fredsparoll:  
"Hemmet, arbetsplatsen, folket,  
världen under Guds kontroll."

2. Expression. If the message of the song burns in our own hearts it will get across convincingly. To have this passion, we must let the song live for us. People will find under guidance the way this will best happen for themselves. Some of us find that it helps to take the lines of a song and let them suggest a picture in our imagination [...] Deep feeling about songs in this personal way is the secret of true expression, because it means that as we sing we are living through a personal experience. And because our experience deepens, so should the expression that we put into our singing. [...]

3. Perfection. Technical perfection is vitally important, but should never be allowed to take precedence over the heart-warming expression in a song. [...] <sup>434</sup>

### *II.3.10. The Function of the Mentality in Fiction*

#### II.3.10.1. The Mentality from a Fictional Distance

In her exposé of British writers of the thirties, Valentine Cunningham concluded that the '30s literature gives the Oxford Group, or Moral Rearmament movement as it became, a rough time for its "sin and vermouth" snobbery, covert homosexuality, crude anti-Communism, "spiritual nudism" and moral triviality,' and she mentions authors like W. H. Auden, Rose Macaulay, and Graham Greene, who in rejecting Buchmanism were 'spurning easy religious travel, the cheapening consolations of the jovial Groupers, and siding with the bleaker pilgrims of the period.'<sup>435</sup> In *The Confidential Agent* (1939), Greene lets a 'grouper' explain the Oxford Group way of life as 'religion – but it's practical. It helps you to get on – because you feel right towards people.'<sup>436</sup> In *Going abroad*, Rose Macaulay delivered a witty, entertaining caricature of the same mentality, and, in doing so, she struck delicate Group problems such as possible differences between the guidance of a team leader and his team members, and the question whether a changed Nazi would change his fundamental attitude towards Jews as well. Not even the unimportant, but most significant habit of giving up smoking without branding it as a sin, was left out of sight, but given a historically apposite explanation: The four 'Groupers' did not know 'that it was a tradition passed down to Dr. Buchman's disciples from those American puritans among whom, so lately as thirty years ago, cigarette-smoking had been forbidden by law. [...] All that the Buchmanites knew was that they were guided not to smoke; theirs not to reason why.'<sup>437</sup>

In Scandinavian literature, too, the Oxford motive was frequently used. In *Nattövning* (1938), the Swedish author Eyvind Johnson criticized the absolute standards and guidance, describing Group fellows as yankee-oriented confessors

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<sup>434</sup> The Teaching of a Song (dupl.).

<sup>435</sup> Cunningham 1988:409 f.

<sup>436</sup> Greene 1952:179.

<sup>437</sup> Macaulay 1934:26, 48 f., 95 f., 147 quot.



of the latter days, taking a stand for Socialism instead of Oxford. In *Krilons resa* (1942), he carved a crude caricature of Sven Stolpe (Tollius) as well as of the Oxford Group practice of sharing.<sup>438</sup> Elisabeth Högström-Löfberg's *Murarna falla* (1937) has a few very skilful pages, which describe the differences between American and Scandinavian mentality, caricaturing some of the private gatherings of the early revival groups phase in Sweden. Gunhild Tegen's *Vägen över Oxford* (1935), Kristofer Benzow's *Mot strömmen* (1937), Ellen Yngve's *Eldbärare* (1939), and Gösta Carlberg's once famous novel in three volumes, *Bären varandras bördor* (1937), all reflect early Swedish, independent group revivalism, while the latter one bears the mark of the renegade in its attacks on the Oxford Group and Group revivalism in general.<sup>439</sup> In his mystery novel *Den döde mand*, the Dane Hans Scherfig presented the tragicomical portrait of a painter and his smiling change. Kaj Munk's widespread *10 Oxfordsnapshots* are in many ways more skilful, and his portraits distinct without impertinence even in their caricature. In the third part of his novel *Stengrunden* (1941; English: *The Hammer of God*), the future Swedish bishop Bo Giertz gave a critical description of a Group revival that had gone astray. In a subsequent comment, Giertz stated that the persons in his book had not been influenced directly by the Group Movement, but from the literarily exposed Oxford mentality that had made an impression here and there in Sweden in later years.<sup>440</sup>

### II.3.10.2. The Mentality Exposed in Literary Confession

Another genre consists of the confessional books, for example, Beverley Nichols' *The Fool Hath Said*, with unusually much room provided for intellectual questions and their theoretical answers, being radical, though often unscientific

<sup>438</sup> In 'Två svenska romaner' (Vi 1938 No. 42:6), Stolpe criticized Johnson for his hatred and rejection of the Christian road (i.e. to change men instead of killing them). In 'Öppet brev till Sven Stolpe från Eyvind Johnson' (Vi 1938 No. 43:6), Johnson explained that he did not attack Christianity but the society pietism ('salongsläseri') of the Oxford movement in its noisy hiding of its emptiness. He stated that the Fascist threat against culture and the world was not warded off by the reconciliation of married couples, etc. Stolpe ('Replik,' Vi 1938 No. 44:10) finally asked what Johnson did while the Oxford Group was in action. Johnson closed the debate ('Slutreplik,' Vi 1938 No.44:10). In *Oxford och vi* (1939), Johnson wrote a critical essay, trying to expose what he regarded as the hypocrisy of the Oxford Group. A few years later, Stolpe severely criticized Johnson (Stolpe 1941:79–92). On Johnson and his private criticism of the Oxford Group, see Johnson to H. Blomberg 1936 Oct. 7 (532 C:2, UUB), and further Stenström 1978:247 f., Lindberger 1990:33, 461 f.

<sup>439</sup> Carlberg 1937. S. Stolpe: 'Prisromanen och grupprörelsen' (SvM 1937, Nov. 23, also in LTV 1937, No. 48, 49).

<sup>440</sup> B. Giertz: 'Oxford och kyrkan. Ett inlägg från "Stengrundens" författare' (SvD 1941, July 5). See further Jarlert 1990. For an appreciative and critical comment from within the Oxford Group, see Stolpe 1941:249 ff., in which he emphasizes the difference between the Group men in Giertz' book and the authentic Oxford Group.

in exegetic and moral matters.<sup>441</sup> Despite the fact that Nichols himself emphasized that his book was neither about the Oxford Group ‘nor has it really been inspired by the Group, except in certain of its later passages,’ and noted that ‘there are probably many things in the book with which the Group would disagree,’<sup>442</sup> it was widely read as exposing the Oxford Group way of life. Sven Stolpe, who translated the book into Swedish, subsequently noted that, as it was in many ways misleading, it were not even allowed to be sold at English Oxford meetings.<sup>443</sup>

In Scandinavia, confessional books were written by Sven Stolpe, Harry Blomberg, Ronald Fangen, and others. They are obviously of a different style and manner from the Anglo-Saxon or Continental ones – written without theological ambitions, but with obvious literary ones. They were given a more or less fictional form and handling of details in the writer’s personal development, thus forming a genre of its own. All the Scandinavian Oxford writers – and the Finno-Swedish Jarl Hemmer<sup>444</sup> – had had their decisive religious experiences at Norwegian house-parties or meetings, 1934–1938.

The Norwegian Ronald Fangen’s *En kristen verdensrevolusjon* (1935) is a Church-oriented Group revival book, written from the subjective viewpoint of Fangen’s own encounter with the Oxford Group. It is autobiographical, historical, and theological. About his own life Fangen tells only what he believes might help others – i.e. more sharing than memoirs. Fangen’s ecclesiology is uninstitutional, with a strong personalistic emphasis. His vision of the Church is neither the institution nor the sect, but the holy, catholic Church, as a synthesis of individualism and fellowship.<sup>445</sup> Fangen’s experience meant that his idealistic personalism found new roots in the fellowship with God and men in faith. The alternative to institutions and organizations was the Holy Spirit, and – which is notable – the Sacrament.<sup>446</sup> His book also has a few instructive chapters on sharing (with special emphasis on sharing of the Christian faith and sharing as a confession to the Cross of Christ) and on guidance (quoting both Martin Luther and Rudolf Otto). It is not doctrinally Oxfordian, but emphasizes active Christian life at the explicit expense of dogma.<sup>447</sup> In doing this, Fangen expressed his experience in the terms of Lutheran doctrines. Sin is defined

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<sup>441</sup> Nichols 1936:234.

<sup>442</sup> Nichols 1936:171. Nichols later criticized the Oxford Group, see Nichols 1949.

<sup>443</sup> Stolpe in SvM 1937 May 19 (‘Vilka är de “rätta” Oxfordböckerna?’). Stolpe 1940b:26 criticized Andræ 1940 for regarding Nichols as a typical Oxford author. Bertil Malmberg found Nichols’ conception built on a rather solid materialism (Malmberg 1937:237).

<sup>444</sup> See Ekstrand 1993:144, 154 f.

<sup>445</sup> Fangen 1935:100, 106 f.

<sup>446</sup> Fangen 1935:95

<sup>447</sup> Fangen 1935:122 f., 130, 133. ‘Fangen hører ikke til dem som docerer dogmet *extra Oxoniam nulla salus*’ (Molland 1935:310). Still, Fangen was criticized for emphasizing the personalistic solution of social problems, as well as for lacking the eschatology of primitive Christianity (Welle 1935: 388, 408).

according to Lutheran tradition: The real sin, the sum of all sin, is that one does not believe.<sup>448</sup> Fangen's book was translated into Swedish by Sven Stolpe, which was of decisive importance for Stolpe's subsequent Oxford experience. But in Fangen's book we are still far from the dramatic and literary converted self-centricity of Stolpe's book of confessions one year later, and Fangen's conversion was not, like Stolpe's, judged by the critics as a literary one.<sup>449</sup>

Stolpe's *Kopparsmeden Alexander. En Oxfordbok* is a confession in the form of a literary autobiography. In 1934, Stolpe, in an essay on Jacques Rivière, had drawn a line between the literary and the Christian confession. The former always contained an element of enjoyment and self-delight, something like: 'Watch my deep sin and my honest exposition,' instead of the Christian 'mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.'<sup>450</sup> Two years later, in *Kopparsmeden Alexander*, Stolpe himself crossed this line with his egocentrically distorted, ruthless outlook, sometimes compared to Strindberg's.<sup>451</sup> Stolpe found the basis of the warm, positive fellowship of the Oxford Movement in its uniform, even safe, and profound identity in sin – realized in honest, mutual sharing.<sup>452</sup> In the fifth and last chapter of his book, on the new life, Stolpe revealed his personal experience of evil *after* his change. He found help in surrender and sharing, in active fight against temptation and sin. And yet, as he read the former chapters of his book in the light of the four absolute standards, he was filled with agony at the question of how much of it was only a new pose, a literary self-reflec-

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<sup>448</sup> Fangen 1935:41. As stated by Oftestad 1981:131 f., Fangen had a positive relation to the tradition of liberal theology, with its belief in the personality and irrational view of reality, though his development went from criticism of the dogma towards belief in it. Oftestad 1981:261 f. suggests an interesting correspondence between Fangen's thoughts and the views of the Swedish theologian Gustaf Aulén, beginning in a liberal, though anti-rational conception, developing in a more moderate direction.

<sup>449</sup> *En kristen verdensrevolution* caused a debate in some Swedish dailies on Christian morals and the four absolute standards. See DN 1934, Nov. 18, Dec. 27 (Olle Holmberg), Nov. 28 (Jörgen Block), Dec. 13 (Fangen), SvM 1934, Nov. 19 (E. Hj. Linder).

<sup>450</sup> Stolpe 1934:100.

<sup>451</sup> Christofferson 1956:132 f. Christofferson correctly notes that despite Stolpe's effort at absolute honesty, he gives a wry representation of his antagonists. Christofferson classifies the book as a singular ('egenartad') novel. We prefer to regard it as an example of a separate genre.

<sup>452</sup> Stolpe 1936:102. Stolpe's book of confession was heavily criticized. Both Malmberg 1937 and, especially Berggrav 1937 delivered well founded critiques on the book. Manfred Björkquist wrote a kind letter (Stolpe to A. Runestam 1936, Dec. 4, Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB), while his most severe critic, Torsten Fogelqvist, published a long review of Stolpe's exclusively literary conversion ('Litterär omvändelse,' DN 1936, Nov. 19). Anders Frostenson, himself a Group man, hesitated before the writer's publishing of a confessional book only a couple of months after his conversion, but acknowledged that Stolpe had grasped the paradox in Christian life ('Stolpes Oxfordbok,' StTD 1936, Nov. 15).

tion.<sup>453</sup> He saw the sin in his idealism, his discipline, his fights, but still, the mercy of God was not grasped in His objective acts outside of man, but in His subjective works, in man's absolute surrender and readiness to obey. Grace was described as totally dependent on this subjective surrender. The Cross of Christ was essential to Stolpe, but he saw Christ as the victorious and loving prototype, not as the sufficient Saviour, victorious through His atonement. Unlike the previous, subjective chapters of his book, this presentation is said to represent a true picture of Christian life.<sup>454</sup> H. C. Christie made the startling observation that Stolpe tried to paint a self-portrait, while passing a mirror at a speed of 100 kph.<sup>455</sup> Stolpe's book had been checked with the Norwegians Mowinkel, Ramm, Wikborg and Fangen, then partly rewritten in a more concrete, personal direction.<sup>456</sup>

In the same year, Stolpe's former antagonist, the Socialist writer Harry Blomberg, published his autobiography, *Vi måste börja om*. Compared to Stolpe's, it is more essayistic, not exclusively personalistic, and more political. Blomberg's book was more theological, too: adogmatic and spiritualizing, lacking the heavy Oxford stamp of Stolpe's book, much less self-centred, and both in form and theology nearer to the confessional book by Beverley Nichols. Blomberg shared Stanley Jones' views on Christianity and Communism, and agreed on the need of changing both persons and structures, while keeping his former pacifism.<sup>457</sup> In a speech in Gothenburg, December 1937, Blomberg stated that if Christ not always had time to go to Church, this depended on His attending meetings to decide about better habitation, wages, or sharing of necessities.<sup>458</sup> At the Visby party, 1938, he got a clearer and more sincere view on his responsibilities for the public word, asking himself whether his work was a 'maximum' one, and emphasizing the need of united efforts to prevent the war.<sup>459</sup> At the end of 1938, Blomberg's theology was still exclusively spiritual-

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<sup>453</sup> Stolpe 1936:120 ff., 126. The last chapter was not yet finished when the three first ones were being translated in Norway and Denmark (Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1936, Sept. 14, UUB).

<sup>454</sup> Stolpe 1936:130 f., 135 f. Cf. Berggrav 1937:262 ff. See further Ch. V.3.5. Åkerberg 1985:56 from a religio-psychological viewpoint describes Stolpe's faith at this time as a pronounced primal religion, with his change as a decision more than a conversion. In a review of Giertz' *Kyrkofromhet* (1941:230, also in *Nytt Liv* 1940:19), Stolpe seems to have reached this conclusion himself.

<sup>455</sup> C[hristie] 1937:56.

<sup>456</sup> Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1936, Sept. 1 (UUB).

<sup>457</sup> Stolpe to Blomberg 1937, May 4 (UUB), found a clear Oxford appeal lacking in the manuscript. Blomberg compared his intellectual difficulties to Beverley Nichols' (Blomberg to J. Hemmer 1936, Nov. 15). Other adogmatic expressions to Hemmer 1937, Dec. 20 (ÅAB).

<sup>458</sup> Blomberg 1938:251.

<sup>459</sup> Blomberg to B. Alving 1938, Aug. 29, Sept. 13 ('maximum'; A 96:95, GUB). This did not exclude critical views on the Visby party, see Blomberg to A. Runestam 1938, Aug.

istic, but in the following years, his development went in a sacramental, objective direction. In December, 1939, he criticized – in private – the Oxford phrase: to have made one’s decision. A better description was that one had been so moved and shook by the immeasurable love of God that the whole person was penetrated, and given a new view on all things.<sup>460</sup> The ramifications of Blomberg’s Oxford experience have several parallels with those of Ronald Fangen. Fangen’s book on St. Paul appeared in 1936, and in a discourse in Lund, April 1937, Blomberg told the story of St. Paul in modern settings. In 1941, he published *Grund av granit*, a collection of speeches, articles, and poems, trying to apply his principles to various fields of social life, rather than to propagate them, somewhat analogous to Fangen’s *Det nye liv*. Here, his growing understanding of the Christian dogma and sacraments is revealed in the story of his further development, leading to his baptism on Epiphany Day, 1940, though he still – contrary to Fangen – meant that intellectual problems of faith were mostly moral problems.<sup>461</sup> In subsequent books, he followed his new ideals, but without special Oxford labels.

In 1937, the Swedish author Bertil Malmberg, still critical of Group revivalism, noticed with scepticism the impatience in the professional writer’s literary exploitation of his conversion, with its real or implied facts. He was amazed at the convert’s easy-going way of describing this experience. However, this scepticism he found without basis in Blomberg’s case.<sup>462</sup> Obviously, his words were aimed at Stolpe. After his own Oxford experience in 1938, Malmberg did not publish any book of confessions, but a collection of Oxford-inspired poems in a confessional form.<sup>463</sup>

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26 (Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB).

<sup>460</sup> Blomberg to Jarl Hemmer 1938, Dec. 20 (ÅAB; ‘För mig personligen spelar varken treenigheten, nattvardsfrågan eller den katolska helgonvärlden någon som helst roll annat än som rörande och gripande uttryck för människors behov av att försöka förklara det outsägliga. [...] Om Oxford inte lika gott kan stavas Kristi ande, rör mig inte Oxford i ryggen’). Blomberg to Ernst Norlind 1939, Dec. 19 (Saml.Norlind, E.L., LUB).

<sup>461</sup> Blomberg 1941:102 ff. and 131, respectively (1:o SvD 1941, Sept. 28). Blomberg had been raised as a Baptist, though without being baptized. In *Land, öppna dig!* (1938), Blomberg combined new essays with speeches from both before and after his Oxford experience. To J. Hemmer he described his experience (1936, Nov. 15, ÅAB) as losing his self-pity, his disgust for men, his spiritual asthma. Realizing the evil of the world, his faith in the possibilities of men was greater than ever before. In Blomberg 1946, the problem of uniting personalism and sacramentalism is a problem for several of the novel’s figures, but no longer one of the author’s.

<sup>462</sup> B. Malmberg, ‘Harry Blombergs bekännelsebok’ (NDA 1937, Oct. 12). See also Blomberg to Malmberg 1937, Oct. 13 (L 74:1, KB). On Malmberg’s attitude of rejection towards Group revivalism at the time, see Malmberg 1936:80 f.

<sup>463</sup> Malmberg 1938. On Malmberg’s Oxford experience, see further Jarlert 1989b, and S. Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1938, June 3 (UUB), on the Oslo trip that ‘broke’ him; Stolpe to A. Ahlberg 1938, June 7 (‘Vet du om hans övergång till kristendomen gm Oxford? Kanske han inte själv ännu direkt vill stå för den [...]’; H 1991:3, GUB). From Stolpe to

In 1938, Blomberg's friend Thure Oskarsson, a postman from Stora Tuna (Dalecarlia), since many years engaged in the Labour Movement and the Social Democratic Party, published his confessional book, *Oxford och en socialist*. Just like Stolpe and Blomberg, Oskarsson had gone to Norway and publicly shared his sins in Stavanger in January 1937. The finale of his book takes place at an international house-party at Oxford. In a subsequent novel, *Den berömda tillfälligheten*, Oskarsson delivered new confessions, though without the spontaneous and confused phrasing of his first one.<sup>464</sup>

Fredrik Ramm's *Uten ansvar* (1938) is an autobiographical novel – the (cover of the) Swedish translation even has the subtitle 'En Oxfordroman' – where Ramm's alter ego, Georg Hørfeldt, confesses his former hatred of Denmark and the Danes. The Christian faith is described as a life of activity for the Kingdom of God on earth. In *En själ gick mot livet* (1939), Ramm emphasized the importance of life changing in working life. Here, Ramm does not disseminate, he does not even mention house-parties or use the special Group terminology. The Oxford Group way of life is shown as unselfish love, and in its practices of guidance and restitution. In writing novels, Ramm was still a journalist, and did not aim at a literary career. His ideal of the changed writer was a surrender of the individual element in his writing, thus improving the personal element. He believed this road to be much more difficult for Ronald Fangen as an original and creative writer, than to himself. In an article on Bertil Malmberg, Ramm stated that the great thinker and the talented poet was changed into a common sinner on the road to the God before whom all are children.<sup>465</sup>

The Oxford Group authors tried to push several colleagues into personal experiences of life-change and working fellowship with the Group. Some of these attempts, for example Moa and Harry Martinson, simply failed. The active turning of others, like Vilhelm Moberg, Elmer Diktonius, F. E. Sillanpää, and Knud Bruun Rasmussen against the Oxford Group may be interpreted as a counter-reaction to the life-changing efforts by Oxford Group people. Still others, like Gunnar Edman, Johan Falkberget, Ragnar Jändel, and Saliy Salminen,

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Ahlberg 1938, July 26, it is clear that Ahlberg had realized that Malmberg did not yet write about Christ. Malmberg to Ahlberg 1939, June 11, on his earlier works as a thesis, the Oxford poems as the antithesis, with the synthesis on its way, confirms the conclusions of Jarlert 1989b.

<sup>464</sup> Oskarsson 1938:85 f; Christopher F. H. Borchgrevink to H. Blomberg 1937, Jan. 21, H. Blake to Blomberg 1937, Jan. 25 (UUB). Stolpe found Oskarsson's second novel – *Bortom allt...* – bad, about the same quality as Fredrik Ramm's second one, i.e. worthless from a literary point of view, and naive in its psychology. At the hands of Torsten Fogelqvist or Olle Holmberg, Oskarsson's book would be slaughtered. Despite this, Stolpe had told Oskarsson that the book ought to be printed as it had been written (Stolpe to Blomberg 1939, Sept. 6, UUB). *Bortom allt...* is not an 'Oxford' novel, neither in its setting nor in the described way of life, though its prerequisite obviously is a spiritually changed attitude in a Socialist writer.

<sup>465</sup> Ramm to Fangen 1935, June 4 (488a, UBO), Ramm 1944:268.

had spiritual experiences, but did not enter the fellowship.<sup>466</sup>

### II.3.10.3. The Re-Creation of Sin and Change in Fiction

The Anglo-American writers did not produce any 'Oxford' novels, written from the inside. Daphne Du Maurier came closest, in *Come Wind, Come Weather*, which tells the stories of real, changed persons, but the 'Oxford' novel developed into a significant Scandinavian genre.<sup>467</sup> After his changing experience, the conflict between the demands of a Christian life and the demands of free fiction became an acute problem for Sven Stolpe. Out of consideration for his own personal needs, he had had to give up fabulation and its process of creating characters.<sup>468</sup> Since the previous year, Stolpe had fought for the freedom of fiction, and against a certain conservative and idealistic kind of Christian literary criticism, which he found moralistic. In his demands for a great and ruthless Christian realism, he addressed himself to Manfred Björkquist, the director of the Sigtuna Foundation, whom he in many respects greatly admired.<sup>469</sup> In a

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<sup>466</sup> Moa Martinson to B. Malmberg 1953, March 2 (L 74.5, KB; see further [Martinson] 1978:44 ff.), Malmberg to V. Moberg 1938, July 29 (L 144:1 A, KB), Vilhelm Moberg: 'Skrattet i Visby,' DN 1938, Aug. 19; Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1938, Dec. 9 ('Ville skall bli förvandlad'; UUB). Stolpe to Blomberg 1936, Nov. 24 (UUB; on Edman), Chr. Conradi to Blomberg 1937, Feb. 12 (on Falkberget), E. Tengblad to Blomberg 1939, Jan. 17 (on Jändel), J. Hemmer to Blomberg 1939, March 28 (on Sillanpää), Appendix to P. Brodersen 1938, Nov. 8 (Bruun Rasmussen among others, Okat.saml.H.Blomberg, UUB). Oxford och vi 1939 (critical articles by Bruun Rasmussen, Diktonius, Sillanpää – awarded the Nobel Prize in the same year, Moberg, etc.). The list of authors who ought to meet Frank Buchman during his visit in Sweden in 1938, includes K. R. Gierow, V. Moberg, Hj. Gullberg, K. G. Hildebrand, Hans Botwid, G. Gustaf-Janson, Curt Berg, B. Malmberg, S. Neander-Nilsson – all these more or less prepared already! (Appendix to Stolpe to Blomberg 1938, June 3, UUB). Another, later list of authors to be invited to a private team-meeting includes Blomberg, Malmberg, Stolpe, eventually Th. Oskarsson, Hans Ruin, Sally Salminen, J. Hemmer, R. Fangen, F. Ramm, but also Hildebrand and Gullberg (characterized as harder to reach) would be welcome (Stolpe to 'Vänner och bröder!' 1938, Oct. 3, Okat.saml.H.Blomberg, UUB). The artist Bo Beskow was attacked as well (Stolpe to Blomberg 1938, Dec. 12, UUB). The attacks on journalists, too, were methodical and intense (see the letters to Barbro Alving from Karin Stolpe 1938, Aug. 15, A 96:116; Blomberg 1938, Aug. 29, Sept. 13, A 96:95; and especially from the Danish journalist Gudrun Egebjerg 1938, Aug. 9, [17], 27, Sept. 6, Oct. 21, [1939, Jan. 1], etc. (GUB).

<sup>467</sup> Cf. Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:12 which states about all sorts of Oxford Group publications that 'Der Romancharakter ist den Gruppenveröffentlichung in sehr starkem Maße eigen.'

<sup>468</sup> Stolpe 1936b:158, 161. Similar thoughts had appeared in Stolpe's essay on the writer and reality, 1932, published in *Det svenska geniet* 1935. See further Tael 1980:150 ff., 1984:120 ff.

<sup>469</sup> Stolpe 1935b, esp. p.57 ff., also several letters from Stolpe to Björkquist (SIB).

couple of letters to Björkquist, from June and December 1935, respectively, Stolpe described his task as gathering all the Christians in the nation, who could not breathe in an environment in which Christian faith – in the name of righteousness – was connected with or tolerated capitalism, moral hypocrisy, old taboos, or repugnance towards necessary social reforms. Stolpe's contact with Group revivalism – as early as in Spring 1935 – had given him a new view of the possibilities to make a real effort. In the December letter, he even stated that he was forced to enter the struggle, because the Group movement had altered him.<sup>470</sup>

Ronald Fangen perceived his situation as a changed writer in a different way. As explained by Bernt Oftestad, Fangen's Christian realism was built on soteriological premises, positive and open to all fiction. Fangen meant that an honest fight to penetrate the deepest stratum of reality sooner or later would give a gleam of the presence of Christ in our world. Faith and fiction were both concerned with the same reality – the world of sin and death, which Christ had entered. They had in common an anthropological basis: man's searching for an understanding and an experience of true reality.<sup>471</sup> Fangen's Christian realism is personalistic, centred around individual persons, while social matters are dealt with mostly in the development of interpersonal relations. Super-individual or transpersonal views are not neglected, but the aim even here is the development of the personality.<sup>472</sup> Oftestad concludes that a line leads from Mauriac over Stolpe to Fangen's Christian realism. While Mauriac's theological basis in the incarnation of Christ did become Fangen's, too, Stolpe's literary mediation went just through his writings on Mauriac, neither through his theories of literary principles nor through his own fictional writing.<sup>473</sup>

Fangen's first Oxford novel, *På bar bunn*, described the Christian conversion as the solution to the crisis of the personality – a crisis with cultural dimensions, explicitly attacking nihilistic materialism.<sup>474</sup> His next novel, *Allerede nu*, was criticized for its weak composition, and for its theorizing or preaching character. Fangen's aim was to depict the growing life in faith, but the result was not a pure Oxford novel.<sup>475</sup> This is obvious especially in the development of two of his principal characters: neither Mrs. Bauk nor Astrid Hamre experience their Christian conversion through the Oxford Group, but are subsequently introduced to its fellowship. Both in his theology and in his conception of life in faith, Fangen had a broader view, and dealt with common spiritual problems. His solution was Christian faith, which created confidence in renewed, bourgeois ideals, and – through the relation to God – the power to realize them in

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<sup>470</sup> Stolpe to M. Björkquist 1935, June 18, Dec.12 (SIB), 'Jag tvangs ut i striden, drf. att grupprörelsen gjort om mig.' Cf. the critical Källström 1935.

<sup>471</sup> Oftestad 1981:98 and further p.116 ff.

<sup>472</sup> Oftestad 1981:108.

<sup>473</sup> Cf. Oftestad 1981:104.

<sup>474</sup> Oftestad 1981:83, 86.

<sup>475</sup> Oftestad 1981:88 f



individuals and culture. This utopian, yet present realization went through suffering in mystical fellowship with Christ.<sup>476</sup>

In a review of *Allerede nu* (Sw: *Redan här*), Sven Stolpe found it the most remarkable Christian novel ever written in a Scandinavian language. In *På bar bunn*, Fangen had described the unchanged man. Now he had written about change and changed people. His new book showed the first decisive breakthrough of a realistic Christian understanding of man in postnaturalistic Scandinavian fiction.<sup>477</sup> Two months later, Stolpe reported on his own new view on faith and fiction. The problem was still how the fictional writer could shape the reality of both evil and good, of sin and grace, when his religious opinions forced him to cut out everything evil and sinful from his own life. Stolpe's new solution was – instead of his former resignation – that the Almighty could do a miracle, and guide a man to the creation of art while protecting his soul. Thus, the only way of the Christian writer was a careful examination of whether his writing plans were guided by God, and – if they were not – to drop his pen rather than take the risk of entering into the demoniacal world without the guidance of God.<sup>478</sup>

At the 1937 Poet's conference at Sigtuna, Bertil Malmberg had spoken of the poet and his demon, criticising the secularization of Christian religion: that Christianity was not a real religion, as it had not been able to unite the holy and the demoniacal characters in a divine totality.<sup>479</sup> At the 1939 conference – after his Oxford experience – he spoke of the extent of the metaphysical moral decision, regarding the deity both as a demoniacal natural power and as a holy spirit, as a crucified god, and as Kyrios Christos. He found that no great poetry, not even the religious one, had been written without demoniacal inspiration. The artistic purpose of the poet was not ethical, but to hide its darker tendencies behind symbols. If the moral demand of Christian faith was regarded as an absolute one, it commanded the Christian poet to cease writing. Alas, God's plan might expect some to take the risk of entering the demoniacal world as a duty with a personal responsibility, breaking the laws, but following the secret will of God. Other problems were the possibility that the poet's faith was only fictional, or that his Christian faith and religious experience were totally consumed by his production.<sup>480</sup>

<sup>476</sup> Oftestad 1981:89 ff., 110.

<sup>477</sup> Stolpe: 'Ronald Fangens nya roman. II' (SvM 1937, Nov. 2).

<sup>478</sup> Stolpe: 'Är kristen dikt möjlig? II' (SvM 1938, Jan. 5). For this problem of Stolpe's, see further Tael's 1980:150 ff., 1984:120 ff.

<sup>479</sup> Malmberg 1937:154 ff. See further Jarlert 1989b:292.

<sup>480</sup> Malmberg 1939:602 ff. The problem with Malmberg's joining the Oxford Group was his clear separation of method and message, otherwise significant of independent Group revivalism. We might even say that he perceived the Oxford Group message of a moral rearmament as a method. His Oxford period was a sincere methodical experiment, leading to an experience of the reality of God, while lacking a Christian context of interpretation for the experiences following his methodical experiment. See further

In an undated manuscript in English, Stolpe commented on Bertil Malmberg's development:

The Christian experience is breaking down the aesthetic point of view, which is based on the dictum that there can never be a full identification of the writer's person and his works. If the writer tries to discipline his own life and there introduce a moral censorship, it is held that he becomes unable in his literary work to give an all-around and valid picture of reality as a whole. This point of view was represented in Scandinavian literature most clearly by Bertil Malmberg, who gave it shape in a complete system of 'fate-aestheticism.' It begins to be clear now that this point of view is an escape from responsibility, and that God can lead a poet's writing as well as his life.<sup>481</sup>

Asked in an interview in 1941, if he now had received clear guidance to start writing fiction, Stolpe answered: – Yes, perhaps one could say so. I suddenly got into a terrifically productive period...<sup>482</sup> A result of Stolpe's productive period was the novel *Världen utan nåd* (1941), an equivalent to Fangen's first Oxford novel. The planned second part, describing changed man, never appeared. Here, Stolpe in his fictional writing – at least to some part – is a parallel to Graham Greene, who, like Eliot, for some time was satisfied 'simply to describe the wasteland of an irreligious age.'<sup>483</sup> In his book on five Norwegians (1942), Stolpe stated that the Christian novel and the non-Christian, naturalistic novel were incomparable. What was bad psychology in one was good in the other. To readers lacking a Christian experience, the description of it must sound like bluff, suggestion, or dishonesty. To those having had such an experience, however, the non-Christian life appeared undeveloped and childish.<sup>484</sup>

In 1942, Harry Blomberg described the writer's aim as reflecting the drama: with God, away from God, and back to God again – in every human person, describing man's pain in not being able to be what he wants, and not wanting to

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Jarlert 1989b:294 f.

<sup>481</sup> Sven Stolpe, 'Renaissance' (Tirley). Another undated manuscript, lacking title and author, says, in a manner significant of the internal Oxford Group propaganda: 'Bertil was not alone in this. Art began to reflect the new joy in living through writers who had begun to live victoriously. The New York Times Book Review commented on the new healthy trend of national literature. Sven and Harry had ushered in a new epoch in national culture' (Tirley). Cf. Blomberg 1939:255 on the writer's instinct to describe life, as possibly excluding him from living the same life.

<sup>482</sup> NL 1941 Nr. 17:1.

<sup>483</sup> Stratford 1967:132.

<sup>484</sup> Stolpe 1942:135, 1942b:16 f., and 1942c:67 f., on Fangen's novels, relates the discussion to Olle Holmberg's criticisms in *Dagens Nyheter*, 1934, Nov. 18 and the critique of Sigurd Hoel, respectively. See further Stolpe 1942b:13, which states that what the great literary historian Henrik Schück had diagnosed as spiritual illness was recognised by the Christian as spiritual health, while Schück's diagnosis of spiritual health to the Christian appeared as naïve ignorance.

be what he ought to be.<sup>485</sup> Already in his big novel *Än kommer dag* (1939), Blomberg let only one of his two main characters be changed, while the other one took his own life. Here Blomberg dealt much with the practice of guidance, emphasizing individual change as a prerequisite for national change. Through its personal examples, this novel functioned as promoting Oxford practices.<sup>486</sup> In *Paradisets port* (1946), Blomberg dealt with the problems of the artist's need of isolation, and his sacrifice of his art to Christ, with the explicit rejection of using the demoniacal character of artistry as a personal excuse.<sup>487</sup>

#### II.3.10.4. Fiction and the Fellowship of the Oxford Group

In an interview in *Nytt Liv*, 1941, Stolpe mentioned his own conflict between literary work and active participation in Group work. To Ronald Fangen, this conflict had become the burning question soon after his change at the Høsbjør party in the autumn of 1934. In his great study on Fangen, Bernt Oftestad states that Fangen early on distanced himself from the movement. The background to and explanation of this distance is found in the correspondence of Ronald Fangen. Here we will further explain the nature of Fangen's early break with Frank Buchman.<sup>488</sup>

In a letter to Fangen, May 1935, Frank Buchman accused him of not having checked the Dutch translation of his book on the Christian World revolution with 'our Dutch Group,' and threatened Fangen that the Dutch sale of his book would 'largely depend upon the attitude of the Dutch Group towards the book.' Buchman stated that Fangen turned to the Oxford Group only when he could not get his own publisher to sell 'a Group book.' In England, however, 'our publisher would not take it unless it had our "O.K.", and he knew we would be responsible for its sale.' Buchman especially disliked the expression 'American-made,' which 'certainly ought to be deleted in other editions [...] A phrase like

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<sup>485</sup> Blomberg 1942:81, using an example from Dostoyevsky. Cf. Frank Buchman to Barbro Alving 1938, Aug. 21 (A 96:96, GUB): 'My own attitude is always to think of the person as he or she really wants to be and thus, since I had an experience of the Cross of Christ some years ago, I never nurse ill-will against people.'

<sup>486</sup> F. Ramm (to Blomberg 1940, Jan. 9; UUB) got a shock from the scene between Peter and Johansson, while Peter's delay with his visit to Alvar drove Ramm to make a personal telephone call (Blomberg 1939:112, 118 ff., 158, 214, 469 and 219, 437, respectively). Human tragedy and loss play an important part in Blomberg 1946 as well.

<sup>487</sup> Blomberg 1946:15 f., 169, 254 f. The rejection of the personal use of artistic demony was probably a reaction to the development of Bertil Malmberg.

<sup>488</sup> NL 1941 Nr. 17:1. Oftestad 1981:77 f., 104. Oftestad correctly notes that Fangen found team discipline tyrannic and unevangelic, but mixes this up with Fangen's later doctrinal reservations, and states that Fangen in his letter to Buchman 1935 did not wish to be regarded as a member of the movement any longer. Later he touches on the conflict (p.104), mentioning Stolpe's note that Fangen was requested to place his literary work under the guidance of the group.

that I would not pass in any book for which the Group was responsible in selling.<sup>489</sup> He did not want to be hard, but he felt that Fangen had ‘no idea how carefully all the literature for which the Group stands has been checked and examined from every possible angle.’<sup>490</sup>

In his reply, Fangen said that the book had been checked ‘with members of the norwegian team.’ The alternative had been to leave the book unpublished. The Dutch edition was made on the translator’s initiative, and not on Fangen’s. He could not stop the book in Scandinavia. ‘And even when it does not seem to please you that it obviously works effectively for the Group-message, it can’t, I hope, hurt you. I think I have written the book under guidance, and I can do nothing more.’ If Group-discipline was not based upon loyalty or Christian freedom, ‘but upon a bit tyrannie [sic] and formalistic state of mind, which in me creates uncertainty and unnecessary problems,’ Fangen thought it best ‘to go out of it now. I am more sorry for it than I can say, for I loved the fellowship and the strength of the team. But when fellowship gets a touch of tyranny in it, it must be payed with cowardice. I can’t pay that price. [...] All in all: I think you will do better without me.’<sup>491</sup> In his answer, Buchman explained: ‘I treated you as a fellow-revolutionary, and I find this is not the way.’<sup>492</sup>

However, the correspondence did not end with this. As early as in September the same year, Buchman wrote Fangen two letters, asking advice for and correcting false rumours about the Swedish work.<sup>493</sup> The correspondence between Buchman and Fangen has much in common with that between Buchman and the Swiss theologian Emil Brunner. To reach the central point of conflict, we must note the difference between ‘living the Oxford Group way of life’ and living in total fellowship with the international team and Frank Buchman himself. The conflict is mostly a conflict between the guidance of the singularly responsible person – a literary writer or a theological professor – working and checking with a local or national team, and the guidance of the international team, with the guidance of Frank Buchman himself as its final authority.

During these years, Ronald Fangen sometimes appeared at house-parties in

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<sup>489</sup> The word was not ‘American-made,’ but ‘made in America,’ Fangen 1935:7, used as a description of Fangen’s feelings of fear towards the Oxford Group *before* his changing experience at Høsbjør. It did not express any continued feelings of hostility or criticism.

<sup>490</sup> Buchman to Fangen 1935, May 14 (UBO 488a). For example, the Danish *Vort måde med Oxford-Gruppen* was translated in manuscript for Buchman, who approved its publication.

<sup>491</sup> Copy of Fangen to Buchman 1935, May 16 (UBO 488a). Fangen’s book was rapidly spread in Scandinavia, and in Germany (Fangen 1936c), soon being both read and quoted (Oehler [1936]:12, 18). Fr. Ramm to Fangen 1935, June 4 (UBO 488a) expressed that the book would have been still better if checked with, for example, Garret Stearly. Now it was too much an individual Fangen-book.

<sup>492</sup> Buchman to Fangen 1935, May 20 (UBO 488a).

<sup>493</sup> Buchman to Fangen 1935, Sept. 20, 28 (UBO 488a).

working fellowship with a local or national team, for example, at Farris bad in Larvik, in the summer of 1936, with the changing experience of the Swedish writer Harry Blomberg among its consequences. The fact that Fangen, in a letter to his wife in October 1937, sharply criticized the group, is of only slight importance in this context. Fangen just told her that he had voiced his reaction against some dangerous ways of the groups – undefined in the letter – at an Oxford Group gathering at Nyborg in Denmark, and that the Danish Oxford Group leaders Paul Brodersen and Halfdan Høgsbro agreed with him.<sup>494</sup> In June 1938, Sven Stolpe characterized Fangen's situation as withdrawing from all small work, writing thick books, descending from his Olympic cloud at particularly magistral mass-meetings, thundering only to disappear again. Six months later, he was worried about Fangen's isolation and difficulties. The reason was a lack of sharing, and a failure of changing the lives of others. In *Kristendommen og vår tid*, Fangen had attacked Hitler and National Socialism – attacks that were true, but dangerous to German Group work, and he had further propagated theological, ecumenical work instead of the Oxford Group. Stolpe's analysis was understood by Fredrik Ramm, while Harry Blomberg and the Finno-Swedish couple Jarl and Saga Hemmer saw negative critique in it.<sup>495</sup>

As late as in December 1938, Fangen complained to Brodersen<sup>496</sup> of his situation with its permanent conflict between Group work and writing, all since Høsbjør, 1934. Fangen had then realized that he had to be willing to surrender – i.e. to leave – his writing. And so he was. But since that time, new writing tasks had been given him, and when he had checked them with his group friends, they all had understood these tasks to be his. Subsequently, several people had written to Fangen, asking him to take part in tours of Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland. They wrote to tell him that he was using his time badly, would not do his best, etc. Now Fangen had to ask his friends if they wanted him to stop writing. That was the real question.<sup>497</sup> The cultural

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<sup>494</sup> Fangen to Solveig Fangen 1937, Oct. 29 (UBO 288c). Cf. Oftestad 1981:250 n.24. Govig 1966:129 relates from an interview with Solveig Fangen, that Ronald Fangen decided to 'resign after a speaking engagement for him was announced for which he had given no previous consent.' On Fangen, the other 'Oxford' writers, and the difficulties of campaign work at this time, see Harry Blomberg: 'Hos Ronald Fangen' (SvM 1937, Oct. 15).

<sup>495</sup> Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1938, June 28, Dec. 12 (UUB); Stolpe to Saga Hemmer 1938, Dec. 12 (ÅAB), emphasizes Fangen's personal defeats, and a lack of surrender in a certain area of his life. Fangen had criticized National Socialism in *Dagbladet* as early as 1934, Aug. 18 ('Tyskland og Norden').

<sup>496</sup> Copy of Fangen to [Brodersen] 1938, Dec. 27 (UBO 488a). The receiver's name is unknown. From the letter it is clear that he was a dean, and according to notes in UBO it cannot have been written to any of the Norwegian deans. The opinions referred to, do agree with Brodersen's, and Brodersen did write Fangen two long letters in the autumn of 1938 (Brodersen to Halfdan Høgsbro 1939, May 16, Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>497</sup> To 'orthodoxfordians' like Brodersen or Stolpe, the real matter was Fangen's

rising in the Nordic countries needed the effective weapons of, for example, the Christian novel – not meetings only. Fangen writes that it was impossible for him to have regular sharing with the people mentioned in Brodersen's letter, asking whether Brodersen really found it impossible to be an active Christian without regular sharing with a certain number of people. To Fangen, writing it-self was a regular sharing.

This letter shows what Fangen's earlier letters to Frank Buchman did not, that Fangen towards the end of 1938 had distanced himself not only from the active Scandinavian work, but also from an important part of the Oxford Group way of life, and now separated the message and the methods of the Group. As a reaction to the Oxford Group teaching of a 'maximum experience of Christ,' Fangen in *Kristendommen og vår tid* (1938), defined the Christian experience as an experience of Jesus alone – a 'minimum' experience and as such a full Christian experience.<sup>498</sup> In a sermon on Annunciation Day 1939, he warned against transforming the gift of sharing into a duty or a law, and, while still certain of the road of the Christian world revolution through individual life change, he no longer found this indispensable to his faith. In November 1940, Fangen, in a statement to the German authorities, wrote that he had not taken part in the work of the Oxford Group for the last years.<sup>499</sup> *Kristendommen og vår tid* was dedicated to the Danish theologian Halfdan Høgsbro, himself a Church Group man, who did not identify himself with the vision of a national revolution through other methods than the personalistic ones.<sup>500</sup> Fangen still kept his personalistic view of the Church, leading to much tension between the objective and the subjective, with the relation between personal religiosity and the foun-

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'personal problems' and the risk of his 'breaking out of the fellowship' (Brodersen to H. Høgsbro 1939, May 16, Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK; Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1938, Dec. 12, UUB).

<sup>498</sup> Fangen 1938b:13, see [Ramm] 1946:17 – We were Christian optimists. We needed to become Christian realists. [...] We needed to learn to live on a minimum, on a faith that defies anything, the imperative validity of obedience, without results.

<sup>499</sup> Fangen 1939:218, 220 f., Oftestad 1981:78, rough copy of Fangen to the German authorities 1940, Nov. 19 (Pa. 320:10, RAO). The sermon on Annunciation Day was criticized from within the Oxford Group for not having mentioned that Mary and Elizabeth 'shared' the message of the Angel (Sverre Rilsøen: 'Fangen-minner', Dagen 1956, June 2). See also Fangen 1938:168 ff. (an eschatological sermon, emphasizing Christ alone as the answer, while recognizing different methods of work). Still, Fangen could publicly defend the 'Group movement' against attacks, see, for example, 'Humanist-akademiet og gruppe-bevegelsen,' TT 1939, March 31.

<sup>500</sup> Fangen 1938:195. In the summer of 1937, Fangen and Høgsbro co-operated in Danish Group work, Fangen staying with Høgsbro at Sønderborg for some days. On the basis of the contemporary Danish situation, with hostility against the Oxford Group from some priests, and the danger of sectarianism among Group men, they discussed the need of a Scandinavian clerical meeting (Fangen to E. Berggrav 1937, July 15 (Pa. 320:10, RAO). See Høgsbro to Fangen 1937, July 22 (UBO 488a). On Høgsbro, see Ch. II.2.3.3., IV passim.

dation of the Church on Word and Sacrament as the most central one.<sup>501</sup> In his novel *En lysets engel* (1945), Fangen portrayed a Norwegian, Lutheran priest, who at first rejects the Oxford Group as methodistic and simplified, while emphasizing Church and eschatology. Subsequently, he recognises that, while his theology has been true, his isolating use of it has been wrong. Both the Church and he as its minister are responsible for the political, social, and cultural life, too. While accepting the message of the Oxford Group, he does not use its methods.<sup>502</sup>

In *Sköna morgonstund* (1943), the Swedish author Harry Blomberg described his former situation as a newly converted Christian, with an inner need of quiet growing, when thousands of people forced him up on various sorts of platforms, telling him in a loud voice that it was his duty to write, write, write, and to speak, speak, speak. New friends wrote, telephoned, or came personally, telling him of their guidance for him to do this or that. Hardly any of them had received the same guidance, and very few seemed to ask for Blomberg's own guidance, most of them lacking an understanding of the writer's paradox: the absolute necessity of isolation in the service of fellowship.<sup>503</sup> A different view of the situation is presented in a report on Blomberg's work for spiritual preparedness in 1940:

Harry has begun to check his plans rather more with the team. He *does* check with us now, to the extent of telling us in advance, and allowing some measure of alteration. This is a great advance for him. It is not yet easy however, to build into his speeches thoughts and ideas other than his own. But that is the next step – for him and for us.<sup>504</sup>

Harry Blomberg had intense contacts with Finland, first with the writers Jarl Hemmer and Sally Salminen, as well as with the artist Lennart Segerstråle,<sup>505</sup> then with the A.B.S., and with the Finnish Young People's Voluntary Work

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<sup>501</sup> Oftestad 1981:137.

<sup>502</sup> Fangen 1945:40 f., 43 ff., 116 f., 119. Sverre Rilsøen: 'Fangen-minner' (Dagen 1956, June 2), concludes that Fangen himself became reserved towards the Oxford Group as method.

<sup>503</sup> Blomberg 1943:173 f. Cf. Blomberg's efforts to get the Finno-Swedish writer Jarl Hemmer, immediately after his change in Oslo, December 1938, to contact the artist Lennart Segerstråle (Blomberg to Hemmer 1938, Dec. 6, ÅAB; Ekstrand 1993:155).

<sup>504</sup> Copy of S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940 July 12 (DWC). See Blomberg to Saga Hemmer 1939, Jan. 23 (ÅAB): 'Jag [...] har ännu inte lärt mig ordentlig teamdisciplin; ja, jag undrar om jag överhuvud har min egentliga uppgift där. Detsamma kan man nog säga om både Fangen och Malmberg – och kanske även om Jarl. Vi göra kanske ett lika nödvändigt arbete med det vi skriva och tänka'; also 'Räddningen för mig har varit att tänka: Du ska lyda Guds röst, och teamets röst är inte alltid Guds röst' (Blomberg to S. & J. Hemmer 1938, Dec. 28, ÅAB).

<sup>505</sup> See Ekstrand 1993:155, 157 f., 160 ff.

Movement.<sup>506</sup>

Sven Stolpe, having talked to Fangen, wrote to Jarl Hemmer that he agreed with the opinion that Christian writers should be writing, and not doing the meeting circuit. Their work was a lonely one before God, but they were unable to write in a new style, and about the new man if they had not experienced the Christian fellowship, which was a prerequisite for a Christian victory in life.<sup>507</sup>

The Scandinavian 'Oxford' novel has not been much noted outside the Nordic countries. The only modern attempt seems to be a presentation by Maurice Gravier at the 10th Study Conference of the International Association for Scandinavian Studies, in 1974.<sup>508</sup> A remarkable fact not noted in literature is that the great Oxford writers in Scandinavia – Fangen, Stolpe, Blomberg, and Malmberg – had reflected seriously on art and problems of writing long before their changing experiences. Another remarkable fact is that they left the Oxford Group during or after the World War. Their Group period was not merely an episode, but an important, albeit passing stage in their development.

### II.3.10.5. The New Mentality in Art and Artists

At the Gränna conference for National education, August 1940, public attention was paid to Miss Kerstin Rääf's work to create a national education through the art and among artists. Herself an artist, she expressed the task of the artist as leaving competition and prestige to live in fellowship and cooperation. A growing group of young artists, musicians, and film men were adopting this new way of life.<sup>509</sup> At the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm, a Group revival was going on, students seeking guidance together, doing teamwork, apologizing to teachers, etc. Among the subsequently famous musicians involved were Sven-Erik Bäck, Eric Ericson, and Gunnar Hallhagen.<sup>510</sup>

Among the artists, the contacts with the Oxford Group, and the inspiration by it, led to a new mentality, and especially the cousins and surrealists Waldemar Lorentzon and Erik Olson were regarded as pioneers of a renaissance of religion in art.<sup>511</sup> Especially in the case of Lorentzon, the combination of sur-

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<sup>506</sup> See Ch. V.4.1–2, 4.

<sup>507</sup> Stolpe to Hemmer 1939, Feb. 8 (ÅAB).

<sup>508</sup> Gravier 1975 has been rightly criticized by Oftestad 1981:251 for not doing much of the ideological background. To be further noticed is his lack of understanding of nuances among the Scandinavian languages, as well as his faulty treatment of the Swedish language even in quotations.

<sup>509</sup> 'Gränna vill ha... Nya hem äro grunden för ett nytt samhälle', JP 1940, Aug. 8. Copy of S. Linton to P. Blake 1940, May 10 (DWC): 'Kerstin Rääf, as a result of work she started in the Musikalisk Akademi has now 30–40 students changed there.'

<sup>510</sup> Hedlund 1988:88.

<sup>511</sup> 'Ny konst skapar en ny mentalitet' (Arvika Nyheter 1941, Jan. 22), 'Märklig förändring inom modern konst' (Lunds Dagblad 1941, Sept. 30). Neither the Oxford Group, nor teamwork or the M.R.A. were even mentioned in these articles.



realism and religion crossed the borders of the irrational. He experienced life change and world fellowship not as an unreal utopian illusion, but as a possible, dramatic reality.<sup>512</sup> Prepared by his reading of Begbie's *Life Changers* in Swedish, he experienced his surrender at the Visby party, since then regarding the Cross as a uniting symbol for the spiritual world revolution. Especially his painting on the altar wall in the Church of Kastlösa has been regarded as summing up his religious views, as influenced by the Oxford Group.<sup>513</sup> In an interview in 1970, Lorentzon stated that he had tried to describe man and his hard struggle with the cruel, satanic realities, and how man could be totally changed through a revolution in his heart, with Christ as the liberator giving hope and joy to those who seek this reality.<sup>514</sup>

To Erik Olson, since 1950 a Roman Catholic, as he remembers his experiences, the Oxford Group did not function as artistic inspiration, but as spiritual liberation. He had met the Group in Denmark, then at Halmstad, but his attitude was hesitating, and from the Ljungskile party, 1939, he fled in a panic.<sup>515</sup> However, in an interview from 1941, he talked not only about the new, positive, spiritual Christian message in his surrealistic art, and its symbols of the subconscious, but of a new range of colours, a warmer light, and another atmosphere in his paintings as well. It is worth noting that Olson did not mention Quiet time, but his reading of the old religious classics as his daily inspiration.<sup>516</sup>

In 1939, the Halmstad group held a retrospective exhibition at Liljevalch's in Stockholm. In Lorentzon's art, Sven Stolpe found the inauguration of a new epoch in Swedish religious art. As changed artists painted their experiences in new, true, and original symbols, many old, worn out Christian symbols would necessarily disappear, and this changed art would replace the dying world of ecclesiastical form traditions. Stolpe describes the Christian experience as an experience even of the subconscious. As the surrealistic art was inspired by the subconscious, the Christian experience did not change its method, but its sources of inspiration, even within the artist himself.<sup>517</sup>

Other artists like Mrs. Saga Walli or Joel Mila, were inspired to Christian faith and activity by the Oxford Group, especially Mrs. Walli testifying at meetings, but as artists, they worked in a more traditional style, and were not presented as 'Oxford artists.'

The Norwegian artist Victor Smith (subsequently Victor Sparre) surrendered at a house-party at Hokksund, 1936. In periods, he had doubts about

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<sup>512</sup> Viveca Bosson in Halmstadgruppens 30-tal 1986:12, 54.

<sup>513</sup> Stengård 1986:110.

<sup>514</sup> See Stengård 1986:119.

<sup>515</sup> Olson's flight was inspired by Bertil Malmberg's liberation from the Oxford Group (S. Stolpe to B. Malmberg 1939, Sept. 3; L.74:6, KB). Egon Östlund resp. Viveca Bosson in Halmstadgruppens 30-tal 1986:39, 71; Rothlind 1986:121 (letter 1983), Almqvist 1986:43, 46.

<sup>516</sup> Stolpe 1941:316.

<sup>517</sup> Stolpe 1941:312 f., 316 f.

whether art had a place in the life of Christian man, and he found himself having to choose between helping people and painting them. His conflict was not so much a conflict between art and faith, but one between art and action – that his art did not work life-changing, at least not enough. Smith's involvement in the Oxford Group isolated him from intellectual circles negative to Moral Re-Armament. During the Second World War, he was active in the Resistance movement.<sup>518</sup> A suggested solution to the conflict between art and action, found by the Finno-Swedish artist Lennart Segerstråle, is described by Erkki Vuoristo: 'Lennart is perhaps the only one of our changed artists who has become a better artist through the new life that he has found. This is because he has given himself and his art totally for God's kingdom and not tried to use God's kingdom to promote his art.'<sup>519</sup>

Hans (Johanson) Norsbo became an Oxford Group artist in a more special way, as he designed the covers to Ramm's *Uten ansvar*, Malmberg's *Sångerna*, and to several of Stolpe's books (*Oxfordprofiler*, *Kämpande dikt*, *Människan själv*, *Världen utan nåd*, as well as the illustrations to *Döbeln* and *Profeter och diktare*). Since the changing experience of Harry Blomberg, Norsbo had been influenced by Blomberg and Ernst Roos. In the autumn of 1937, the artist Helge Zandén's studio was used for team meetings, while Norsbo still was not changed. During the Midsummer house-party at Malung, 1938, and at the following Visby party, he testified to his being forgiven, to his peace of conscience and his new possibilities to live as a positive Christian.<sup>520</sup>

The artist Norsbo has been thoroughly analyzed by Jane Rothlind. She finds a contradiction in Sven Stolpe's statement that Norsbo was moved by the simple faith of the Groups, and still not involved or participating in the Group work in a deeper way.<sup>521</sup> However, Stolpe's statement seems to be accurate. There is no evidence of Norsbo's deeper involvement in Group work, while he, as an artist, worked for the Group, inspired by its principles. As he directly served the Oxford Group with his art, he was probably not under pressure to lead meetings, testify everywhere, etc. It seems as if Oxford Group people had a deeper understanding of the conditions and artistic expressions of visual artists, while the writers in quite another way were expected to write or speak on request. According to Ernst Roos, Norsbo, in his art and in short time, had accomplished more than all the meetings of the others.<sup>522</sup>

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<sup>518</sup> Stubberud 1984:12 ff., 16, 27.

<sup>519</sup> Erkki Vuoristo to Philippe [Mottu] 1943, May 22 (Tirley). On Segerstråle, see further Ekstrand 1993:161 f. et passim.

<sup>520</sup> Rothlind 1986:111 ff., 'Hans Norsbo. Porträttmålare, akvarellist, grafiker och – oxfordpionjär' (Svenska Journalen 1941 Nr. 11). In the autumn of 1939, Norsbo's studio was used for team-meetings (Rothlind 1986:114).

<sup>521</sup> Rothlind 1986:113.

<sup>522</sup> Rothlind 1986:118; 'Med sin konst har han redan gjort mer än alla våra möten tillsammans.' In 1944, Norsbo seems to have distanced himself from the Group (Rothlind 1986:116).

### II.3.10.6. The Cultural Renaissance in the Nordic North

The vision of a cultural Renaissance in the Nordic North was built on personal life-changing. Even in his literary criticism, for example in *Kämpande dikt*, Sven Stolpe, having found life defeats behind the criticized literary works, points to the victorious way through life-change.<sup>523</sup> One of his critics, Dr. Ivar Harrie, noted Stolpe's ambitions to become a 'Kulturführer,' calling attention to the relations between Stolpe, the Oxford Group, and the famous Swedish explorer Dr. Sven Hedin, established soon after Hedin had publicly stated his support for Adolf Hitler.<sup>524</sup>

In the autumn of 1938, Stolpe, together with Ronald Fangen, Harry Blomberg, and others, discussed the plans of a necessary, private team-meeting for dealing with the common problems of the Christian writers, aiming at a uniting line, and, perhaps, a manifesto. The problems were: fiction and Christian responsibility; Oxford work and artistic production; artistic independence and checking of guidance; the writer and the demons; writing and selfishness; inspiration and guidance; free fantasy and checked guidance; the evil one as an artistic motif. Stolpe planned to arrive with an Oxford team of writers and others at the French cultural centre of Pontigny, where the best authors of France, England, etc. normally gathered at conferences. Stolpe had been there together with Thure Oskarsson, and the management was open to the possibility of receiving an Oxford team together with the writers du Gard, Gide, Maurois, Mauriac, Romain, Schlumberger, Fernandez, Capek, Huxley, Curtius, Mann, Ortega, Madariaga, Papini, Munk, Sillanpää, Valéry, Duhamel, Undset, Fangen, etc.<sup>525</sup> In December 1938, Stolpe complained of the total lack of programme for a Christian literature, with a split even on the main points of art and guidance, art and fellowship, and art and life-change. To a planned, private party in February or March 1939, authors like Arne Sørensen, Sigrid Undset,

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<sup>523</sup> Stolpe 1938d.

<sup>524</sup> Ivar Harrie, 'Där Marsviolen knoppas II,' GHT 1939, March 3. Through his German contacts, Dr. Hedin was able, during the war, to support the British full-timer Andrew Strang during his imprisonment in Germany (see Ch. VI.4.2). During 1939–40, Hedin visited Hitler on three occasions, trying to mediate for peace (Hillgruber 1967:48 ff., 77 ff., 390 ff.).

<sup>525</sup> S. Stolpe to 'Vänner och bröder!' 1938, Oct. 3, copy to Kaisu Snellman Dec. 29 (Okat.saml. H. Blomberg, UUB). In his letter to Snellman, Stolpe regards the list of writers simultaneously as fantasies, and as his guidance. According to Hambro 1937:122, Huxley was strongly influenced by the Oxford Group ('I sitt hele resonnement og i sine konklusjoner viser Huxley her ganske klart at han er sterkt påvirket av Oxfordgruppebevegelsen'), though Stolpe 1942d:438 states that Huxley – through Philip Leon – came into contact with the Group Movement, was strongly impressed, but declined its basis: the personal reality of God. The need of a private team-meeting was emphasized by F. Ramm to Blomberg 1938, Sept. 14 (UUB).

Kaj Munk, Elin Wägner, Sally Salminen, and Johannes Jørgensen ought to be invited. Even Thomas Mann and one of the leading French authors might come.<sup>526</sup> These plans were postponed, as was a planned journey to Pontigny. Instead, Stolpe travelled with Frank Buchman and a Scandinavian team to the United States.<sup>527</sup> From over there, he planned an attack at the writer's congress arranged by the PEN club in Stockholm, in September 1939.<sup>528</sup> The change of plans was probably to some extent due to Harry Blomberg's rejection of a 'front' along Stolpe's lines.<sup>529</sup>

In September 1939, Stolpe planned the publication of a cultural journal, with Malmberg, Blomberg, Oskarsson, Hemmer, Fangen, Ramm, and himself as permanent contributors, further including Sigrid Undset, Johan Falkberget, Arne Sørensen '(?)', Kaj Munk, Björkquist, K. G. Hildebrand, Runestam, Bengt Jonzon, Tengblad and the teachers, Erik Olson and the Halmstad painters. The aim was a real spiritual renaissance: a new philosophy, new writing, new art, a new school. Stolpe's search for common cultural tasks was a result of the difficulties of the Oxford Group writer or artist to combine the necessary artistic isolation with active work in the fellowship. Instead of dividing their energy on meetings, artists and writers should concentrate on the common solving of a cultural task under guidance.<sup>530</sup> In Finland, a cultural team was established in August 1939, with the participation of Gertrud Alfthan, Laina Kalmari, Fred Runeberg, Kauko Huhta, Ella Grönroos, and Lennart Segerstråle. The aim was a new way of seeing art, based on guidance, expressing a new mentality, and with the focus on God and not on the artist.<sup>531</sup> The plans for a cultural rising were intimately connected with the endeavours for peace, and strengthening the Nordic culture inwards around the theme 'The thought of peace,' with a novel competition, a public appeal, etc.<sup>532</sup>

To Fredrik Ramm in Norway, it was clear that his task was to work for a rising of cultural life. He had asked himself if these thoughts were an escape from reality, and from team work and its practical problems. His answer was that if he were to rest in his thoughts without realizing them, then it was an escape, but if he used his thoughts to change the national trains of thought, it was

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<sup>526</sup> Stolpe to Blomberg 1938, Dec. 12, 27, to 'Kära vänner!' Dec. 20 (Okat.saml. H. Blomberg, UUB).

<sup>527</sup> Stolpe to Blomberg 1939, Jan. 20 (UUB). Stolpe regarded the trips to the U.S.A. and Pontigny as alternatives. To Pontigny, Hans Johansson [Norsbo] and Fredrik Ramm would have accompanied him. On the participants on the American trip, see Appendix Nr. 1.

<sup>528</sup> Stolpe to Blomberg 1939, May 19 (UUB).

<sup>529</sup> Blomberg to J. Hemmer 1939, Apr. 1 (ÅAB). Because of his contacts in Finland and Norway, Blomberg probably had a clearer view of the actual situation.

<sup>530</sup> Stolpe to B. Malmberg 1939, Sept. 3 (L74:6, KB).

<sup>531</sup> Ekstrand 1993:165 f.

<sup>532</sup> L. Segerstråle to M. Björkquist 1939, Oct. 3 (SIB).

not.<sup>533</sup> Plans included making the Sigtuna Foundation a meeting-place for political, Church, and cultural leaders of the Nordic North, to make a Christian effort in fellowship, related to Harry Blomberg's plans to combine the great Swedish tradition (Geijer – E. Billing) with the Labour movement in Sweden.<sup>534</sup>

In an essay on Christianity and the history of literature (1942), published in his anthology of Swedish authors from E. G. Geijer to Hjalmar Gullberg, Sven Stolpe emphasized the tradition of Christian personalism from Geijer, Söderblom, and Einar Billing. As examples of a kind of history of literature that from a Christian view might be called realistic, he mentioned Theophil Spoerri, Friedrich Gundolf, Jacques Maritain, Henri Bremond, and Jacques Madaule. In the Nordic North especially Johannes Hohlenberg, Hans Ruin, and John Landquist had shown positive tendencies. Stolpe's book was dedicated to Kaj Munk, Lennart Segerstråle, and Sigrid Undset, which emphasized its place in the work for a cultural renaissance in the Nordic North.<sup>535</sup>

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<sup>533</sup> Ramm to [friends in Sweden] (dupl.) 1938, Dec. 5 (SIB; okat.saml. H. Blomberg, UUB).

<sup>534</sup> Ramm to M. Björkquist 1939, May 8 (SIB).

<sup>535</sup> Stolpe 1942b:26.

### III. NORWAY:

## FROM OXFORD GROUP REVIVAL TO CHURCH GROUP REVIVALISM

#### III.1. The Information Phase

In Norway, the early 1930s were years burdened by the worldwide economical crisis. The political polarization of the 1920s was still sharp, and the programme of the Labour Party was revised in a radical direction in 1930 – to be revised in a reformistic direction only in 1939. The attitude of the upper classes was mostly irreligious. Among the masses, a certain de-Christianization continued. Simultaneously, those years were the years of growing spiritual interest and activity. Psycho-analysis became a current ideal in the cultural life, and the relation between analysis and soul-care was treated, for example, in different articles in *Kirke og kultur*, 1932–1933.<sup>1</sup> Much due to the revision of the concept of justice in Germany, leading cultural idealists could find their former identification with certain civilizing values insufficient, and their existential orientation in need of revision.<sup>2</sup>

The new, objective impulses from Barthian, Lundensian or German Confessional theology often lacked a practical, ethical complement. Still, the spiritual temperature was rising. The Finno-Swedish Free Church evangelist Frank Mangs led a revivalistic campaign, starting in 1932, and in the summer 1933, a tent taking 5,000 people was put up. This revival reached people from the middle and working classes, and was fruitful mostly to the free churches. Simultaneously, a revival seemed to be on its way in the Christian student world, and the old pietistic, organized revivalism was strengthened. Such a rising revivalism on different lines did not exist in the other Scandinavian countries, but unique to Norway. In September, 1932, Einar Molland gave a

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<sup>1</sup> On the distinctively more revolutionary character of the labour movement in Norway, compared to the other Scandinavian countries, see Montgomery 1982b:227. As Cantril 1941:165 points out, the Oxford Group ‘during periods of unusual social crisis or indecision’ received new followers in large numbers, whereas relative social stability was restored, fewer newcomers entered the fellowship. This was due to ‘the desire for meaning or interpretation of events,’ and for psychological security, ‘involving security of status, of self-integrity, of associations, of institutional and personal ways of life.’

<sup>2</sup> Fangen 1938b:5 f.

discourse at the Student Union (Norske Studenters Kristelige Forbund) on the new and somewhat provocative theme: *Vi tror på dogmene* [We believe in the dogma]. He started by stating that the Norwegian Church struggle was over, and continued with a reaction against individualism, describing dogma as the collective thinking of the Church, not just common human ideology, and with a reaction against the bias towards Barthian theology. With this new theological inspiration, a new understanding and interest in the Church was growing. A priestly order-like association, Ordo Crucis, was founded in 1933. Among its members were Hans Ordning, Einar Molland, Alex Johnson, and Arne Fjellbu. In the Home Mission Society, the chairman, Professor Hallesby, stated that the revivalistic work had been directed towards the middle classes, while the upper classes had not been reached. It has been pointed out as a remarkable fact that in Norway, with its relatively small class distinctions, the religious class distinctions have been so great.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Lavik 1946:178, Wisløff 1971:398 f., 401 f., Austad 1974:49 ff., Holm-Glad 1934, Johnson 1971:19, Molland 1932:609, 612, 615 f., 620, Longum 1986:67 f. Wisløff's broad description of the Oxford Group in Norway is written from a very critical theological point of view. Like Bishop Henson of Durham and the Danish theologian Knud Hansen before him, he uses Russell's *One Thing I know* as a reliable source for the knowledge of the theology of the Oxford Group, which indicates a lack of critical sense, as this book was neither authorized nor recommended by the Oxford Group. Wisløff's final judgment on the Oxford Group, 1971:411, is biased and unfair: Old believers had feared liberal theology. As it now sometimes appeared in the clothes of revivalism, they did not recognize it. Cf. Molland 1971<sup>3</sup>:86, which gives a very short but correct abstract on the Oxford period in Norway. Molland states that the relations between the Oxford Movement and the Church were far more intimate in Norway than in other European countries. Cf. the 'official' Oxford Group description of the Norwegian situation in 1934 in Howard 1946:14: 'The problems: *Number 1*. As in other countries, politics and industry were a battlefield. Factions fought while the nation weakened. it was political manoeuvre for power programmes, not the service of the whole people. *Number 2*. The Norwegian churches were torn by division and separated by a critical spirit which made them less effective than they should be. *Number 3*. Anti-democratic ideologies were assailing the nation, and the bombardment by subversive moral and political forces was making headway and strongly impacting the youth of Norway.' Howard's numbers 1 and 2 are correct, with the remark that the battle in politics and industry can by no means be compared to the much more difficult situation on the Continent. Number 3 is more obscure. The impact of 'subversive moral and political forces' on the Norwegian youth is not known to have been so very extensive. In radical, intellectual circles, Marx had been replaced by Freud in the late 1920s. See Longum 1986:75 ff. Cf. Ken [Twitchell] to John [Morrison?] 1934, Nov.8 (London): 'There is a considerable Communist element in the University. We were told that many of the leading spirits among the undergraduates were Communists and that many of them were trained and paid from Moscow to go after the professorships in the University. As you probably know, the Labour Party, which now has the largest representation in the Storting, is closely linked with Communism although they officially renounced it a few years ago [...] Politically, we were told, that the marks of Communism throughout the country, especially in the

In 1930, the seamen's chaplain Ernst Hallen returned to Norway after having encountered the Oxford Group campaign in South Africa. Living in Oslo was also the old missionary Robert Wilder and his Norwegian wife, who encountered the Oxford Group in Cairo. From 1931, impulses from Group revivalism were received by the Norwegian Christian Student Union (Norske Studenters Kristelige Forbund) in Oslo. Having encountered the Group movement in England 1931–1932, Einar Gløersen tried to introduce sharing and quiet time, and in 1933, Trygve Leivestad, Supreme Court judge to be, introduced the movement in a discourse at the Student Union.<sup>4</sup> In the spring 1933, Jacob Steen Natvig in *Norsk Kirkeblad* introduced the Oxford Group as 'a modern revival movement,' explaining all the special terms and practices, and in the summer 1933, Howard Rose – known from Hallen's article – arrived in Oslo to give an introduction to the revival for a selected circle. He was invited by Ernst Hallen, Herman Laading, Alex. Johnson, and Carl Fredrik Wisløff. Students from both the Union (Forbundet) and the conservative Hallesby Movement (Laget) were invited to a meeting at the Holmenkollen restaurant. In the same year, Stephan Tschudi met the Group in London, and the publisher Harald Grieg at Gyldendals asked him to translate Russell's *For Sinners only*.<sup>5</sup> In the summer 1933, the future Dean of Copenhagen, Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard, gave two lectures on the renewal of private confession, at the Nordic theologian's meeting at Trondheim. The practice of sharing was treated as an interesting effort for a renewal of private confession. The importance of absolution was emphasized, but Fuglsang-Damgaard did not point out the lack of a direct absolution in sharing.<sup>6</sup> In the autumn 1933, a few of the young priests in Ordo Crucis talked about starting a group in the adapted form of the Swedish priest Erik Arbin.<sup>7</sup>

Most significant of this phase, and very influential, was the young clergyman and scholar Sverre Norborg, especially in his small book *En eiendommelig verdensvekkelse* (Second edition: *Oxford Groups*). Within two months it was printed in 30,000 copies in Norway and Sweden, and soon translated into

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municipalities where they had gained control, were moral and economic breakdown' (M.R.A. Archives 256, NLC). The Communist element in Studentersamfundet was observed by Eivind Berggrav in *Kirke og Kultur* 1933:248. In his duplicated memoirs, p.3, Svend Major states that while the Marxist influence was considerable among the students in Oslo, it was not the case at Trondheim.

<sup>4</sup> Hestvold 1987:118. Hallen 1933:91, 95 f. (Oct.–Nov.), approved of the Oxford Group methods, while criticizing its undogmatic, subjective theological basis. See also a statement by Hallen, made in Sweden, 1935, that he was not able to co-operate with the movement because of its openness to different nuances of opinion on the Bible and Atonement ('Oxford gör människan till centrum,' SvM 1935, Feb. 9).

<sup>5</sup> Natvig 1933:267, Johnson 1971:28, Hestvold 1987:120.

<sup>6</sup> See further Ch. II.2.3.3.

<sup>7</sup> H. Ording to J. Nørregaard 1933, Dec. 22 (Pa. 6073, RAK).



Danish and Finnish.<sup>8</sup> Norborg was regarded as an expert on Group revivalism, and wrote on groups he had met in London, Oxford, and Cambridge. Later on he described them as characterized more by Evangelical revivalism than by 'Buchmanism.'<sup>9</sup> After his return from Harvard in January 1934, Norborg gave lots of lectures and discourses on Group revivalism. His interpretation was a very Nordic one: he ends his booklet noting that much in the Oxford Group Movement reminded him of H. N. Hauge, C. O. Rosenius, Henric Schartau, N. Beck, Paavo Ruotsalainen, N. G. Malmberg and Lars Stenbäck, respectively. Norborg started on February 13 at the Lovisenberg Diakonissehus. On February 20, 100 clergymen attended an evening at the Bishop's residence in Oslo. There was a common wish for revival and renewal. On May 3, he spoke to an audience of almost 200 at the Fellowship of Confessing Clergymen (Bekjennelsestro Presters Broderkrets), and answered the question whether the new movement should be transmitted to Norway. Norborg spoke in Denmark, at Church Youth Meetings on the Swedish West Coast, and at an open air-meeting at the Landsvennestevne in Kristiansand with 8,000 listeners.<sup>10</sup> Norborg's answer to the transmission question was published in 1934 (*Bør Oxford-bevegelsen overføres til oss?*), from a position he described as Neo-Haugian, i.e. a both Apostolic-Lutheran and Haugian-Norwegian view.<sup>11</sup> He was critical to Reformed influences on Lutheran, Norwegian Church life, especially the understanding of conversion as an immediate act, and the important role of visible results in the evaluation of Christian meetings, as well as to everything he regarded as Anglo-Saxon activism.<sup>12</sup> He recommended Geoffrey Allen's books, but was slightly reserved towards the books of Russell and Begbie, while positive towards the *Groups* magazine, as well as to the books of Plowright and Raynor. The independent, Methodistically influenced *Groups* was even said to be officially representative of the Oxford Group, which it was not, and never was meant to be.<sup>13</sup> Norborg searched for an organic transmission, a coalescence of Haugianism and Group revivalism: as Norwegian Christians did not practise Haugianism, they needed Group revivalism.<sup>14</sup>

Norborg kept in lively contact with those Danish Church men who wanted a Scandinavian translation of Group revivalism, with clear reservations towards Anglo-Saxon mentality and the coming visit of Frank Buchman.<sup>15</sup> In Norway, where the Revival groups phase was very short, and the start of the Oxford Group phase uncommonly Church-centred, Norborg's writings worked mostly

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<sup>8</sup> Norborg 1962:154, Johnson 1971:28.

<sup>9</sup> Norborg 1962:154.

<sup>10</sup> Norborg 1962:156 ff. On the Swedish Youth meetings, see Jarlert 1994.

<sup>11</sup> Norborg 1934:7, 12.

<sup>12</sup> Norborg 1934:21, 24.

<sup>13</sup> Norborg 1934:28, 64.

<sup>14</sup> Norborg 1934:40 ff., 56. Though in fact propagating Group revivalism, Norborg writes of the Oxford Movement.

<sup>15</sup> Norborg 1962:158 f. (quoting H. O. Lange to Norborg).

as a positive preparation. But in Denmark and Sweden, and to some extent in Finland, Norborg's reservations towards Buchman and the international team were transferred to independent Group men, supporting their suspicions of Anglo-Americanism.

In September 1933, the Clerical society of the Larvik rural deanery discussed the new movement,<sup>16</sup> and during the following years almost all clerical conferences discussed Group revivalism or related subjects, such as confession or soul-cure according to the principles of the Oxford Group. The methods of Group revivalism were discussed as well at the Nordic Student Meeting in Lillehammer, July 1934.<sup>17</sup>

### III.2. The Revival Groups Phase

The revival groups phase in Norway – from the autumn 1933 till October 1934 parallel to the information phase – is characterized by its shortness and its Church-centred stamp.<sup>18</sup> The idea of an invitation to Frank Buchman and his team came from circles around Dordi and Fridtjov Arentz, as well as Kathrine and Sten Bugge. In the parish of Ullern, the Arentz' had had regularly Group meetings at home for a year. In Ullern, Bible hours and talk meetings altered between different homes. Kathrine Bugge had just returned from the missions in China, where she and her husband had met Frank Buchman as early as in 1917. She founded a group in the parish of Frogner, where the exegete Sigmund Mowinckel took part. They read *For Sinners Only* and kept quiet times together. Such meetings were arranged in the Student Union and at the Sanatorium of Holmenkollen, too, where Madeleine Steen started a group for ladies. There were reports of older Christian groups too, adopting the 'Oxford' name without changing their character, as well as of new 'Oxford Groups' with prayer, Bible-reading, etc. on the programme, in a conventional, revivalistic atmosphere.<sup>19</sup> In December, 1933, the President of the Norwegian Parliament, Carl Johan Hambro, who had met the Oxford Group earlier in 1933 through Russell's *For Sinners Only*, and personally in Geneva, was invited by Frank

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<sup>16</sup> Norsk Kirkeblad 1934:229.

<sup>17</sup> Johnson 1971:64 f.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Johnson 1971:39 who states that the Buchman period lasted from 1933 till 1935, culminating during the autumn 1934. By this strange terminology, nothing is made clear. In Germany, often visited by Frank Buchman during the 1920s, the whole period up until the Second World War must then be called 'Buchman.' Much more fruitful is Hestvold's functional distinction between 'the Oxford revival' and 'the Oxford Movement,' though his terminology is vague (1987:132).

<sup>19</sup> Welle 1934b:39, Det hender idag 1936:24, Johnson 1971:29.

Buchman to speak to British Members of Parliament in London. Hambro concluded his speech with an invitation to Buchman to bring the Oxford Group to Norway.<sup>20</sup> On 9 March, 1934, Sverre Norborg spoke with Hambro, who wanted to ask the Provost of the Oslo University, Sem Sæland, to join him in officially inviting Frank Buchman and his international team to a House-party at Høsbjør. In the summer 1934, Henrik Hauge came to Oxford as a preparation for his important task: the planning of Buchman's Norwegian campaign. Of great importance was that Hauge's uncle, Parliament President Carl Johan Hambro, already had accepted the role of official inviter.<sup>21</sup> The national cultural journal, *Syn og segn*, published a positive presentation of Russell's books.<sup>22</sup>

There were critical voices too. Already before asking the question of whether the Oxford Groups came from God or from men (*Oxford-gruppene av Gud eller av mennesker?*, 1934), Ivar Welle had made some preliminary reflections in an introductory article, as well as in a letter from Oxford. He emphasized the roots of the Oxford Group in the Keswick Movement. Though he believed in Russell's change, the leopard still had its spots, the Englishman his snobbery, and the journalist his advertising disease. Allen's *He that Cometh* was regarded as a serious and touching dogmatic authority for the movement.<sup>23</sup> Welle found an interesting parallel in the Laestadian movement in Finnmark (far north of Norway), but at the same time he considered any direct, living connection with the Groups unlikely for Norwegians, because of the former's belonging to a social and cultural sphere without an equivalent in Norway.<sup>24</sup> From the house-party at Oxford, 1934, he reported that their strength was in the ethics, not being overstrung, pietistic, but sound, good, and bourgeois, though they had no doctrine.<sup>25</sup> In his more extensive report, Welle observed that with the new words for confession (sharing) and prayer (quiet time) followed an alteration of the matter in itself.<sup>26</sup> He described the movement as a methodistic revival movement, with rather pronounced characteristics, including a striking resemblance to the Salvation Army.<sup>27</sup> Though positive in some respects, Welle regarded the Oxford Group as an alternative or a substitute for churches and religious movements, and as such a substitute

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<sup>20</sup> Bugge 1965:13, Hambro 1984:174 f., Lean 1985:216. See further Hambro 1933 (articles from *Morgenbladet*), and his subsequent articles 'Oxfordgruppe-bevegelsen,' Feb. 5, 6; 'Litteratur om Oxfordgruppen,' Feb. 17, 19.

<sup>21</sup> Norborg 1962:155 f., Hestvold 1987:120, Johnson 1971:28, Oftestad 1981:69. On Hestvold's statement that Henrik Hauge got his uncle, C. J. Hambro, to act as official inviter, cf. Lean 1985:216.

<sup>22</sup> Eskeland 1934, reviewing Russell 1932, 1933.

<sup>23</sup> Welle 1933:366 f.

<sup>24</sup> Welle 1933:369, 371.

<sup>25</sup> Welle 1934:672.

<sup>26</sup> Welle 1934b:11 f.

<sup>27</sup> Welle 1934b:22 f.

insufficient. Confessional criticism was delivered by Sigurd Normann (1934). He found that this essentially Reformed, Anglo-American movement did not bring anything new, and did not come up to Lutheranism either in evangelical light or in spiritual power. The shortcomings of the movement were those common to Reformed Christianity: a lack of the real Gospel with its emphasis on Christ and His act of salvation. The possible importance of the Oxford Movement was that it brought a call to realize and use the values of life already present in Norwegian Christianity.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, Normann's examination lacked depth and thoroughness. An opposite position was taken by Erik Veel, who admired the unconfessional, undogmatic approach, with its emphasis on simple, practical Christian life, while criticizing public testimony and the practice of guidance during quiet time. He found life-change too narrow an aim of life, and the definition of sin insufficient, as sin was primarily everything which brought confusion and disharmony to one's own life.<sup>29</sup>

An important prerequisite for the Norwegian Group revival and its special form of 'Oxford Pietism' was its theological platform in dialectical theology, especially the thinking of Emil Brunner. Ove Hestfold finds that Group revivalism formed the moral parallel to the understanding of the Gospel as the message from the mouth of God. In the same way that the message was not identical to the words of the Bible, but reached us through preaching as a word for today, God's moral demands were made real to us through living.<sup>30</sup> Eivind Berggrav – who had introduced the Oxford Movement at the clerical synod in Narvik already in April 1934 – found that Barth and the Group Movement, without being aware of it, had co-operated in giving the whole theology a more serious emphasis, with a more humble life attitude to the grace and message of God, and Hans Ording later emphasized that Karl Barth had not understood that the total subjectivism of the Group must reach the objective in the Bible, Church, and Sacraments, which made way for a connection with Barthian objectivity.<sup>31</sup> While Einar Molland, during the Oxford Group campaign, criticized Group preaching for its lack of eschatology in speaking of the Christian World Revolution, an editorial in *Norsk Kirkeblad* found no conflict between the two parts.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Normann 1934:100 f., 105. In 1937, Normann succeeded Eivind Berggrav as Bishop of Hålogaland.

<sup>29</sup> Veel 1934:204 f., 212, 218. See also Veel 1936:30. Veel was at the time obviously a decided liberal, and not, as stated by Oftestad 1981:251, 'betinget' positive.

<sup>30</sup> Hestvold 1987:119. See also 'Gruppebevægelsen som spørgsmål til kirken' (Norsk Kirkeblad 1935:364–371), which refers to the Danish translation of Brunner 1934b. In Engelstad 1957, a post-Oxford novel, the moral defeats of a clergyman leads him into Barthianism (p.160).

<sup>31</sup> Norsk Kirkeblad 1934:279 (clerical synod in Narvik, Apr. 5–9, 1934), Berggrav 1934:118, Ording 1937:89.

<sup>32</sup> Molland 1935:312. Cf. Johnson 1935:425 ff. See also Källström 1939:14 f. Editorial 'Tanker ved årsskiftet' (Norsk Kirkeblad 1935:3).

During the Oxford Group campaign, Cand. theol. Nils Astrup Dahl, the future professor, compared two collections of sermons, *Komm Schöpfer Geist* by Barth and Eduard Thurneysen and the South African Ebenezer MacMillan's *Seeking and Finding. Oxford Group Sermons*, respectively. While Barth said that we had to put all our confidence in *God alone*, MacMillan emphasized that we had to put *all our confidence* in God alone, and when Barth said that *God* must decide over the entire life, MacMillan stated that God must decide over *the entire* life.<sup>33</sup> The Barthian collection did not tell which sermons were by Barth and which by Thurneysen – as the message and not the messenger came foremost. The testimonies of the Oxford Group were different, speaking of personal experiences, and of 'the fifth Gospel,' i.e. the Gospel of personal experience. Barth pointed forward to the final, true change, in the resurrection of the dead, but MacMillan and the Oxford Group dared to preach the presence of the Spirit of God in Christian men, and with them the world change began. While Barth spoke of St. Paul, the Groups dared to speak like the apostle.<sup>34</sup>

According to Sverre Norborg, the Oxford Year of 1934 – before Høsbjør – had been a year of spiritual openness between men, and a new attitude to the Christian message and its practical consequences.<sup>35</sup> An editorial in *Norsk Kirkeblad* characterized the Oxford Group Movement as an answer to a cry based on the spiritual need of the priest.<sup>36</sup>

### III.3. The Oxford Group Phase

#### III.3.1. House-parties and Mass Meetings

Then came the house-party at Høsbjør Turisthotell in Brumunddal, October 27 til November 6, 1934, with almost 300 participants, rising to 400 at the finish.<sup>37</sup> Frank Buchman and his international team were there,<sup>38</sup> and among the

<sup>33</sup> Dahl 1935:266.

<sup>34</sup> Dahl 1935:267 f., 272 f.

<sup>35</sup> Norborg 1962:160. See also Berggrav 1934:117. A fine example is Ronald Fangen's long and informative article on the Oxford Group, 'Den religiøse verdensbevegelse,' TT 1934, March 31. Fangen describes the tendency of both Communism, Fascism, National Socialism, and the Oxford Group as a violent simplification of the problems, an impassioned appeal to the will, and a concentrated programme of work, and compares the new movement with the first period of the Communist Mot Dag Movement in Norway, in its absolute authority, and demand for an absolute point of view.

<sup>36</sup> 'Oxfordgruppebevegelsen og prestene' (Norsk Kirkeblad 1934:553).

<sup>37</sup> Oftestad 1981:68. Cf. Howard 1946:15, 'over one thousand turned up at Høsbjør,' and Lean 1985:217, 'By the second weekend, the number of guests had grown to 1,200.' A possible explanation of the different numbers in Govig 1966:45, 'almost a thousand

Norwegians were C. J. Hambro, his former enemy Johan E. Mellbye, leader of the Farmer's party, the theological professors Mowinckel and Michelet, the Provost of the Oslo University, Sam Sæland, Bishop Berggrav of Hålogaland, Bishop Hille of Hamar, the General Secretary of the Home Mission Society, J. M. Wisløff, as well as the lay preacher Albert Lunde, the leader of the Salvation Army in Norway, Commander Larsson, the writer Ronald Fangen, the journalist Fredrik Ramm, and many others. According to Johannes Johnson, the programme was rearranged when J. M. Wisløff turned up, as the team knew of his importance.<sup>39</sup> Several people surrendered to a life in the Oxford Group way:

Hambro's broadcasts and the literature which had been printed in Norwegian about the Group had also prepared the way and many of those there came like ripe apples waiting to be knocked off the tree. Lives were changed before the House Party began and the creation of new forces through life changing was the dominant note right through the House Party.<sup>40</sup>

Ronald Fangen's story is well-known:

I assumed the days at Høsbjør would become rather interesting. But I also calculated with the possibility of dullness. I brought with me a pile of new books to review, plus two bottles of whisky. It could be nice to have a chat with a sensible person over a quiet grog, if the atmosphere should become too much speaking in tongues. I think those were the first bottles of whisky I had bought without taking part in their draining.<sup>41</sup>

The atmosphere at Høsbjør was entirely different from the accustomed one in churches or chapels. Most of the people invited were well acquainted – from the inside or from the outside, positively or negatively – with what a revival meeting normally should be like. Here they met another mentality at work through an international team, which placed old antagonists in the same room for the night, and searched for prey in the corridors, with an often grinning superficiality in public, but with a serious and radical concern in small and private talks.<sup>42</sup> The party meant an attack and a great advancement of the Oxford Group in Norway and its neighbouring countries:

Before Høsbjør, the Christians of the Nordic countries were captivated and

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Norwegians had visited Group sessions at the hotel,' i.e. not at the same time.

<sup>38</sup> In this first international team were 17 men and 11 women, of whom 5 were English, 4 Scottish, 2 Canadian, 3 South-African, 7 American, 3 Dutch, 2 French, and 2 Czechoslovak (see a photo in 'Moralsk Oprustning. Bilag til Morgenbladet' 1938, Nov. 1).

<sup>39</sup> Johnson 1971:32.

<sup>40</sup> Ken [Twitchell] to John 1934, Nov. 8 (London), (M.R.A. Archives, NLC).

<sup>41</sup> Fangen 1935:6.

<sup>42</sup> Lavik 1946:180 f.

inspired by the Oxford Group as an idea and a message. After Høsbjør, things were taken far more concretely, as the brilliant stubbornness of Frank Buchman made it clear that the Group Movement was a firmly constructed organization under Frank's absolute and personal control.<sup>43</sup>

Sverre Norborg's words give a subjective, not altogether correct description of the actual situation, but it does catch the impression made by the Oxford Group on parts of the Norwegian Church Group revivalist people from before the Oxford Group phase. Local, ecclesiastical, or national ideas and impulses were obviously neglected, and local and Church people did sometimes neglect the international team. But the Oxford Group phase in Norway did from the very start develop in uncommonly Church-centred forms such as Bible hours and Sunday services at house-parties,<sup>44</sup> unison hymn singing, saying the Lord's Prayer in unison at Oxford Group meetings, and even – at least once – discussion. The Høsbjør House party was of immense importance, too, for the development of Group revivalism in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, and its incorporation into the fellowship (and its being put under the command) of the international Oxford Group.

A series of big meetings and smaller parties followed in Oslo, as well as house-parties at Kjølbjerg Herregård, at Geilo (at the turn of the month from November to December) and Voss (early in December), campaigns in Fredrikstad (November 26 with 1,400 people attending), Skien (November 27), Bergen (from December 4), Drammen, Moss, and Trondheim. The first three of the Oslo meetings gathered 14,000 people, and 3,000 students attended a meeting at the University. The Oxford Group had its headquarters at Grand Hotel, the most fashionable one in Oslo. Meetings took place in the big hall at the Lodge, and in the Mission Hall of Calmeyergaten, the meeting-place of the Oslo Home Mission, where 4,000 people gathered on November 14, and as many on December 18, followed by a big meeting at the Lodge the next day. Special importance was put on the many branch meetings. The 'military team' of the Oxford Group arranged a meeting at the Military Society, which was attended by the Crown Prince Olav. Meetings for pre-varsity students, for clergymen, for women in Hjemmenes Vel, and for students, teachers, etc. followed in the Mission Hall of Calmeyergaten.<sup>45</sup>

The campaign in Bergen may be followed from the internal lists of appointments, starting December 4 with a public meeting at the Lodge by invitation. In the evening there were three small assemblies in private homes for

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<sup>43</sup> Norborg 1962:153.

<sup>44</sup> Already at Høsbjør, a special Sunday service was arranged, with a sermon preached by Sigmund Mowinckel.

<sup>45</sup> See *Oxfordbevegelsen i Norge 1935*:114 ff., 126 ff. The Ladies' meeting in Hjemmenes Vel was described as moving, in *Aftenposten* 1934, Nov. 14, 'Oxfordgruppens damer i Hjemmenes Vel. Et meget stemningsfullt møte for overfylt hus.'

'professional people,' Bishop Fleischer, and 'Clergymens Fraternal with wives,' respectively. December 5 had closed meetings or private parties for women, clergy, men, 'ladies only,' and women teachers, respectively, and a public meeting at the Y.M.C.A., attended by 300 people. On December 6 there was a small dinner at the Bishop's, and arrangements for 250 members of the German Association, as well as meetings at the Y.M.C.A., the Deaconess Home, St. Jacob's Church, etc. December 7 had separate meetings for women, clergy, and men, as well as for 300 elementary school teachers in the Teachers' Organization, a meeting at the Salvation Army, and five private meetings, including one at 10 p.m. with '16 young pagans after dance.' Saturday, December 8, had a broadcast, a meeting with 130 businessmen, private parties for '15–20 pagan girls' or '15 young pagans,' '100 nurses, servants,' '20 girls, business,' a meeting in the Prison, arranged by Mrs. Fleischer, as well as 140 women at the Y.M.C.A., and some more 'young pagans' in a private house. On Sunday, December 9, further private parties were held, as well as a meeting for 400 men at the Y.M.C.A. Fredrik Ramm spoke at a special service 'for sports people' in the Cathedral, attended by 1,200. At Fløien, a 'service on mountain' was attended by 300 in Church, and 500 in the open air. The service in the New Church was attended by 4,000 people, and two 'packed meetings' in the Church of the Cross took 2,000. Albert Lunde preached at the Evening service in the Church of Bethlehem for 1,600, the day closing with a men's meeting in the Y.M.C.A. The following Monday, December 10, had meetings for railwaymen, ladies, '30 young pagans,' teachers, young men, etc.<sup>46</sup> Of great importance was the positive attitude of Johannes Lavik, publisher of the Christian daily *Dagen* in Bergen, especially as the older revival circles in that part of the country (Vestlandet) were suspicious of the Oxford Group.<sup>47</sup> On the 2nd Sunday of Advent, the Norwegian section of the ecumenical World Alliance arranged a big meeting at Bergen, simultaneously with the Oxford Group campaign. A strong appeal was given at the ecumenical evening meeting by Ronald Fangen, Loudon Hamilton, and Frank Buchman.<sup>48</sup>

Among the more important consequences of the Oxford Group campaign was its impression on the Small Church movement in Bergen. In its magazine *Storby og småkirke*, 1935, ten persons testified by answering questions on surrender, hindrances and support, explaining what their experiences had meant to their relation with the Church.<sup>49</sup> This forms a significant example of Church Group revivalism, inspired by an Oxford Group campaign.

The impression was so great that even the thoughts of the radical, anti-

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<sup>46</sup> 'Bergen appointments' (NLC).

<sup>47</sup> See *Oxfordbevegelsen i Norge 1935* [1], 2, Lean 1985:218, also Forster 1934. Berggrav 1935c:134. Cf. R. Fangen: 'Religiøs situasjon i Norge' (*Dagen* 1935, May 13), which criticizes the critique in *Dagen* on the Oxford Group as a religion of success.

<sup>48</sup> 'Ekumenisk arbeid i Norden 1934' (KG 1935:46 f.). In 'Bergen appointments' (NLC), no ecumenical meeting is mentioned.

<sup>49</sup> *Storby og småkirke* 1935:40–62.



Christian men around the daily *Dagbladet* were taken by the Oxford campaign. When Sigurd Hoel wrote an anniversary article on Ludvig Holberg, it dealt as much with Oxford, and when Johan Borgen presented his weekly portrait, this time of the psycho-analyst Trygve Braatøy, he wrote so much on Oxford, that he had to stop himself, exclaiming that the article was not supposed to deal with the Oxford Movement.<sup>50</sup> The day before Høsbjør, Jakob Fries, in the Socialist *Arbeiderbladet*, described the Oxford Movement as a religious snob movement, and exhorted the labour movement to a still stronger and more concentrated Marxist work of enlightenment. This attitude was to last. In a review of Ronald Fangen's confessional book, Ingjald Nissen declared that the Oxford Movement had the effect of dividing and paralyzing the forces needed for the resolute struggle against barbarism.<sup>51</sup>

Positive articles and testimonies published in the newspapers were collected in *Oxfordbevegelsen i Norge*, published in two parts. Buchman, Reginald Holme, John Watt, Sherwood Day, Baron de Watteville-Berckheim, and other international Oxford Group fellows appeared side by side with Fangen, Ramm, the new Dean of Oslo, Johannes Hygen, the lay preacher Albert Lunde, and Sverre Norborg. Another collection of testimonies was *Hvorfor jeg tror på Oxfordbevegelsen* (1935). Commander Karl Larsson of the Salvation Army recognized in the Oxford Group its aggressive mentality, its happy naturalness, its worldwide perspective, and its absolute standards.<sup>52</sup> The missionary priest Jens Nikolaisen opposed those who cried for a 'Norwegianization' of the movement, while the real need was for an organic integration – in methods and spiritual values – of this radical movement with the ecclesiastical and Christian work already being carried on.<sup>53</sup>

Like in hardly any revival before Group revivalism, personal letters became of decisive importance. Letters of restitution had been important all since the beginning of Frank Buchman's work, but in this longish country with sometimes complicated communications, personal letters often worked as a substitute for sharing: The country was said to be under a network of correspondence.<sup>54</sup> Through these personal contacts, a more or less Oxford-coloured revival grew far outside the limits of organized campaigns and house-parties, across the borders, sometimes probably lacking even the form of Group revivalism.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Hestvold 1987:127. The impression made by the campaign was noticeable on many levels. An example of this is Eivind Berggrav's miswriting of 'Buchmann,' instead of the finally corrected 'Bultmann' in a letter on exegetical matters (copy of Berggrav to Alex Johnson 1934, Nov. 16, Pa. 320, RAO).

<sup>51</sup> J. Fries: 'Oxfordgruppebevegelsen – en religiøs snobbebevegelse' (*Arbeiderbladet* 1934, Oct. 26), I. Nissen: 'Oxford-bevegelsen' (*Arbeiderbladet* 1935, June 18).

<sup>52</sup> *Hvorfor jeg tror på Oxfordbevegelsen* 1935:41 ff.

<sup>53</sup> *Hvorfor jeg tror på Oxfordbevegelsen* 1935:54 f. See also Nikolaisen 1935.

<sup>54</sup> Berggrav 1935c:135.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Norborg 1936c, with a chapter on The Sacrament of Letter-writing, dealing with the example of H. N. Hauge.

Sverre Norborg had not attended the Høsbjør party. He had gone to other meetings, then to Copenhagen, where the group around Henry Ussing arranged a five days series of public meetings on the deepening of the 'Oxford' thinking. On November 12, Norborg had his first conversation with Frank Buchman, Loudon Hamilton, Cleve Hicks, John Mackay, Basil Yates, Ronald Fangen, and the others. While Norborg was critical of their lack of understanding of Norwegian Christian traditions and Norwegian mentality, he shared the international team's critical view of clergymen who wanted to lead a revival, but did not want to take any real part in it themselves.<sup>56</sup> While attending the house-party at Fleischer's hotel in Voss, Norborg said at an 'inner team'-meeting, that the soul-care must give biblical conduct. He wrote in his diary that Buchman needed a new course on Martin Luther, and expressed his hope that Buchman's team soon would leave the country to be replaced by a Norwegian Oxford Movement of Biblical, living groups, such as those he once found in London and Cambridge.<sup>57</sup> But at an Oxford meeting in the Mission Hall in Calmeyergaten in Oslo, December 18, Norborg confessed his judgmental attitude. Like a theological St. Peter he had guarded the entrance to heaven, but now he had had to revise his life after nine years of priestly service.<sup>58</sup> Despite this, Norborg's ideal obviously was an independent Church Group revivalism tending more towards the Cambridge Group Movement than towards the Oxford Group.

We have paid such attention to Sverre Norborg's views, firstly because of his very wide and continuing influence throughout Scandinavia,<sup>59</sup> secondly because

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<sup>56</sup> Norborg 1962:160 f.

<sup>57</sup> Norborg 1962:167. Still, Norborg found himself at home with Cleve Hicks – a Christian theologian, an apostle John in this international team. See also the positive report in Norborg 1935Sw<sup>5</sup>:77–91, where the international team is praised for its evangelizing work. The Norwegian Oxforders are not regarded as members of an international working fellowship. Instead of sharing, private confession is emphasized, together with the Lutheran heritage, etc. Cf. J. Johnson 1971:59, which gives four positions in the reactions of the clergy: 1) full association (Sverre Norborg), 2) very positive [...] with a reflected theological attitude (Norsk Kirkeblad), 3) no to the theology of the Group Movement or to the lack of it, but yes to the Group Movement as a movement (Ivar Welle), 4) categorical rejection (Kr. Ljostveit). Johnson comes to these conclusions, since he understands the Group Movement as an undefined whole. For example, Sverre Norborg's association with the Oxford Group as such was never full, and only of short duration.

<sup>58</sup> Oxfordbevegelsen i Norge 1935:160 f. S. Stolpe (SvM 1937, May 19 'Vilka är de "rätta" Oxfordböckerna?') noted that Norborg at a meeting, after publishing his first book on the Oxford Group, behaved as an opponent and afterwards joined the movement.

<sup>59</sup> See, besides his books on Group revivalism, his speeches in Copenhagen, February 1936, edited with a foreword by Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard, translated into Swedish in the same year by Olle Nystedt (1936, 1936b). On Norborg's influence in Gothenburg, see Jarlert 1994.

of his position as a significant representative of a pre-Oxford Church Group revivalism in Norway. This line is to be clearly distinguished from the Church Group revivalism represented by men like Ronald Fangen, for whom the Oxford Group phase was of personal, totally decisive importance, although he developed, after some time, in a Church-centred direction, and abandoned the exclusive identification with the international Oxford Group fellowship.<sup>60</sup> A clarifying example of the difference is found in one of Fredrik Ramm's articles, which compares Frank Buchman to the 19th century revival leader Hans Nielsen Hauge. As we have seen, Sverre Norborg wrote from what he called a Neo-Haugian, i.e. a both Apostolic-Lutheran and Haugian-Norwegian, viewpoint, and worked for a coalescence of Haugianism and Group revivalism. Fredrik Ramm, on the other hand, did not discuss the doctrinal matter at all, but stated as fact, that the contents of their respective preaching were the same. His comparison was limited to methodical and practical things: they were both revolutionaries. Hauge's 'følelser' are explained as Guidance, Hauge's work was based on private talks with individuals, and on small training meetings. Their respective training methods are found to have some similarity. Thus, there was no need to work for any coalescence.<sup>61</sup> This parallel was used by Frank Buchman too, who drew a line from St. Paul by way of St. Francis and Hauge to the Oxford Group.<sup>62</sup>

During the first years of the Norwegian Oxford Group phase, Ronald Fangen and Fredrik Ramm were the first and presumably the most influential propagandists for the Oxford Group anywhere in Scandinavia.<sup>63</sup> Especially Fangen's views were of great importance as he emphasized important Lutheran

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<sup>60</sup> This important distinction has often been neglected. Even Oftestad 1981, who pays much attention to the Church-bound development of Group work in Norway, does not observe the difference between early, continuous Church Group revivalism, and convinced Oxford Group men working in the context of the Church and personally developing in a Church-centred direction. An explanation might be that Ronald Fangen at an early stage had taken a Church-minded, though uninstitutional position (Fangen 1935:100).

<sup>61</sup> Oxfordbevegelsen i Norge 1935 2:36 f., 41, 145 with a line from Jesus by way of Hauge to the Oxford Group. While Albert Lunde had spoken with Buchman on the Son of God, His death and resurrection, and was reassured (1935:160), Dr. Henrik Scheen stated that the fundamental principle of the movement was congruent not only with the Christian faith, but also with the high ethical ideals of Buddhism and of other religions.

<sup>62</sup> Oxfordbevegelsen i Norge 1935 2:82. The parallell with Hauge was further used (1935 2:51) by J. Nikolaisen (also in Nikolaisen 1935:18, 22, 88) and in an editorial 'Tanker ved årsskiftet' in Norsk Kirkeblad 1935:3. Even Svend Major's duplicated memoirs, p.21–28, written in the 1980s, emphasize Hauge's importance as a model or a pattern for a modern social revolution through spiritual means.

<sup>63</sup> Fangen spoke in the Engelbrekt Church in Stockholm and in St. John's Church in Helsinki in May, and in the Eidsvoll Church on July 15, 1935. He preached at the academic service at the University in Oslo on Sept. 1, 1935 (see Fangen 1935b). The confessional books and novels are dealt with in Ch. II.3.10.2.

doctrines of Christian life and experience in an uninstitutional, catholic and personalistic understanding of the Church. In a speech at a meeting for pre-university students and senior students at Strand by Sandefjord, he stated that men are not changed, but are being changed, and always in need of change.<sup>64</sup> Even if Christ took away all our sin once and for all, there would always be enough left to make necessary an absolute relation of dependence to God. Only this relation of dependence was Christian faith.<sup>65</sup>

There were critics, too, who lacked all understanding of the Oxford Group. Johannes Bjaaland, speaking in Odd's sports hall as early as February 20, 1935, raised the question if the nation was to be led astray, since several people, after a few years with the Oxford Group, had lost their solid faith in the atonement of Christ as necessary for salvation. Among these were Howard J. Rose, one of the introducers of the movement in Norway. The ten Commandments were set aside by Guidance: a South-African was quoted as saying that he would even commit murder if he was guided to do so. Quotations from critics were used, mixed with quotations from Begbie, saying that it did not matter whether Christological doctrines are true or false, their acceptance was not necessary for the wonderful experience of conversion.<sup>66</sup> Unlike what some critics found, a specific Norwegian type of Group Movement is sometimes described. Miss Esther Normann even said that the Movement had taken other forms than the original Oxford Group Movement, being less schematic, and more Norwegian-tempered.<sup>67</sup> The Dean Johannes Hygen spoke of the need for a Norwegian form, especially of Norwegian translations of the English phrases.<sup>68</sup> Frank Buchman even announced that Norway was elected by God to make a powerful effort for the Christian religion in Europe.<sup>69</sup> On one hand, it is obvious that the Norwegian campaign in its planning and locations at hotels was very Anglo-Saxon, perhaps even more than later on in Denmark or Sweden, but the contents of the arrangements were influenced by the different mentality of

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<sup>64</sup> Fangen 1935b:13.

<sup>65</sup> Fangen 1935b:18 f.

<sup>66</sup> Bjaaland [1935]:5 f. The criticism from the Home Mission Society is treated in the following in 3.3. Even from an anthroposophic view, Alf Larsen (1935:484 f., 488) declared that the Oxford Group did not know what the Christian religion was all about, as it started from a modern, totally corrupt, materialistic conception of the Christian faith. Contrary to many revivalistic leaders, Larsen concluded that the Oxford Movement merely was the popular revival movements reaching the upper classes. For a Roman Catholic critique of sharing, see van der Burg 1935:82 (the lack of absolution), 83 (Catholics had confidence in their confessor without knowledge of his sins), 86 (the soul-care was put in the hands of anybody). The Danish 'Tidehverv' man V. Filskov reviewed Larsen's critique compared with the one in *Tidehverv* (Filskov 1935:153 f), and the Roman Catholic critique (Filskov 1936).

<sup>67</sup> Oxfordbevægelsen i Norge 1935 2:103.

<sup>68</sup> Oxfordbevægelsen i Norge 1935:75.

<sup>69</sup> Oxfordbevægelsen i Norge 1935:131.

Norway, for example, with the joint saying of the Lord's Prayer, Bible hours and – on Sundays – services at house-parties, etc. At the second house-party at Geilo during the turn from November to December, the matter of sexuality and absolute purity was treated as a matter for *discussion* – a word and a practise which otherwise disgusted Frank Buchman.<sup>70</sup> In March 1935, Buchman even ended the final meeting with the international team, in front of about 1,200 people, by reading Jeremiah, Ch. 7.<sup>71</sup> An obvious strength of the Oxford Group in the Norwegian religious situation was its combination of cultural openness with preaching the need for radical change – an almost unknown combination in that environment.

According to the official historiography of the Oxford Group, the Norwegian campaign had created 'a new moral climate in politics and industry,' 'a united Church front,' and 'the birth of a faith in the heart of an entire people adequate to arm them against totalitarian creeds even when an enemy had occupied their territory.'<sup>72</sup> A new climate has been described by several witnesses of different opinions. Group revivalism demonstrated a religion of conversion, simultaneously open to culture, without pietistic restrictions. It suddenly became a natural thing to speak of God even at mundane parties.<sup>73</sup> To the Norwegian language debate, Group men introduced new attitudes, which were grateful for both tongues.<sup>74</sup> The unifying process after the Church struggle had its theological prerequisite in the Church-centred neo-orthodoxy, inspired by Barth, Nygren, or German confessional theology, which gave an opportunity to break with old positions by taking a third point. The Oxford Group inspired and gave the opportunity of a new, practical co-operation between former opponents. The professor of Old Testament Exegetics at the University, Sigmund Mowinckel, and the secretary of the Home Mission Society, J. M. Wisløff, had not even met personally before the Høsbjør party in 1934.<sup>75</sup> The theological questions and criticisms were still there, but full and correct answers were not always, as before, a necessary condition for co-operation. Here, the personalistic attitude had to some extent won over the dogmatic one.<sup>76</sup> This personalistic attitude did not cause isolation, but inspired

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<sup>70</sup> Oxfordbevegelsen i Norge 1935:144.

<sup>71</sup> Spoerri 1975:98 f.

<sup>72</sup> Howard 1946:23. Cf. Wisløff 1971:406 ('Overdrivelsen er her så massiv at den motbeviser seg selv').

<sup>73</sup> Berggrav 1936, Christensen 1961:451 emphasizes 'Oxford's' special appeal to the upper classes and the intellectuals, Fjellbu 1960:185.

<sup>74</sup> Dagen 1936, Jan. 10 'To motmenn om ei kristen løysing av målstriden' (Eiliv Skard and Ragnar Ullmann, emphasizing God's guidance, thankful for both tongues); also Mowinckel & Skard 1937, with the explicit connection with the Oxford Group, p.21.

<sup>75</sup> Johnson 1971:30.

<sup>76</sup> From a one-sidedly dogmatic point of view, it is strange that theologians, inspired by the neo-orthodox, strongly objective theology were positive to Group revivalism, while those keeping to the orthodox-pietistic experience theology of Ole Hallesby were

to active and responsible work in church and society. Unlike the old liberal, theological personalism, the new, practical personalism of the Oxford Group got a Church-centred character. To the neo-orthodox clergy of the 1930s, the Oxford Group, with its reserved attitude towards organizing and institutionalizing work, presented a revivalistic alternative to the many Christian organizations and associations of Norway. When the liberation through change was described as a liberation to fellowship and individual responsibility, without the ties of organizations and associations, this could easily be adopted in active Church life.

### *III.3.2. The Norwegians and the Fellowship*

Around Frank Buchman and his international team, a Norwegian circle was gathered, consisting of men who totally identified themselves with the Oxford Group: Ronald Fangen, Fredrik Ramm, Erling Wikborg (regarded as the leader of the work in Oslo),<sup>77</sup> Sten Bugge, Randulf Haslund, Eiliv Skard, and many others. Together with Sigmund Mowinckel, Bugge, Skard, Ramm, and Wikborg then formed a leading, national team. But – according to Norborg – the academical world, the writers and the politicians shut themselves into old defensive positions. The Labour Movement ignored the Oxford Group, not many industrial leaders were engaged, and there was no Christian cultural revival.<sup>78</sup> The judgments on the effects of the Oxford Group campaign differ widely. On one hand, the lively debate on Oxford does not prove any national change – debate and change are not on the same level. On the other hand, during 1934 sales of the New Testament rose by 40%. Eivind Berggrav stated that it was very rare that people in such multitude were on their way to Emmaus. Oxford was not the cause of this, it had only released the hidden need, and the revival as such did not depend on the success of ‘Buchmanism’ or its methods.<sup>79</sup>

Shortly before the Oxford Group Campaign in 1934, the journalist Fredrik Ramm (1892–1943), famous since his flight with Roald Amundsen over the North Pole, and who wrote sharply against totalitarian states in *Tidens Tegn* under his pen-name ‘Mannen i tønne,’ was dismissed, following pressure from the Norwegian Nationalist (National Socialist) party, Nasjonal Samling. After his surrender at the Høsbjør party, Ramm clearly admitted to Vidkun Quisling that he, in his journalism, had used unjustifiable methods, while his change had not altered his critical attitude to Nasjonal Samling. On the contrary, he now found that Christian faith excluded the strong and almighty state. To make the

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negative.

<sup>77</sup> Berggrav 1935c:135.

<sup>78</sup> Norborg 1962:163.

<sup>79</sup> Berggrav 1935c:133 f.

state free but man unfree was wrong. Instead, the start had to be with the singular man.<sup>80</sup> At Høsbjør, Ramm took the decisive step into Christian life. His decision has been described as a real change, not only in his opinions, but in his feelings and conduct.<sup>81</sup> It is probably the clearest example, at least in Scandinavia, of definite political consequences of the Oxford Group strategy of changing individual key persons. In January 1935, Ramm on Danish radio confessed his own journalistic sins in agitating against Denmark in the struggle about the fishing rights around Greenland, and on Norway's National Day he addressed 3,000 Danes at Odense, declaring that his hatred for Denmark had been removed, and calling on the listeners to sing the Danish National Anthem. After a moment's hush, the Danes burst into the *Norwegian* Anthem. Ramm's first testimony of this kind had been given in November 1934, at the first meeting in the big hall of the Lodge in Oslo, where he, in a moved voice, related his story, concluding that the ten days since his change had given him more happiness than all his previous years.<sup>82</sup> Ramm's confession and his new direction of life was given much publicity in several countries, and used by the Oxford Group as an example of what individual change could mean in political matters. Four years later, he described his experience:

God began in me by extinguishing all hatred, all negativity and all fear in my relations to other people, classes and nations, and just as if the miracle was only four minutes old and did not lie four years back in time, I remember the liberation which came to me and how the ice in my heart melted and a new and unknown feeling began to grow, a love of men unfettered by what they could give me.<sup>83</sup>

The President of the parliament, C. J. Hambro, did not totally identify himself with the Oxford Group, nor with the Oxford Group way of life. His position was the one of a leading, national key person, who was allowed to work rather independently from the fellowship, though always keeping close and friendly relations. His task was to speak before British Members of Parliament in London, and to act as host at a luncheon for delegates from the League of Nations in Geneva on the very day when Neville Chamberlain flew to meet

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<sup>80</sup> Ramm to V. Quisling 1934, Oct. 9, Nov. 20 (Ms.fol.4096 V, UBO). On the background, see Terning 1947:73 ff. While personally being more anti-Nazi than ever, Ramm could apply an ultra-personalistic attitude, for example, when Harry Blomberg was upset by Frank Buchman's expression: 'I thank God for a man like Adolf Hitler' (Ch. VI.3.4), Ramm answered that if Buchman, the Archbishop of Canterbury, or Blomberg had this or that personal opinion in a political matter, this had nothing to do with what God had done to him (Ramm to Blomberg 1936, Sept. 17, UUB).

<sup>81</sup> Bugge 1952:281.

<sup>82</sup> Lean [194?]:7, Oxfordbevegelsen i Norge 1935:112 f.

<sup>83</sup> Lean [194?]:6 f. (printed in Bombay!). See also Stolpe 1942:184 ff., 1975:62 ff., [Ramm] 1946, [Tvede] 1943, Terning 1947, Lean 1985:217 f., 224 f., 229, 231.

Adolf Hitler at Berchtesgaden.<sup>84</sup> In his biography, his son writes that Hambro readily worked as an instrument of the Oxford Group, and did it with energy, but despite Frank Buchman's efforts in that direction, he did not accept the vocation to become something of a new St. Paul bringing the message of the Oxford Group to the U.S.A., Canada, India, and other parts of the world, though he did propagate the Oxford Group work at a luncheon in Bankers' Club, New York City, as early as in November 1935.<sup>85</sup> A matter both serious and delicate was that Hambro, giving public testimony of his change, at the same time lived sort of a double life, and, that he, when sharing his life with Frank Buchman, did not mention his intimate relationship since 1918 with another woman beside his wife.<sup>86</sup> To Hambro, the Oxford Group seems to have been first of all an instrument to defeat war and hatred between nations and classes.<sup>87</sup>

The secretary of the Norwegian Christian Student Union (Norske studenter kristelige forbund), Gunnar Gundersen, had a changing experience at the Høsbjør party in 1934. In the following weeks he got most of the leading persons in the Student Union (Forbundet) to go along with him. This meant a deep renewal of the whole student work. But the Union never went 'orthodoxford.' This word seems to have been coined in leading circles of the Union, indicating that they were not blind followers of the international signals. In their independent work, they were sometimes told that, for example, a youth meeting at Hundorp, 1935, was not a genuine house-party.<sup>88</sup> In the Union, where students were used to discuss theological and cultural matters, it meant something of a personal revolution, suddenly to be asked for one's latest lie or theft. Quiet time and sharing were advocated and commonly practised. Alex Johnson, the future Bishop of Hamar, concludes that psychologically the Oxford period in Norway was a parallel to both Freudianism and Evang's sex instruction. They had in common a new openness, unknown to the 19th century: in the Union, as in the whole of the Norwegian Church, the 19th century had lasted one third of the 20th!<sup>89</sup>

During 1934–1939, many students in the Union lived in a regular, personal

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<sup>84</sup> Hambro 1984: 175, Lean 1985:187, 274, van Roon 1989:263.

<sup>85</sup> Hambro 1984:175, Luncheon in honor of Carl J. Hambro. Banker's Club New York City November 20, 1935 (Tirley).

<sup>86</sup> Hambro 1933, 1934, Hvorfor jeg tror på Oxfordbevegelsen 1935:9, Lean 1985:218, 221 f., Hambro 1984:300 (cf. Lean 1985:317 f). According to Lean 1985:224, Buchman challenged Hambro throughout the entire Norwegian campaign to a more thorough surrender of his life and plans to God – a surrender which Hambro seems to have sidestepped.

<sup>87</sup> Oftestad 1981:77. For the 'official' Oxford Group view on Hambro, see Bugge 1965.

<sup>88</sup> Johnson 1959:20, Solum 1983:81. On the interest in the Oxford Group among other youth movements, see 'Kring Oxfordrørsla' in *Norsk ungdom* 1934:181 ff., 202 ff., 1935:9 ff.; in child care, see Selvig 1935.

<sup>89</sup> Johnson 1959:20 f., 23.



tension between the total surrender and change taught and practised in the Oxford Group, and the Lutheran doctrine of *simul justus et peccator* (at the same time sinner and righteous). Alex Johnson found this tension to be sound and healthy for the growth of the Student Union. In his speeches in 1935, Halfdan Høgsbro found that a union between the two brightest Christian spots of our time, Oxford and Barth, was possible as well as desirable. The Oxford years of the student work were further characterized by the Scandinavian co-operation. While Norwegian students did not interest themselves in the World Union, where negative, Barthian views on the Oxford Group were held by the leaders, they engaged themselves in the Scandinavian work. To the Student Meeting at Lund (Sweden) in 1937, the Norwegians brought their Oxford-inspired concentration. Ronald Fangen was one of the main speakers. More than 40 of the Union members were for a shorter or longer period full-time-workers in the Oxford Group, and together with the leading Norwegian team, a big campaign was arranged at the Oslo University in the autumn 1937. Such co-operations took place mostly on the conditions of the Oxford Group, but were mostly paid for by the Student Union.<sup>90</sup> Despite his personal openness, Alex Johnson was not included in the central Oxford Group team in Oslo. Leading Oxford men, such as Ramm, Wikborg, Fangen, and Sven Stolpe spoke at the Student Union, and some of Johnson's closest co-workers were included in the team. He shared at an Oxford meeting at Klekken, and found great confidence because of this. He requested Union workers to stay in close contacts with the Oxford people, and spoke of how Oxford could renew theology, but was still not included in the team. His institutional understanding of the Church – critical of Emil Brunner's theological personalism – might have been one obstacle. According to his biographer, Alex Johnson got his salary from voluntary 'Oxford' people in the parish of Uranienborg.<sup>91</sup> A good example of Alex Johnson's theology during these years is his article on the Church full of hope in *Kirke og kultur* 1935. Johnson set his pattern in the combination of eschatology and mission, while criticizing both speculative apocalypics and the passive eschatology of dialectical theology, and finding the practical solution in

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<sup>90</sup> Johnson 1959:22 f., Hestvold 1987:140 f., Johnson to Halfdan Høgsbro (on Oxford and Barth) 1935, Apr. 16 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK). An example of the attitude of student Barthianism is given in Visser't Hooft's manuscript 'Modern revivalism' (Bell Papers. Church Reform Movements 1930–1955:116, LPL; sent to Bishop Bell 1933, Jan. 2, by Erich Stange), in which the Oxford Group is criticized for reversing the real relation between God and man, not taking the paradox of the Christian life seriously, speaking too glibly about the Holy Spirit, and being in danger of the pietistic separation of individual obedience and corporate obedience to God's Will. After 1936, the number was waning. Another example of continuing, strong, and independent group work is the Oslo Home Mission, and its journal *Bymisjonæren*, though the importance of Oxford here was more one of inspiration than one of direction (see Lundby 1980:116, Tschudi 1984:474).

<sup>91</sup> Hestvold 1987:137 f., 164.

the Oxford Group Movement. Its descriptions of the changed world was so utopian that they pointed far beyond the present world: God was now realizing His plan, He alone knowing how and where it all would lead.<sup>92</sup>

The continuing, strong, independent groups, growing up during the Oxford Group phase, living in the Oxford Group way, but only now and then working in fellowship with the Oxford Group, are significant and special to the Oxford Group phase in Norway. Perhaps as a consequence, the early, strong and independent Group work in Denmark was to a great extent consciously crushed by the international campaign.

### *III.3.3. The 'Official' Reaction*

The official reaction from the Norwegian Church was benevolent, though the emphasis was on personal openness and revival rather than on identification with the Oxford Group as such. An editorial in *Norsk Kirkeblad* made it clear that the priests had to dare to take it personally – else the revival would not bring any blessing either to themselves or to the Church.<sup>93</sup> To the established reaction of the Church, we must further add the divided attitudes of the strong, pietistic lay movements within the Church. This is made clear already by the yearly statements from the Norwegian Bishops. Some of the Bishops reported a positive, renewing 'Oxford' influence among the clergy, but their evaluations of the influence of Group revivalism as compared to the older revivalistic movements differed.<sup>94</sup> In a few dioceses, the Oxford Group Movement and the Home Mission worked together. In the diocese of Nidaros (Trondheim), a new co-operation between the clergy and the older, active lay Christians was reported, thanks to a great extent to the Oxford Group.<sup>95</sup> The more exotic strains in the movement had gradually been adjusted to Norwegian circumstances, but there was a risk in the forming of small groups for special Christians, who isolated themselves from older Christians of a somewhat

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<sup>92</sup> Johnson 1935:425 ff. Cf. Molland 1935:312, who finds a lack of eschatology in Fangen 1935.

<sup>93</sup> 'Oxfordgruppebevegelsen og prestene' (*Norsk Kirkeblad* 1934:553).

<sup>94</sup> Beretninger om den Norske Kirke i 1935:76 (A. Fleischer of Bjørgvin: a fresh addition and a drive), 1936:76 (J. Lunde of Oslo: to some extent), 91 (J. C. Petersen of Stavanger: the strongest spiritual influence), 102 (J. Støren of Nidaros/Trondheim: of great importance, directly or indirectly), 120 (E. Berggrav of Hålogaland: It is impossible to say what is owing to 'Oxford', and what is from old roots). See also J. Lunde to the Swedish Archbishop E. Eidem 1934 Jan. 9 (EEA C II:7, ULA): 'Lidt fremmedartet virker den jo, men i stort set gaar den ind under det vekkelsens liv vi i de senere aar har kunnet glede os over [...] and in Oxfordbevegelsen i Norge 1935 [1]:89 ff.

<sup>95</sup> *Norvegia Sacra* 1936:80 (H. Hille of Hamar), 120 (Berggrav of Hålogaland, where some Home Mission people were cold towards Oxford), 102 (Støren).

different kind.<sup>96</sup> Still, the spiritual climate had changed, and there was a new sensitivity to the gravity of God's voice.<sup>97</sup> At the Bishops' dinner at the Royal Palace in October 1935, Bishop Lunde of Oslo had expressed criticism, while Bishop Berggrav of Hålogaland had shared his personal experiences – probably both positive and negative.<sup>98</sup>

In the Home Mission movements, feelings and reactions were mixed. The secretary of the Home Mission Society, Joh. M. Wisløff, taking part in the Høsbjør party, felt himself unaccustomed to the arrangements, and found the proclamations of weak substance. But he was deeply moved by the care for the souls and the conversions he witnessed, and wrote an essentially sympathetic report.<sup>99</sup> Ludvig Hope, the leader of the Westland Home Mission, was an enthusiastic participant at the Høsbjør party. In his short book on the matter, Hope was positive towards the simple and natural behavior, though he found that the elements of the movement's practice which had been called the strongest might turn out to be the weakest: confession of sins, the four absolute standards, and keeping quiet time with paper and pencil.<sup>100</sup> The preaching of Christ might be weak, but worse were the laughing confessions of sin, which did not seem to be confessions before the living God, the quiet listening instead of Bible-reading, and the fact that changed liberal theologians did not confess their former theological errors as sins.<sup>101</sup> When Ronald Fangen published his confessional book, Hope was deeply moved.<sup>102</sup>

Other leaders of Christian lay movements, such as the unconfessional, voluntaristic Albert Lunde, chairman of the Norwegian China Mission, became decidedly positive at Høsbjør, because of the undeniable, revivalistic results they experienced in several persons, and identified themselves with the Oxford Group way of life. Lunde himself said that he had not had as much soul-curing work to do since the big revival in 1905.<sup>103</sup>

When Ronald Fangen sent Ole Hallesby, professor of Dogmatics at the Independent Theological Faculty (Menighetsfakultetet), his confessional book, Hallesby thanked him, and joined in expressing delight over the testimony about Christ that Fangen had 'tried to give.' He ended by hoping that God would let Fangen see deeper into Christ and the mystery of the Gospel before

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<sup>96</sup> *Norvegia Sacra* 1936:76 (Lunde), 102 (Støren), 120 (Berggrav).

<sup>97</sup> *Norvegia Sacra* 1936:120 (Berggrav: 'Det er det aandelige klima som har skiftet, og saa er der blitt en ny lyhørhet overfor alvoret i Guds tale').

<sup>98</sup> Heiene 1992:229.

<sup>99</sup> Wisløff 1971:400, Kullerud 1987:306.

<sup>100</sup> Hope 1935:20.

<sup>101</sup> Hope 1935:27, 24, 29 f., 34.

<sup>102</sup> Fr. Ramm to Fangen 1935, June 4: 'jeg talte med Ludvig Hope om den som sa at han efter å ha læst den var mere enn fornøiet, og at han hadde været på gråten over å se hvad du skrev om korset og forsoningen' (488a, UBO).

<sup>103</sup> Lunde 1939:130 ff.

he wrote another book.<sup>104</sup> When the Home Mission Society held its general convention with 500 deputies in Oslo June 29 – July 3, 1935, severe dogmatic criticism was raised against the Oxford Group by Johan Martin Wisløff (no doctrine and no preaching of the Word of atonement), who criticized dead orthodoxy as well, and Ole Hallesby (a Gospel without the Cross), but the prepared resolution was not brought forward, and each Home Mission member was left to take his own stand on the movement. Hallesby's reaction was later criticized by his colleague at the Independent Theological Faculty, Professor Olaf Moe.<sup>105</sup> At the Geilo meeting in January 1936, the matter was treated behind closed doors, the conflict was sharpened, and the prepared resolution was not accepted.<sup>106</sup> Professor Hallesby said that the Home Mission would leave the work of the Oxford Group in peace, as it did with the work of the Pentecostal Movement.<sup>107</sup> The situation was rather complicated. Before the Oxford Group campaign, Home Mission leaders had talked of the necessity of a new sort of revival, which resulted in a renewed everyday life.<sup>108</sup> The Oxford Group seemed to bring exactly this new sort of revival, though not in 'reliable' ways. To Ole Hallesby's strategical thinking, the Oxford Group meant a competition for the souls, and an unwanted alternative outside of traditional

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<sup>104</sup> Hallesby to Fangen 1935, May 9 (488a, UBO). Hallesby's wording must be regarded in the light of Fangen's previous review of Hallesby's book on moral philosophy, six years earlier, in which Fangen accused Hallesby of materialism, and of lacking the spiritual power of Christian faith, and concluded that neither Hallesby's book on dogmatics nor his actual one on ethics, were Christian (Fangen 1929:444). See further Oftestad 1981:64 ff.

<sup>105</sup> Wisløff 1971:404 f., Lavik 1946:182, Fjellbu 1936:560, Editorial 'Indremisjonen og Oxfordbevegelsen' in Norsk Kirkeblad 1935:313 f., which criticizes the unpersonalistic action of the Home Mission, and revives the Church struggle at the risk of the end of the revival. Moe's position was of international importance. When he reported from the Norwegian Church at the Lutheran World Convent in Paris, he spoke positively of the effects of the Oxford Group. While much disputed, it had given many clergymen and theologians a personal Christian renewal. His report was published in the German press as well (Moe 1936:39).

<sup>106</sup> Rudvin 1970:329 ff. The Home Mission Society was criticized in an unsigned editorial 'Indremisjonen og Oxfordbevegelsen,' Norsk Kirkeblad 1935:313 f., for its unclear motives for rejecting the Oxford Movement, as it knew well that in Norway it was neither without doctrine nor without the Cross. Unlike the Danish Home Mission, the Norwegian Home Mission leaders did not want to engage themselves personally in the revival. Instead of a personal, Christian agreement, they tried to revive the Church struggle. The discussion on Oxford or Home Mission is further reflected in one of Sverre Norborg's speeches in Copenhagen in February 1936 (:48 f.), in a typical Group revivalistic manner: the matter was not whether Home Mission or Oxford was right, but a matter of Christ, the fullness of the Spirit, and the gift of God. See also Oftestad 1981:249.

<sup>107</sup> Berggrav 1936:123. Also reported in SvM 1936 Oct. 12.

<sup>108</sup> Editorial 'Tanker ved årsskiftet' (Norsk Kirkeblad 1935:2).

positions in the Church struggle. The Scandinavian Home Mission meeting had been postponed from 1936 to 1937 because of the mixed attitudes to the Oxford Group. Both the Oslo Home Mission and the Danish Home Mission were to some extent positive. The Scandinavian meeting in Oslo, September 1–5, 1937, counted 1,400 participants from Denmark (more than 500), Norway (more than 600), Sweden (150), and Iceland, respectively.<sup>109</sup>

The conservative clerical journal, *Luthersk Kirketidende*, published articles both in favor of and against the Oxford Group. While still critical, Ivar Welle recognized that during the winter 1935, the groups had got hold of a class formerly mostly absent from the Church, and almost totally from the Home Mission. Many older Christian circles had received a strong push, and revivals were going on in the congregations. Most of them were not especially Oxfordian, but similar to other revivals in the last decade. Still, Oxford had given its contribution to them.<sup>110</sup> In the same year, the journal published a discourse given by Stephan Tschudi on how to promote and lead revivalism in the congregations. Tschudi emphasized the need for working teams for a sound growth. He did not find it self-evident that the priest should lead the work. His special task was to lead Bible hours. To act as a spiritual guide, he must share his own sins.<sup>111</sup> In 1936, *Luthersk Kirketidende* published a moderate essay by Halfdan Riiser, thankful and critical, and expressing appreciation of the new methods in preaching (especially the concrete speaking of sin), soul-care, and the soul-winning work. A Norwegian-American judgment, critical to the modernism of the Oxford Group, was translated and published, as well as Kristian Ljostveit's *Oxfordbevegelsen og kirken*, subsequently printed separately.<sup>112</sup> Ljostveit's report shows a mixture of superficiality and hostile perspicacity. To Ljostveit *change* meant to be changed into 'Oxfordmen,' living on a level of general religiousness outside the life in faith with God. The Oxford principles had been useful for a team of believers during their reviving work, but were now (1936) vindicated as principles of the Christian community. The movement wanted to be self-sufficient, to be Church.<sup>113</sup> At the house-party at Ferris Bad it became clear to him that the sectarian spirit had seized *sharing*, being used as a condition for recognition, and for use by the Spirit of God.<sup>114</sup> Guidance in the Oxford sense of the word was rejected as totally lacking basis in Scripture, and struggling against God's self-revelation and man's responsibility for his

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<sup>109</sup> Fra det femte nordiske indremisjonsmøte 1937:463. 'Indremisjonens retningslinjer under debatt. Et skarpt replikkskifte om Oxfordbevegelsen' (Dagen 1937, Sept. 6). See further Ch. IV.

<sup>110</sup> Welle 1935:409 f.

<sup>111</sup> Tschudi 1935:371, 389 ff.

<sup>112</sup> Riiser 1936:311, 314, 316; Lee 1936 (editor of *Lutheran Herald*, Minneapolis), first published as 'Oxford Group Movement' in *Theological Forum*, October 1935; Ljostveit 1936.

<sup>113</sup> Ljostveit 1936:9-13.

<sup>114</sup> Ljostveit 1936:20.

actions.<sup>115</sup> The God surrendered to by the average Oxfordian was a personification of the Oxford principles.<sup>116</sup>

A noteworthy, official reaction came from King Haakon VII, who was interested and competent in religious matters, and clearly noticed the positive sides of the Oxford campaigns, especially the new tone it had brought to Church sermons. In a private audience, he thanked Frank Buchman for the movement's effort in Norway, asking him to be careful with public confession of sins, since it might easily lead to confessing other people's sins as well. According to the King's own report, this comment was not without effect.<sup>117</sup>

### *III.3.4. The Continuing Oxford Group Work in Co-operation with the Church*

On April 23, 1935, the resident chaplain Johannes Smidt gave a discourse at the Clergy Association of Oslo on how the new movement could be useful to the congregations in practical ways. Smidt encountered Group revivalism while serving as a seamen's chaplain in England, but was repelled by it. Once the movement had taken root in Norway, he became thankful for what it had brought. This spiritual movement was totally positive, against all struggle, without an organization, and thus without the egotism of organizations. Instead of overemphasizing the feelings or the intellect, it was practical and voluntaristic in its simple proclamation of sin and conversion. Smidt had himself learnt from its Christian optimism that there were no hopeless cases: even the worldliest people could be converted. The question how to use the movement was answered with the statement that it should not be used at all. The clergymen had to surrender totally to God, so that the revival could become strong and alive for themselves. The priest should be a sinner among sinners, testifying in his sermons, while preaching conversion. A possibility for co-operation between parishes was opened through the exchange of Group visitors. But the movement should be presented in accordance with Norwegian Christianity. Ronald Fangen, present as a guest, spoke of his joy at the positive attitude among the clergy. He testified of the importance of the Cross of Christ, an understanding given him through the Oxford Movement, with the objective atonement as the basis of life change.<sup>118</sup>

In its introductory editorial, 1936, *Norsk Kirkeblad* stated that the importance of the movement depended on the personal involvement of the clergy. Even the Home Mission and its chairman had been forced to accept that co-operation

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<sup>115</sup> Ljostveit 1936:29.

<sup>116</sup> Ljostveit 1936:30 f.

<sup>117</sup> Fjellbu 1960:186.

<sup>118</sup> 'Oslo presteforening,' *Norsk Kirkeblad* 1935:207 ff. (see also Johs. Smidt in *Hvorfor jeg tror på Oxfordbevegelsen* 1935:114 ff).

could no longer be stopped, when it came to a personal agreement between human beings who were prepared to see their sin and to be converted. The first big clerical house-party was planned for January 1936. From the viewpoint of the Church, the task was to find the connection between revival and growth.<sup>119</sup> The party was arranged as a joint party for 25 Danes, about 45 Norwegians, and about 10 others over a weekend at Klekken.<sup>120</sup>

From the autumn 1935, a co-operation with the Church and parts of the Home Mission was notable even in the location of house-parties. A Norwegian team, campaigning to the far north (Tromsø, Bodø, Narvik), arranged a party at Finsnes, the Youth School of the Home Mission. A house-party at Sauda in Ryfylke (diocese of Stavanger) was positively mentioned by Bishop J. C. Petersen.<sup>121</sup> Other characteristics were the direction towards Sweden, and the international contributions. A house-party at Modum Bad, May 20–27, 1936 led to a changing experience of Sven Stolpe, who finally surrendered, at the same time as Elov Tengblad, at Sund Folkehøyskole during Whitsun. Here, Bible hours were led by Ma Nyein Tha, a Burmese headmistress.<sup>122</sup> Succeeding house-parties were arranged at Riksgränsen, on the Swedish side of the border, near Narvik,<sup>123</sup> at Hundtorp Folkehøyskole in Sørfron July 8–14, and at Lyngseidet in August, where Bishop Berggrav was critical.<sup>124</sup> The house-party at Farris bad in Larvik, August 18–23, 1936, led by Ronald Fangen, led to the surrender of the Swedish writer Harry Blomberg. At Elverum, people from all political parties, including Nasjonal Samling and the Communists, met in September 1936.<sup>125</sup>

A big action was carried through during the Intercession Day holiday, October 29–November 1, 1936. House-parties or other arrangements took place at Sundvollen, Hønefoss, Kongsvinger, Hamar, Lillehammer, Ulvik, Steinkjer, and Mosjøen. The party at Sundvollen was arranged for teachers and students from the University, the Independent Theological Faculty, and the Dental School, under the direction of Eiliv Skard. People came from most parts of the country. Among the speakers to an audience of about 1,000 at a meeting in Oslo on October 26 were Sven Stolpe and Elov Tengblad from Sweden. About 200, mostly students, participated in the house-party. At least 400–500 Group people spent their holiday in travelling teams. These travelling teams consisted of people of different ages, sex, political views, and religious backgrounds.<sup>126</sup> A meeting for engineers and architects was arranged in Oslo

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<sup>119</sup> Editorial 'Tanker ved årsskiftet' (Norsk Kirkeblad 1936:1 f).

<sup>120</sup> The others were described as 'of us assorted varieties,' H. Blake to H. Høgsbro Feb. 5, 1936 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>121</sup> *Norvegia Sacra* 1936:120, Beretning...1935

<sup>122</sup> Fraenki 1979:25 ff. Oxford-gruppen House-party på Modum Bad...1936.

<sup>123</sup> H. Blake to H. Høgsbro 1936, June 16 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>124</sup> Isene 1990:33 f.

<sup>125</sup> Fr. Ramm to H. Blomberg 1936, Sept. 17 (UUB).

<sup>126</sup> Det hender idag 1936:3 f., 12 f. On Sundvolden, see S. Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1936,

November 28–29, and an academic house-party followed in Trondheim from December 12.<sup>127</sup>

The work had been decentralized, but with a more intimate co-operation between the parts of the country as well as between individuals. The emphasis of the printed report is on activity in the Christian fellowship, common guidance, personal freedom, and testimonies.<sup>128</sup> The common Oxford Group attitude towards organizing and institutionalizing the work, automatically got a stronger emphasis in Norway with its many Christian organizations and associations. The liberation through change was thus described as a liberation to fellowship and individual responsibility, without the ties of organizations and associations.<sup>129</sup> A general experience was that a team must have shared deeply before starting its work in a new place. During a house-party and a campaign, plenty of time in the mornings was needed for team-meetings. Individual sharing was needed during the work, because the strength of the fellowship depended on everybody knowing each other. Negative or critical thoughts in particular, on the team or singular members, had to be shared. Resident and visiting members of the team should work together, and avoid all talk about 'you' and 'us.' Plans made in advance for the campaign or the house-party ought to be as few as possible: from day to day the team had to trust in God's guidance. Several of the house-parties had taken another direction than the one planned. Planning a campaign meant first to get to know the place, getting into contact with the local teams. It was important that people took part in all meetings, since the team wanted them to see and take their responsibility, not just to get them in the mood or touch them. But all of these instructions might be altered because of God's deciding guidance on how to lead men to the Christian faith.<sup>130</sup> The normal order for a house-party was a morning meeting

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Nov. 8 (UUB). Blomberg, too, had been asked to participate (E. Wikborg to Blomberg 1936, Oct. 7, 21; S. Mowinckel to Blomberg 1936, Oct. 17, Nov. 14, UUB). To Hønefoss, people came from Oslo, Skien, Skedsmo, Lillestrøm, Stabekk; to Kongsvinger from Oslo, Fredrikstad, Notodden, Horten, Sandefjord, Skien, Porsgrunn; to Hamar from Oslo and Gjøvik; to Lillehammer from Bærum, Grefsen, Oslo, Fredrikstad, V. Aker, Nordstrand, Ås; to Ulvik from Bergen, Haugesund, Voss, Odda, Tyssa, Sauda, Larvik, Fredrikstad, V. Aker, Oslo, Skedsmo; to Steinkjer from Trondheim, Levanger, Namsos, Malm, Snåsa, Namdalen; to Mosjøen from V. Aker, Nordstrand, Trondheim, Steinkjer, Bodø, Svolvær, and Narvik. The importance of the first house-party for students was emphasized in the editorial 'Tanker ved årsskiftet' (Norsk Kirkeblad 1937:2).

<sup>127</sup> Edvard Jørstad to 'Kjære kollega' 1936, Oct. 2 (dupl), Jørstad to H. Blomberg 1936, Sept. 19, Dec. 28; Erling Wikborg to Blomberg 1936, Nov. 17 (UUB). A further meeting for engineers was planned for Jan.5. S. Stolpe to Blomberg 1936, Nov. 24; S. Mowinckel to Blomberg 1936, Nov. 14 (UUB).

<sup>128</sup> Det hender idag 1936:6 ff., 12.

<sup>129</sup> Det hender idag 1936:8 f.

<sup>130</sup> Det hender idag 1936:9 ff.



with a quiet time, then a Bible hour or special meetings for men and women, and during the afternoon and evening personal testimonies on sin, surrender, or guidance, with possibilities to declare one's new decisions. The parties in the provinces included Church services on Sunday. The party at Ulvik (arranged by teams from Bergen and Hardanger) started with a service with Holy communion in the Church. Special 'Oxford services' were arranged at house-parties, sometimes in the open air.<sup>131</sup> Some of the arrangements had more than 500 participants.<sup>132</sup>

A new book containing testimonies of changed persons was planned in 1936 by Sten Bugge and Eiliv Skard, who checked the idea with Erling Wikborg and Sigmund Mowinckel. As the plans were not realized, the planned disposition is of great interest for our context:

Erling Wikborg: Det moderne menneskes utglidning  
 Arthur Jayne: Mine invendinger mot samdeling  
 S. Mowinckel: Erkjennelse, liv og tro  
 Eiliv Skard: Fra tvil til tro  
 Fredrik Ramm: Verdens skyld og min skyld  
 Sten Bugge: Samdeling og samfund  
 Agnes Hall: Russens mor  
 Sara Koch, Jæger Hagen, Lars Sulheim, Ernst Hansen: Personlig vidnesbyrd  
 Per Angdal: Menneskefrygt og menneskeforagt  
 Øivind Nordal (cfr. Bj. Halvorsen, Industrigt 6 B)  
 Søren Hansen: Fra prest til mann  
 Jussi Pihl: Barna og det nye liv  
 G. von der Lippe: (Fra whisky til rødvin!)<sup>133</sup>

During 1936 the Oxford Group work was no longer speaking so loud, but its inner activity had increased. Some critics feared sectarian tendencies among the groups. Eivind Berggrav stated that the movement was integrated with the Church in Sørlandet and Nordlandet, and that the stress was part of the acclimatization to the work, with a tension between the 'Ortodoxford' methods and the more organic work according to older Christian views. The old institutions and movements had received positive impulses for a renewal. And in Sørlandet, the Group and the pietistic Home Mission worked side by side without antagonism, and the Sørland Oxford team was distinctive in its Home

<sup>131</sup> Det hender idag 1936:13 ff., 19. S. Stolpe in StTD 1936, Sept. 2, 'Oxford i arbete. Intryck från ett norskt femdagarsmöte.'

<sup>132</sup> Sundvollen: 200 participants, Hamar: 300–350, Lillehammer: 500–600, Ulvik: 150 *surrenders* (!), Steinkjer: 100, Ullern: 180, see Det hender idag 1936: 13, 17 f., 20 f., 25.

<sup>133</sup> Sten Bugge to Eiliv Skard 1936, July 2 (UBO 598). To 'Kjære venn' [1937, Apr. 15] (Okat.saml. H. Blomberg, UUB), Fr. Ramm suggested the publication of collected confessions of what the new life had meant to individuals, homes, and work, aiming at a material for God to build a new world of.

Mission character and support of the ‘Hallesby Movement’ (‘Laget’) instead of the Student Union (‘Forbundet’).<sup>134</sup>

Beside Eivind Berggrav’s positive attitude of support and inspiration – without identification with the Oxford Group and Ole Hallesby’s first rejecting, then wait-and-see policy, Sverre Norborg’s effort to combine the Haugian revival tradition with Group revivalism was still of topical relevance, as it formed a neo-Pietistic tradition of Lutheran-Pietistic doctrine and Group revivalistic methods. It was spread further in the Scandinavian countries through the publication of Norborg’s speeches in Copenhagen in February 1936. In one of these speeches, he analyses the relation between justification by faith and life-change in 15 theses:

1. Both touch central Biblical truths.
2. Justification concerns the invisible, eternal side of the life in faith.
3. Life-change must be visible.
4. Biblical justification and Biblical life-change are both acts worked by God.
5. There is a false life-change (i.e. when human will is understood as saving).
6. We are declared righteous, not because of life-change, but because of Christ.
7. Life-change is not the cause of salvation, but its consequence.
8. The decisive moment in life-change is the full surrender.
9. Full surrender is the very faith.
10. Faith changes man.
11. Life-change is the fruit of justification.
12. Life-change is an unmistakable sign of true faith.
13. Life-change is no slavery, but a Gospel.
14. Justification is completed, life-change is a continuing process.
15. Justification is God’s promise that the change at one time also will become absolute.<sup>135</sup>

During 1936–1941, Fredrik Ramm distributed duplicated letters to about 400 Oxford friends in Scandinavia.<sup>136</sup> Some of his early letters clearly reveal that, as the revival groups phase was so short in Norway, some of the difficulties noted in Denmark and Sweden during that phase did not occur in Norway until during the Oxford Group phase. In a letter in December 1936, Ramm observed the danger of sectarian tendencies. According to his experience, people easily got into the work in new places, rejoicing in the new fellowship, the realistic character of Bible hours, and in the freedom given by sharing. From the start, Ramm had tried to organize a strong nucleus which met regularly, but soon he found that the nucleus easily developed a shell which isolated the whole as a new kind of association. The fellowship was not made alive, and people were not bound together by an inner life, but by a Group meeting every Thursday at

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<sup>134</sup> Berggrav 1936b:123, Hestvold 1987:141.

<sup>135</sup> Norborg 1936:26 ff., 1936b:23 ff.

<sup>136</sup> The number is given in Ramm to ‘Kjære venn’ [1937, Apr. 18] (Okat.saml. H. Blomberg, UUB).

6 p.m. Recently, this danger had been realized in many places, and the groups dissolved. Instead of being a hanger-on in a group, the individual had again become responsible, preparing himself for new tasks, and understanding that groups which did not take responsibility for new people, new situations, and new tasks were only religious associations. A group was identical with a working team.<sup>137</sup>

In January 1937, a big attack was made on Stavanger, the centre of the Western Home Mission district. After the preparation of a team of about 100, from January 6, led by Sten Bugge, the public attack started with a meeting in the crowded theatre, in an unsentimental and realistic atmosphere. On another evening, parallel meetings were arranged in the Cathedral and St. Peter's Church, for about 3,000 people. The interest was uncommonly great in the country districts. Most important was the meeting in the public hall ('Folkets Hus'), after an invitation from the local club of the Youth movement of the Labour Party. The hall took 1,000 or 1,100, mostly workers, while 2,000 or 3,000 more were unable to gain entrance. Six Group members testified, followed by questions from some of the members of the Labour Party. This was something new to the Group members, who were worried about it, convinced as they were of the rightness of the old road, i.e. personal testimony, full honesty and openness, without any jokes about political ideas. The attack ended with a closed meeting for the committed ones, from Saturday evening to Sunday evening, led by the Stavanger architect Valdemar Hansteen. The campaign led to the surrender of several hundreds, including the Swedish postman and local trade union leader, Thure Oskarsson.<sup>138</sup>

During 1937, the Oxford Group work continued with house-parties from Finnmark to Kristiansand, and with meetings for special categories, for example, engineers in Oslo, and a Scandinavian house-party for teachers at Elverum. An Easter party was arranged in Hodalen, Holga station. At the same time, 33 Scandinavians gathered at a camp for young men in Birmingham, and subsequently took part in the Whitsun campaign in Utrecht. A camp for 500 young male leaders from all over the world was arranged at Oxford. For the Scandinavians, these efforts worked as preparations for the male Youth camp at Røros, July 30–August 9, 1937, which counted 300 young men from 18 nations (260 Scandinavians, and 33 from overseas). The printed invitation from young people in Iceland, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway emphasized the responsibility of the youth and the Nordic countries for the future of the world, and pointed to the solution of changed men changing nations, changing the

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<sup>137</sup> Ramm to 'Kjære venn' 1936, Dec. 16 (Okat.saml.H. Blomberg, UUB).

<sup>138</sup> Ramm to 'Kjære venn' undated; copy of E. Wikborg to E. Tengblad 1936, Dec. 23 (Okat.saml. H. Blomberg, UUB). The team members came from Østlandet, Vestlandet, Trøndelag, and Sørlandet; three were Danish. Several of the meetings were most unusual to the district, also because of their mixed audiences. Smaller meetings for ladies, clergymen, Christian workers, Good Templars, etc. were held, too. On Oskarsson, see Ch. V.2.12.

world.<sup>139</sup> After the camp, ‘the whole team of seventy young men training together [...] sealed their commitment at a special celebration of the Holy Communion held for us on a weekday by the parish priest.’ A few Swedish workers had changing experiences.<sup>140</sup> At the same time, a Scandinavian party for teachers was given at Elverum, on the initiative of Elov Tengblad.<sup>141</sup> A double-house-party followed at Modum in the last ten days of August.

The heavier emphasis on special categories included application of the Oxford principles to these categories and their social responsibilities, sometimes leading to extended and critical public discussions, far from an exclusively personalistic strategy. Here it was sometimes impossible – as in Stavanger – to continue along the old road, i.e. with personal testimony only. For example, an article by Sven Stolpe in the first issue, 1937, of *Under Dusken*, the student journal in Trondhjem, started a long debate with contributions from an engineer as well as one student of architecture and two students of technology, and two replies from Stolpe.<sup>142</sup>

A Norwegian team had been active even in traditional conference ecumenics, visiting an ecumenical conference in Swedish Sigtuna, September 30–October 2, 1936. Among the Swedish participants were various Church men engaged in Group revivalistic work, but from Norway came – among others – Ronald Fangen, Fredrik Ramm, and the student Øivind Berggrav, son of Eyvind Berggrav. Ramm gave an impassioned testimony and Fangen delivered an introductory discourse, emphasizing the need for guidance, realism, and unity, both critical to the Church as a hindrance for the renewal work of the Group Movement. This Nordic conference was followed by the Swedish Ecumenical Days in Stockholm, where Ronald Fangen on October 3 in St. Clara’s Church gave a public discourse on Christian unity.<sup>143</sup> Fangen’s understanding of

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<sup>139</sup> Et kall til ansvar 1937.

<sup>140</sup> ‘Scandinavian Youth Front,’ 28.7.37 (DWC), S. Linton to A. Lehtonen 1939, Jan. 30 (RAH), ‘Oxford inntar Røros. Møtet åpnet igår’ (Dagen 1937, July 31). The opening meeting was conducted by Sven Major from Oslo. Among the Swedish workers were Ernst Roos and Adrian Petersson, see ‘Arbetet i Sverige före Visby’ (EPC).

<sup>141</sup> Fraenki 1979:29.

<sup>142</sup> Sven Stolpe: Tre punkter (p.1 f), Erling Schreiner: Oxfordbevegelsen (p.17–20), Arne Nilsen: Sven Stolpes “punkter” (p.23 f), Carl E. Brønn: Tre punkter i en annen utgave (p.24 f), Daisy Colbiørnsen: Til Sven Stolpe (p.25 f), Stolpe: Tre punkter än en gång (p.38–41, Nilsen: Et punktum fra min side (p.53 f), Colbiørnsen: Forstå mig rett, Sven Stolpe! (p.54 f), Brønn: Oxfordbevegelsen som social faktor (p.55 f), Schreiner: Sven Stolpes debattmåte (p.70–72), Nilsen: Åpent brev til Sven Stolpe (p.119 f), Stolpe: Slutreplik (p.157–159).

<sup>143</sup> ‘Deltagere i nordiskt ekumeniskt möte i Sigtuna 1936’ (dupl., Okat. samling O. Nystedt, GUB), Rosenqvist 1936:188 (Sigtuna), Bosson-Alin 1936:191 (Stockholm), Report in Församlingsbladet 1936:664 f., Ekstrand 1993:90. The conference was much noted in Norway, see, for example, the front page of Dagen 1936, Oct. 3. Some Norwegian Oxford Group men seem to have been more critical. Erling Wikborg told Ramm that it was a waste of time and money to go there (Ramm to H. Blomberg 1936,

the Church was Christocentric and totally personalistic, with Christian unity understood as the unity of the Christians, and his ecumenical method aimed at the development of personal, ethical relations. The Committee Way was described as the broad path, while the narrow path went through confession of sin, through living in the human fellowship of sin. Ecumenics as such was identified with the Group Movement.<sup>144</sup>

Starting on Ascension Day, 1937, the Oxford Group campaign in Utrecht, Holland, was more traditional in its methods, though with a new, national and supernational emphasis. Since twenty Dutchmen had taken part in the Norwegian campaign in 1934, Ramm thought at least twenty Norwegians ought to go to Holland. Thirty Norwegians went from different parts of the country. The campaign 'coincided' with the signing of the Trade Agreement of the Oslo States at the Hague, and J. L. Mowinckel, the Norwegian father of the Oslo Convention, welcomed the Norwegian Oxford Group idea of a 'spiritual Convention of Oslo.'<sup>145</sup> In 1937, *Tider skal komme*, the Norwegian edition of the international Oxford Group journal *Rising Tide* was published. It meant a change in the public image of the Oxford Group. To realize the vision of changed nations, the national and supernational aim had to be visualized in such a manner that it was made clear that this was something more than Group revivalism. The emphasis on the upper classes was toned down, and much of the work centred around the working class and relations in working life. In preparing the Norwegian edition, Fredrik Ramm missed this point of strategy. Frank Buchman wrote to him:

I am convinced you have made a fundamental mistake in calling it *The Solution*. You label it from the beginning. Surely you, too, can call it *Rising Tide*. Otherwise you make it another Group publication and rob yourself of the larger labour population you ought to reach. You are not using the same genius you used as an editor, in your work for the Groups. Please change the title and make it a national

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Sept. 27, UUB), while Sten Bugge delivered a discourse on the fighting and victorious Church at the Anglo-Scandinavian Theological Conference at Fritzehus in Larvik, in September, 1936 (printed in *Dagen* 1936, Sept. 19). These conferences operated mainly on a personal level, see further Støylen 1982.

<sup>144</sup> Fangen 1937b (translated into German, 1937c, and Swedish, 1938), Oftestad 1981:133 f., Jarlert 1989:141 f., Østnor 1990:47 ff. Fangen gave his discourse the subtitle 'The Ecumenical Message of the Group Movement,' and Østnor reads it as a 'concrete example' of the ecumenical theology of the 'Oxford Group Movement.' Cf. Jarlert 1989:142, which emphasizes Fangen's contrast to the ecumenical programmes and actions of Emil Brunner and Arvid Runestam. The reader ought to be reminded of the fact that it was precisely 'the Committee Way' that made it possible for Fangen to deliver his discourse.

<sup>145</sup> Ramm to 'Kjære venn' [1937, Apr. 18] (Okat.saml. H. Blomberg, UUB), Ramm [1937]:4, 20, van Roon 1989:264. See further Ch. II.4. On the Dutch participation in the Norwegian campaign, see de Loor 1986:82.

thing and not a Group thing.<sup>146</sup>

This change in the public image of the Oxford Group did not turn up to be a success in Norway. During 1938, progress was registered especially in Oslo, but after 1938, the revival waned without dying out totally.<sup>147</sup>

### *III.3.5. Bishop Eivind Berggrav: Support and Inspiration without Identification*

Among the participants at the Høsbjør house party in 1934 was the bishop of Hålogaland, Eivind Berggrav, from 1937 bishop of Oslo. Berggrav's name was soon associated with the Oxford Group. As his name was used by the Group with propagandistic aims, and as Berggrav during 1938–1939 co-operated with Oxford Group people on an international level, expressing himself in what seems to be an 'Oxford'-inspired manner, the question of his relationship to the Oxford Group has a wide interest.

Berggrav had met Frank Buchman privately at Tromsø in the summer 1931, and he became interested and even committed to the new movement. Some of the Oxford Group principles were related to Berggrav's book on sanctification (1934), with its emphasis on activist religion and the activities of the Holy Spirit in everyday life.<sup>148</sup> Berggrav's impressions of Høsbjør were mixed. His previous impressions had been confirmed, both the positive and the negative ones.<sup>149</sup> In his first, informative articles on the subject, he wished to save the positive sides of Group revivalism, while rejecting other elements of it. For example, he practised quiet time, but regarded the doctrine of changing other people as proof of one's own change as unevangelical. His reaction against the sensational propaganda was sharp.<sup>150</sup> At the same time, he stated that the task for the Christians was not to evaluate the Oxford people, and the important question was not whether to become Oxford or not, but whether to become a Christian or not. Priestly co-operation through one week's work, talk, and

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<sup>146</sup> Copy of Buchman to Ramm 1937, Nov. 9 (Morris Martin Manuscripts Vol. III:103, Tirley). Buchman had trouble of a similar sort with the American edition, see Lean 1985:173. However, *Løsningen* [*The Solution*], translated by Fredrik Ramm, and printed in 1936, is the title of the Norwegian version of Lean & Martin [1936]. Buchman's objections apply to this latter publication as well.

<sup>147</sup> Fjellbu 1938:134, Hestvold 1987:132.

<sup>148</sup> Isene 1990:14 ff. Cf. Heiene 1992:225, who without noting the sources states that Buchman visited a clerical conference ('prestemøte') in Tromsø.

<sup>149</sup> On Berggrav's private impressions, see Heiene 1992:226 f.

<sup>150</sup> Isene 1990:19 f., Berggrav 1935:1, 3 (1935Sw:9, 11), E. Berggrav: 'Oxford-sensasjonen,' TT 1934, Oct. 30, which states that sensation was more dangerous than irony. As the nucleus of Oxford was as strong and sound as it was old and good, there was no need to make it the subject of society sensationalism.

praying in another parish was given priority.<sup>151</sup> His comments on several issues are significant of an ecclesiastical Group revivalism, with quiet time, though without paper and pencil, with faith in guidance, but as a guidance in individual situations, and not as separate revelations, etc.<sup>152</sup> While opposing the unhistorical approach of 'a First Century Christian Fellowship,' he emphasized continuity and growth in Christian life.<sup>153</sup> In his attitude, Berggrav was influenced not only by the Oxford Group in Norway, but by Swiss Group revivalism as well. To the separate Swedish version of his first 'Oxford' article, he added parts of his subsequent article on the Swiss Group Movement in Zurich.

As the Swiss mentality was so much closer to the Norwegian than was the American, Berggrav thought it could be inspiring to get into closer contact with the Swiss Group Movement. Here he met an exponent of the revival groups phase. No international team did start off in Switzerland until September 1935, though a regular Swiss Group work had been carried on since the activities at Zurich and the Ermatingen house-party 1932. Berggrav's report from this rather independent Group work demonstrated one significant Oxford Group principle: the groups were not intended for spiritual pleasure, not for edification, but for expansion. Simultaneously, they told Group members to visit Bible hours in Church, and tried to incorporate them in the congregations. The groups should not be congregations in the congregation, but the salt of the congregation.<sup>154</sup> The Swiss never said that one person had changed another. Change was an act of God, and many people might have been used as instruments of God in advance. They rejected personal, compulsory restitution in the form of telling individuals their former sinful thoughts, words or deeds towards them. Since they had heard from the Netherlands that the Group movement there had come to a standstill, because of their copying the English model, they never used the 'Oxford' label, but called themselves a Group movement. Still, the international teams were useful for their spirit and impulses, and one should not be choosily critical about the Anglican way.<sup>155</sup>

The Swiss influence was strengthened through a sermon on the silence before God, by W. J. Oehler, printed in *Kirke og kultur*, 1935. Oehler's sermon was taken from his collection of sermons on the principles of the Group

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<sup>151</sup> Berggrav 1935:8, 4 (1935Sw:19, 13), Heiene 1992:228.

<sup>152</sup> Berggrav 1935:9 f., 13 f. (1935Sw:20 f., 23, 26 f.). Heiene 1992:228 finds this divided attitude significant of Berggrav, who often combined his dedication with a critical distance.

<sup>153</sup> Berggrav 1935:11, 20 (1935Sw:24, 37). For an 'inside' Oxford Group reaction, see Hegermann 1935, which emphasizes the importance of sin, sharing, quiet time.

<sup>154</sup> Berggrav 1935b:377 f. H. H. Brunner 1986:74 emphasizes the intense Bible work in the 'schweizerische Variante' of Group revivalism: 'Im Zwiegespräch, im Freundeskreis, in Tagungen und Großveranstaltungen ging es so unmittelbar und intensiv um das Verständnis biblischer Texte, daß Erinnerungen an die Reformationszeit wach wurden.'

<sup>155</sup> Berggrav 1935b:379, 381 f. (1935Sw:43).

Movement, *Fruchtbare Schweigen*. Two succeeding books, *Vom "Dicken Ich" und seiner Hingabe* and *Wir Pharisäer*, were widely spread through the publisher Leopold Klotz in Gotha, and advertised as 'Bücher der Gruppenbewegung.' Like some of Oehler's other books, they were translated and influential in Scandinavia. The Reformed minister Wilhelm (Willy) Johannes Oehler was inspired by the Ermatingen house-party 1932, and tried to make Group principles fruitful in the congregational life. His published sermons were written under the influence of this, though not checked by any group or team.<sup>156</sup> He wanted to be loyal to Frank Buchman, and was positive to the growing international Group activities in Switzerland after the visit of the international team in 1935, but his concept was still revivalistic.<sup>157</sup> It is important to mention his influence here, as it was heavy in all the Scandinavian countries, while the Oxford Group historiography has been almost totally quiet about his name and efforts.

A Swiss Group influence of a more Oxfordian stamp directly on the Norwegian campaign was Professor Theo Spoerri's participation in the international team in Oslo in March 1935. Spoerri's emphasis was on the life by the Cross of Christ and in His imitation, a life to get to know together with another person or in smaller groups.<sup>158</sup> At the final meeting, he spoke before about 1,200 people on the new leadership, with examples from Switzerland. Spoerri was unswervingly loyal to the Oxford Group and yet in certain matters independently stubborn.<sup>159</sup> The Dutch influence, too, was heavy, with about 30 Dutch workers in the fellowship during 1934–1935.<sup>160</sup> Both the Swiss and the Dutch participants in a way balanced the Anglo-Saxon influence.

Speaking in Copenhagen during the Oxford Group campaign, March 31,

<sup>156</sup> See the postscript to Oehler 1932 ('Diese Veröffentlichung ist nicht im Schoß und mit der Korrektur einer großen Gruppe entstanden.') and the foreword to Oehler 1935c. Oehler's Reformed views are notable, for example from his emphasis on 'die Königsherrschaft Gottes auf Erden' and 'eine christliche Weltordnung [...] eine Eingliederung der großen Gebiete der Politik, der Wirtschaft und der Erziehung' (Oehler [1936]:7). Klotz' advertised in *Le Seur* 1934<sup>3</sup>, as 'Die Bücher der Gruppenbewegung,' books by Oehler, Spoerri, Laun, Russell, and Shoemaker, as well as *Was ist die Oxford-Gruppe* and *Ermatinger Tagebuch*. Oehler 1932 was translated into Norwegian by R. Fangen, and reviewed in *Norsk Kirkeblad* 1936:135 by Hans Ording as an excellent introduction to the Oxford Movement.

<sup>157</sup> See an interview 'En "orkestermedlem" speler solo – men inte med sordin' (SvM 1936, Oct. 26).

<sup>158</sup> Hestvold 1987:129.

<sup>159</sup> Spoerri 1975:96 ff. [letter from Oslo], 98 f: 'Ich bleibe auch beharrlich bei meiner Meinung, wenn auch das halbe Team mich da zurechtweist, wo ich weiß, daß ich meiner Überzeugung treu bleiben soll. Aber was spielt das für eine Rolle gegenüber dem, daß hier wirklich der lebendige Christus am Werk ist und eine Gemeinschaft schafft, wie ich sie nirgends sonst in der Welt sehe.' See also Fangen 1935:117. For Spoerri's views, see Spoerri 1932, 1934.

<sup>160</sup> Ramm [1937]:4 f.



1935, Bishop Berggrav is supposed to have said that what was now happening in Norway was the biggest spiritual movement since the Reformation. These words have been quoted several times in the Oxford Group propaganda, without evidence. In his biography of Frank Buchman, Garth Lean has clarified this mysterious lack of sources.<sup>161</sup> However, Bishop Berggrav himself admitted having uttering this already in 1936, in answer to a question from Leopold Klotz, and explained it in the following words:

Wir haben tiefgreifende Bewegungen gehabt, aber sie waren mehr an einzelne Orte gebunden und brauchten mehr Zeit, um das Ganze zu durchsäuern. Im letzten Jahre wurde auf einmal das Volk in Bewegung gesetzt. Es war beinahe wie beim Kriegsausbruch: alles wollte Religion, und zwar nicht als Diskussion, sondern existentiell.<sup>162</sup>

Still the fact remains that Berggrav did not repeat his own words in any of his writings on the subject.

Simultaneously with a clerical meeting for the diocese of Hålogaland in Tromsø, August 21–28, 1935, the Oxford Group arranged a party in the very same town. The clerical meeting got an uncommonly personal emphasis, probably with individual testimony. Priests were reconciled across theological differences.<sup>163</sup>

As early as in December 1935, Berggrav wrote in a private letter that he was not a 100% Oxfordian, and that the percentage was decreasing rather than increasing.<sup>164</sup> In his New Year article in *Kirke og kultur* 1936, he gave a seven point summary of what had happened in Norway during 1935:

1. The atmosphere was new. From being just a possibility, God had become a reality;
2. God's name had been pronounced, not in a new way, but by new men;
3. The unpersonal and secret religious question had turned open and personal;
4. Religion had become a common matter, not just a private one;
5. The fellowship in sin and the victorious Christ;
6. God was no longer the God of specialists, but of everyone, in private, daily life;
7. The changed world-view, with the possibilities of a world change through Christ.<sup>165</sup>

Berggrav summed up the obstacles as well:

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<sup>161</sup> Lean 1985:223. The sentence was omitted from the account of Berggrav's speech in KD 1935, Apr. 2, but is included in contemporary typescripts and was referred to during a meeting later in the day by Kenaston Twitchell, reported in the same article.

<sup>162</sup> Die Kirche von Norwegen 1936:12.

<sup>163</sup> See Isene 1990:27 f., Heiene 1992:228 f.

<sup>164</sup> Isene 1990:34.

<sup>165</sup> Berggrav 1936:1 ff.

1. Not criticism from the others, but the selfishness of the Christians towards their critics;
2. The pleasure of criticizing other Christian groups or individuals instead of loving criticism;
3. There was a need for an active ambulance in the wake of Oxford, but not for a passive company, crying for sanity;
4. The catching of souls for ourselves, our church, association or group;
5. The stating of the human Oxford method as the only, true Christian method, and the Oxford Group's aversion to discussion, with its risk for sectarianism. Confidence would grow in open conversation on guidance, sharing, the basis for salvation, on the use of God's name etc;
6. The greatest obstacle was standing up against the Spirit of God. Oxford was an exponent of the urgent message of God. The question was whether we wanted to walk with God, guided by God.<sup>166</sup>

The change from Berggrav's 'Oxford' article in 1935 to the one in 1936 did not mean a change of opinion regarding the Oxford Group, but he had now seen the work from the inside, experiencing it in his own sons. His views were broader and his concerns deeper. He clearly saw the Oxford Group as an instrument in God's hand, but as one instrument among others.<sup>167</sup> In a review of Sven Stolpe's confessional book, 1937, Berggrav still criticized subjective guidance when used as a foundation, pointing out the fact that man may become so subjectively seized by cramps, that he was not able to grasp the objective, what God *had done*. This was a sad experience in all revival movements. He agreed with the idea of the Christian fellowship as a fellowship of sinners, and with the necessary identification with others as sinners, but

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<sup>166</sup> Berggrav 1936:4 ff.

<sup>167</sup> See also Berggrav to M. Björkquist 1935, Dec. 27 (SIB; 'Oxford passer for oss i samme mon som vi ikke er slaviske overfor metodene, men forholder oss som de fri Guds barn Luther har hjulpet oss til å bli i denslags'). Cf. Stolpe 1942:74 f., who finds changed signals in Berggrav 1936, in which Berggrav describes his way as approaching the Oxford Group until he one day stood up and as his own took up its catchwords his own. After the changes of his own sons, Berggrav was, according to Stolpe, p.76, a loyal friend and supporter of the Oxford Group. Stolpe wrongly dates the testimony of Øivind Berggrav at Haslev in Denmark at Easter 1934 instead of 1935, and he does not explain why E. Berggrav should be a loyal friend and supporter because of the changes of his sons (1935) while at the same time partly repudiating (p.74), and still approaching the Group up until 1938 or 1939. Isene 1990:48 notes that Stolpe's dating to 1934 is impossible, as Stolpe also states that the conversion took place after the publication of Berggrav 1936 (January). In a letter 1935, Oct. 9, Berggrav mentions the connection of his son with the Oxford Group since August 1935. Isene's conclusion is that Stolpe meant Easter 1935, and that he simultaneously had stated that Ø. Berggrav's conversion took place after the publication of Berggrav 1936. Heiene 1992:229 states 1935. The whole portrait of Berggrav in Stolpe 1942 is propagandistic and, if not untrue, yet very one-sided. See also Ludlow 1971:225, who quotes Berggrav to Kr. Andersen 1936, Feb.1, that he could not force himself to take a definite stand, as he did not have any.

opposed Stolpe's way of speaking of this fellowship as *based* on sin. The centre of sharing was not men, but God, and St. Paul would have said: 'justified only' rather than 'sinners only'.<sup>168</sup> Berggrav further demonstrated the use of the completed act of Christ outside oneself, and emphasized forgiveness and justification instead of selfishly asking oneself if the confession/sharing had been deep or honest enough. He ended with a defence of discipline, structure and order in practical, Christian life.<sup>169</sup>

It is an undeniable fact, that Eivind Berggrav never identified himself with the Group. The reason has been found in the methods of the Oxford Group.<sup>170</sup> Berggrav himself explained his attitude in a letter to Arvid Runestam in February 1938. He was not able to identify himself with the Group, and hardly with the Church, as he found it impossible for a Christian to identify himself with any human arrangements or methods. A Christian could be loyal to Christ, as He had made himself loyal to men. Other loyalties had to be merely relative. Still, Berggrav could not identify himself with 'Oxford' even in a relative way, first because it would keep him from being 'a Jew among Jews and a Greek among Greeks,' which was especially important for a Bishop, though he was loyal to the *Christian* [message or way of life] of Oxford and felt himself in full fellowship with it. Secondly he could not identify himself with such a vague concept as 'Oxford' was and should be. The foreign methods were from several aspects unevangelic, and in Norway, the authenticity had grown since the departure of the foreigners, while the efficiency was still fully maintained. The Group as well as individuals could easily confuse the absolute obedience and surrender to God with obedience to the Group.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Berggrav 1937:262 ff.

<sup>169</sup> Berggrav 1937:265 ff.

<sup>170</sup> See, for example, Austad 1974:50, who states that Berggrav did not identify himself with the Group since he found its methods unevangelic. Further Christensen 1961:451 on the critical attitude by the Church and the lay movements towards the methods of the Oxford Group.

<sup>171</sup> Berggrav to A. Runestam 1938, Feb. 22 (Runestam Coll. I): 'Jeg "kan ikke" identifisere mig med gruppen. Strengt tatt kan jeg heller ikke identifisere mig med kirken. Det er ikke for en kristen mulig å identifisere sig med menneskelige anordninger eller metoder. Vi er som kristne solidariske med Kristus, fordi han har gjort sig solidarisk med oss. All annan solidaritet må bli relativ. Når jeg ikke heller relativt kan identifisere mig med Oxford, så er det av to grunner: 1. Det vilde skille mig fra den gjerning for Kristus som beror på at jeg er "jøde en jøde og greker en greker". [...] Men jeg er i høi grad solidarisk med *det kristne* i oxford og kjenner mig fullstendig i fellesskap med den. [...] Et særlig moment kommer til for en biskop. [...] Vi plikter for evangeliets skyld å ta hensyn til dette *billede* av oss som danner sig hos folk, vel å marke bare i den utstrekning som det kan bli et stenge på vår vei till menneskene med frelsesbudskapet. 2. For det annet kan jeg ikke *identifisere* med oxford fordi oxford eller gruppen er et uklart begrep og skal være det. De uten landske metoder er dessuten i flere henseender uevangeliske. Her i Norge er det blitt en langt større ekthet i det hele efter at det utenlandske blev avstrefet, og effektiviteten er like fullt bevaret. [...] Gruppen har en menneskelig

It is likely that Eivind Berggrav in his attitude to the Oxford Group – positive to the Group itself as an instrument of God, but negative to some of its doctrines and methods – is representative of a great deal of the Norwegian clergy. He was obviously inspired by the Oxford Group, but did himself inspire the Group as well. In spite of the fact that this was recognized by Sven Stolpe as early as in 1941,<sup>172</sup> it has often been hidden behind the propagandistic use of all possible signs of Oxford inspiration in Berggrav. The mutual inspiration is most clearly recognizable in Berggrav's work for international reconciliation in 1939 – dealt with further on – and in the stronger emphasis on democracy in the Oxford Group during the following years.

### *III.3.6. The Influence on Congregational Life*

The spiritual influence of Group revivalism on congregational life in the Norwegian Church is hard to separate from other spiritual influences in the 1930s. However, it is undeniable that in many parishes in Norway, Group revivalism meant a renewal of ordinary congregational life, visible in increased Church attendance, as well as in the rising number of communicants and participants in Bible hours. The total number of those identifying themselves with the Oxford Group, in active co-operation with the central team, has been estimated to be hardly over 2,000. They formed an exclusive circle, with intellectual leaders, and English-speaking fulltime workers. But several thousands more admitted being inspired by the Oxford Group and tried to put it into practice in congregational life. Several others had been converted or renewed through Group revivalism, and found their place in the churches and denominations without any remaining 'Oxford' mark.<sup>173</sup>

Arne Fjellbu recalls that several hundred gathered for Bible hours in the Cathedral of Trondhjem – most of them completely new to Church life.<sup>174</sup> They found that the work in an 'Oxford' team was not enough for a continuing

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tilbøielighet til å sluke oss, råde over oss. I mange deler er dette en ubevisst forveksling med kravet om absolutt lydighet. Vi kan selv fristes til å kjenne den tilfredsstillende å prestere full lydighet (overgivelse) mot Gud *derigjennem* at vi her bringer det offer å være lydige mot gruppen.' The reverse position (total loyalty both to Church and Moral Re-Armament) was later taken by the Swedish Bishop Bengt Jonzon (see Jonzon 1951:55).

<sup>172</sup> Stolpe 1941:225 – 'hela hans gärning går i grupprörelsens anda – eller grupprörelsens arbetar, om man så vill, i hans.' Cf. the more propagandistic views in Stolpe 1942:84 'hur exakt Berggrav här upptar Oxfordgruppens tankar.'

<sup>173</sup> Editorials 'Tanker ved årsskiftet' (Norsk Kirkeblad 1937:2), 'Ved nyttår' (Norsk Kirkeblad 1938:1), Hestvold 1987:132 f.

<sup>174</sup> Fjellbu 1960:185. See also, for example, Dagen 1936, Jan. 16 Søndagstillegg 'Oxford og kirken,' with several testimonies of how the Church had become important to people through Oxford; O. Kopreitan: 'Oxfordgruppen og gudstjenesten' (Dagen 1936, Feb. 14).

Christian life, and became active in the congregational life around Word and Sacrament.<sup>175</sup> To the congregations, these newly awakened people, privately practising the Oxford Group way of life, meant a reviving inspiration. But when they wanted to introduce practices as sharing and guidance into congregational life, this was not commonly accepted. Thus, the message of the Oxford Group was separated from its methods, and the result was a sacramental Group revivalism in many congregations.<sup>176</sup> In the parish of Frogner in Oslo, the total number of communicants rose from 2,019 (1933), to 2,357, 3,099, 5,498, and 8,017 (1937) in the following years, while the population increased at a much slower rate, from 23,091 in 1933 to 26,910 in 1938. Then the number of communicants alternately rose and fell 1938–1941, reaching its height of 8,446 in 1942.<sup>177</sup> Other Oslo parishes influenced by Group revivalism were Uranienborg, Fagerborg, Majorstua, Ullern, and Riis, and to a lesser extent also Markus and Nordstrand.<sup>178</sup>

In Fagerborg, special parish groups were formed, with the aim of uniting people active in the congregation, in the Home Mission, and in the Oxford Group. Egil Brekke found that the position of Oxford in relation to Church and congregation had grown more unclear, the Oxford people consolidating and limiting themselves to their own group meetings. The instruction to the so-called Fagerborg groups stated that these groups were built on the foundation of the Word of God and the Confession of the Norwegian Church, with the task – under the guidance of God – to win people for decided, confessing Christian faith, and to help them to become more active workers in the congregation. The groups met once a week, led by their members in rotation. Fellow meetings were held in Church, sometimes with Holy Communion, as well as public meetings. Non-parishioners were welcomed. The main points were repentance, confession, fellowship, prayer, and the Bible.<sup>179</sup> In October 1937, 15 groups were active, the first one since October 1935. They had about 115 regular members, and some more occasional ones. Fifteen house-meetings were held each week. Brekke reported that these Church groups were criticized by some Oxfordians, who claimed that the Oxford Group was the renewal of

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<sup>175</sup> Fjellbu 1960:185.

<sup>176</sup> Johnson 1971:96.

<sup>177</sup> Brekke [1948]:47, who further notes (pp.27, 22) that in connection with the Oxford Movement, a revival was going on in the parish from 1934, culminating with the house-party in January 1937.

<sup>178</sup> Hestvold 1987:156.

<sup>179</sup> Egil Brekke: 'Menighetsgrupper' (Dagen 1936, March 12, 13): '*Retningslinjer for Fagerborggruppene*. 1. Fagerborggruppene, som bygger på Guds ords og vår kirkes bekjennelses grunn, har til oppgave under Guds ånds ledelse å søke å vinne mennesker for avgjort, bekjennende kristendom, og hjelpe dem til å bli aktive menighetsarbeidere.' Oftestad 1981:248, describes these groups as 'formet av Oxfordfromhet, men siktet mot menighetens vekst.' This combination of a spiritual inspiration by the Oxford Group and the aim of congregational growth is significant to Church Group revivalism.

the true religion of the New Testament, in reality the only true Christian religion. Those not identifying themselves with Oxford were regarded as living outside the Christian fellowship. Instead, Brekke referred to Frank Raynor, Leslie Weatherhead, and British Group revivalism independent of the Oxford Group.<sup>180</sup> In his letters to Professor Eelis Gulin in Helsinki, Brekke declared that though he had received much good through the Group movement, he could not identify himself with that movement. The Parish groups were not entirely accepted by the Oxford people. The 100% Oxford mentality among parts of the Norwegian clergy created a borderline, while Brekke saw his task as creating a Christian fellowship between Oxford priests and Christian priests of other sorts. He could feel spiritually at home only where this task was recognized and practised.<sup>181</sup>

In June 1938, a joint Danish-Norwegian clerical meeting was arranged at Knattholmen near Sandefjord. Advertised speakers were Berggrav, Fangen, Høgsbro, and Sigmund Mowinckel. According to the invitations, the meeting was arranged in order to deal with personal problems, the work among modern men, the tasks among the congregation, and personal deepening, without mentioning either a national or a world revolution. Berggrav wrote to Arvid Runestam that the meeting aimed not at being orthodoxfordian, but at using all the positive things learnt from the Group.<sup>182</sup> We may call it significant of Church Group revivalism – either independent or in full fellowship with the Oxford Group.

Johannes Smidt, the future Bishop of Agder, described the situation in Ullern as Bible hours coming to new life, 'Oxford meetings' starting in the churches, and drawing full congregations for two years, as well as team meetings. A house-party, October 22–25, 1936 had 180 participants. After the party, those who reached a personal breakthrough gathered for private meetings, for Bible hours and for a 'mønstringsmøte' in the Parish house, a week after their surrender.<sup>183</sup>

In the diocese of Oslo, the total number of communicants rose from 101,791 (1933), to 114,818, 124,846, 134,222, 137,699, 143,604, and 145,037 (1939).<sup>184</sup> In the northern diocese of Hålogaland, the number of communicants rose from 30,042 (1933) to 34,494 (1934), dropped to 34,063 (1935), and rose again to 34,865 (1936) and 36,753 (1939).<sup>185</sup> In other dioceses, the increase was slower (Hamar, Agder, Nidaros), and in the diocese of Stavanger, the number of communicants fell from 27,824 (1934) to 26,091 (1935), then slowly rose to

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<sup>180</sup> Egil Brekke: 'Oxfordgrupper og menighetsgrupper' (Dagen 1937, Oct. 27, 28).

<sup>181</sup> E. Brekke to E. Gulin 1937, Apr. 30, Sept. 25 (RAH): 'å skape kristensamfund mellem oxfordprester og kristne prester av andre typer.'

<sup>182</sup> Innbydelse til samvær av danske og norske prester på Knattholmen ved Sandefjord 14.–18. Juni 1938. Berggrav to Runestam 1938, Feb. 22 (Runestam Coll.I).

<sup>183</sup> Det hender idag 1936:24 ff. (also Norborg 1962:162).

<sup>184</sup> Beretninger om den Norske Kirke i 1937:109, 1938:96, 1939:163.

<sup>185</sup> Beretninger om den Norske Kirke i 1937:163, 1939:201.

32,301 (1939).<sup>186</sup> Only in the diocese of Bjørgvin the numbers fell every year, from 85,376 (1934) to 77,897 (1937), rising to 79,848 (1938), then dropping back to 78,216 (1939).<sup>187</sup> Obviously, these figures are not unambiguous. The unusual increase of communicants in Oslo was – at least in some parishes – heavily dependent on Group revivalism. Still we must note that the increase in the diocese had been higher still from 1928 to 1934 (from 74,655 to 114,818), than it was during the Oxford Group years.<sup>188</sup>

Fjellbu stated that the influence of the Oxford Group was much broader than the influence of its active participants, as almost every priest in the country had received strong impulses, especially for a more personal and testifying preaching.<sup>189</sup> In the autumn 1938, Johannes Smemo's book on preaching raised the question whether the time of preaching had passed. In some reviews, the Oxford Group was blamed for having neglected preaching. Ronald Fangen answered that the Group movement had rather contributed to the creation of a boom for preaching. The possible difference was that the Group put more positive value of soul-cure than Smemo's book.<sup>190</sup> We may well conclude that the Oxford Group as such hardly created a boom for preaching, but that the clergy influenced by the Group preached in a way that supplied the needs of the newly converted, and thus did create something of a boom. For example, Fangen's own discourses on St. Paul were given before three crowded houses in Oslo, and subsequently in Stavanger and Bergen, indicating and contributing to a higher interest in preaching.<sup>191</sup> However, a man like Fangen influenced the opinion even in a sacramental direction by asking for more frequent celebration of Holy Communion, and stating that only a sacramental Church was a Church.<sup>192</sup>

The Oxford Group leaders were obviously puzzled about how to handle this situation. Either they had to deny the broad, positive influence on Norwegian spiritual life, stating that only those in working fellowship with the Oxford

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<sup>186</sup> Beretninger om den Norske Kirke i 1934:65, 69, 87, 1935:79, 85, 89, 109, 1936:119, 123, 143, 1937:120, 125, 129, 149, 1938:102, 107, 115, 129, 1939:168 (–2,409 in the diocese of Hamar), 173, 179, 195.

<sup>187</sup> Beretninger om den Norske Kirke i 1934:78, 1935:99, 1936:134, 1937:140, 1938:124, 1939:187.

<sup>188</sup> Beretninger om den Norske Kirke i 1938:96.

<sup>189</sup> Fjellbu 1936:560. See also Fangen 1939, a collection of 'Nordic sermons' in which Oxford Group men like Paul Brodersen and Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard, and more independent Group revivalists like Fangen and Halfdan Høgsbro, are mixed with preachers of different characters, such as Alf Ahlberg, Manfred Björkquist, Erling Eidem, Karl Larsson, Sven Lidman, Lyder Brun, Ludvig Hope, Einar Molland, Christian Bartholdy, and Regin Prenter.

<sup>190</sup> R. Fangen: 'Er prekenens tid forbi?' (TT 1938, Dec. 27, 28).

<sup>191</sup> On Fangen's discourses, E. Wikborg to H. Blomberg 1936, Nov. 17 (UUB); further Fangen 1936b.

<sup>192</sup> R. Fangen: 'De nadverdløse kirker' (Dagen 1939, Nov. 11).

Group had got the message in its 'correct' form, or they had to classify the positive men who surrendered to God but not to the Oxford Group as their fellow workers. Here, the propagandistic use dominated, together with the opinion that a 'key person' could work for the Oxford Group without working in it, for example, when Sven Stolpe described Arne Fjellbu as 'one of the strongest and most reliable forces in the Norwegian Oxford Group.'<sup>193</sup>

### *III.3.7. Work for a Moral Rearmament, 1938-1940*

During the last years of the 1930s, the revivalistic wave weakened in Norway. The spiritual openness ceased at least partly, and the rush to Bible hours was over. The atmosphere became darker and thinner.<sup>194</sup> The Oxford Group work got a political emphasis, particularly on rescuing peace.<sup>195</sup> In February 1938, a new journal, *Norges Vel. Organ for en kristelig norsk folkereising*, was published in Oslo. The plan was for it to come out twice every month, but only one issue did appear. *Norges Vel* had a heavy national emphasis, and stressed the need for a nation ruled by God, as well as for people ruled by God in a world ruled by God. The war risk, the possibilities of world-change through personal change, and the sermon preached by Bishop Berggrav at the service after the opening of the Parliament, were the main subjects.

The strategy for a moral rearmament was not well prepared in Norway. In *Kristendommen og vår tid* (1938), Ronald Fangen warned of the moralistic, exalted talk of a moral rearmament, and of the high moral standards of Nazi Germany as surpassing the standards of the democratic states.<sup>196</sup> The M.R.A. campaign in Oslo in the autumn 1938, with a peak on October 30 and big parallel meetings in Det Ny Teater, Det Norske Teatret, and the rooms of the Handelsstand, was reported as a great success,<sup>197</sup> and 3,000 people gathered in the Mission Hall in Calmeyergaten, but the special M.R.A. supplement of *Morgenbladet*, November 1, emphasized that four years had passed since the

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<sup>193</sup> Stolpe 1942:109. Cfr. Fjellbu 1936:561 f., who is positive, although he warns of the danger of sectarianism, 1960; further Bishop Aulén's preface to Stolpe 1942, in which he notes the Oxford Group identity of Fangen and Ramm, though omitting any Oxford connection with Berggrav and Fjellbu.

<sup>194</sup> Seierstad 1939:121.

<sup>195</sup> Johnson 1971:79.

<sup>196</sup> Fangen 1938b:63.

<sup>197</sup> On the plans of Swedish participants, see S. Stolpe to 'Vänner och bröder!' 1938, Oct. 3 (Okat.saml.H.Blomberg, UUB), on the result, copy of S. Linton to Morris Martin 1938, Nov. 2 (DWC): 'I stayed here, but John M[orrison], Andrew [Strang], David [Grimshaw], Richard P[etersen] and four Uppsala lads went over for it, as well as Harry B[lomberg], the Malmbergs and Karin Stolpe, and three Finns.' According to newspaper reports, 2,000 out of 4,500 invited people came to the parallel meetings in Oslo. See also 'Oxford rykker inn på teatrene' (Dagen 1938, Oct. 31).



arrival of the Oxford Group in Norway, rather than the vision and strategy of Moral Re-Armament. On November 19–20, about 300 took part in a houseparty in Oslo.<sup>198</sup> However, these appeals were soon silenced by other voices: on November 6, Oslo saw the most severe fire catastrophe in Norway in the last hundred years. Two days later, all hotels and restaurants in Oslo were closed by a strike, on November 10 the Crystal Night in Germany occupied the front pages, and on November 20 Queen Maud died, and much publicity was given to her memory, the funeral, etc.<sup>199</sup>

When it was decided, at a meeting at the Lodge, November 19, to issue an academical protest against the German persecution of the Jews, a public debate followed on Sigmund Mowinckel's refusal to address the protest to Germany or even mention that country. Mowinckel answered that his proposal had been to change the protest against the persecution to an act in favor of those persecuted, with emphasis on personal disposition.<sup>200</sup> On February 3, 1939, Sven Stolpe gained much publicity for a discourse with a subsequent discussion at Studentersamfundet in Bergen. Stolpe warned of a Nazi revolution in the Nordic countries if 'we are not being life-changed.' He contrasted the new, Christian man to the uninteresting Christian Church. The Church needed a revolution, but Stolpe and his fellows preferred to work positively. Together with Howard Blake, Edward Goulding, John Morrison, Krista Petersen, Gudrun Egebjerg, and the Norwegians Fangen, Wikborg, and Bugge, Stolpe had visited Kristiansand, Klekkefjord, Egersund, Sandnes, Stavanger, Haugesund, and Bergen, meeting teams with hundreds of people in all these towns (!).<sup>201</sup> He returned to Stavanger and Bergen in March,<sup>202</sup> and then to Oslo for the Nordic Student Meeting at Midsummer 1939. Meanwhile, a houseparty for businessmen was held in Oslo, February 11–12, dealing with the question of employment. Taking part were businessmen from the Nordic countries, such as Alfred Nielsen (Silkeborg), John Erikson (Borås), and Hugo Sandbakka (Tampere), with Howard Blake as executor.<sup>203</sup> In the summer 1939, a girl's camp was arranged at Nysetra, which emphasized the rebuilding of a

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<sup>198</sup> 'Moralsk Oprustning,' *Morgenbladet* 1938, Nov. 1. In Calmeyergaten, Randulf Haslund led the meeting, with Harry Blomberg, and two students from Uppsala, Harald Lindström, and Jan Westerberg, among the speakers. Oxfordgruppen innbyr herved... til et houseparty i Oslo, lørdag 19. og sønd. 20. november 1938.

<sup>199</sup> TT 1938, Nov. 7, 9, 11, 21, etc.

<sup>200</sup> TT 1938, Nov. 21 ('Protest mot jødeforfølgelsene'), Nov. 23 (S. Mowinckel, 'Protesten mot jødeforfølgelsene'). In November 1942, Mowinckel signed the common Christian protest against the persecution of the Jews (see Austad 1986).

<sup>201</sup> *Bergens Arbejderblad* 1939, Feb. 4 'Sven Stolpe om falske og ekte demokrater'; *Bergens Tidende* 1939, Feb. 4 'Sven Stolpe spår nazirevolusjon i Norden – dersom vi ikke blir livsforvandlet'; *Dagen* 1939, Feb. 4 'Demokratiets maskerade.' Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1939, Jan. 20, Feb. 2 (UUB); E. Wikborg to Blomberg 1939, Jan. 25 (UUB).

<sup>202</sup> Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1939, March 26 (UUB), dated 'Stavanger-Bergen.'

<sup>203</sup> *Dagen* 1939, Feb. 14 'Forretningsmenn går inn for moralsk oprustning'.

new Nordic North under the guidance of God.<sup>204</sup>

During spring and summer 1939, a Nordic team visited the United States, together with Frank Buchman and his fellow workers. A team of forty-three left Oslo by boat on March 25, several others (to a total number of sixty-two) followed. Most of them stayed until August 22.<sup>205</sup> The purpose of this campaign was partly the manifestation towards the outside, partly the training of a team for future tasks. According to 'official' reports, the Nordic team was effective especially in industry and among the workers, with Swedish workers speaking about the road to industrial peace, and Sven Stolpe about the new type of man and the new culture. The journey meant a thorough training of the team, which felt at one with the team of the whole world. They learned how to start a national campaign which included the leaders of the country, and making them responsible for the moral rearmament of the people through a personal and loving attitude, thus being changed in action.<sup>206</sup> Another version was presented in private reports by Sven Stolpe, who stated that the Swedish team was weak, the Norwegian still weaker. The result was that Buchman did not dare to use the Scandinavian team in full. Of those from the Nordic countries, only Stolpe was allowed to speak at the meeting in Madison Square Garden on May 14, which was attended by 14,000 people. At a big meeting for Scandinavians in St. George's hotel, the appearance of a couple of stuttering girls in national costume made Buchman exclude all Scandinavian speakers. While the Swedish team was too weak to be used in the Swedish-American areas, Buchman was grateful for the work of Kaisu Snellman, the Dalecarlians, Erkki Vuoristo, Sven and Karin Stolpe, and Birger Holm-Hansen (Oslo) in teams in Washington, New York, and Toronto.<sup>207</sup> Later in the summer, Frank Buchman had questioned all the Scandinavians, and found out what everyone had to do and needed to do in order to keep them in America until October.<sup>208</sup>

In August, the Swedish team visited Oslo together with some of the leading Britons, for example Garth Lean, for the Interparliamentary Congress, where 105 members representing 21 Parliaments signed a call for Moral Re-

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<sup>204</sup> Nysetra sommeren 1939 (dupl., EPC).

<sup>205</sup> See Appendix Nr. 1, Moral Re-armament in Scandinavia since the outbreak of war (dupl., Caux Archives). Among the subsequent participants were Dean Brodersen of Copenhagen.

<sup>206</sup> 'Det svenska teamets insatser i andra länder' (EPC). A retrospective, personal view is presented in Grönroos 1971:220 ff.

<sup>207</sup> Lean 1985:284 ff., Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1939, May 19 (UUB). Cf. 'Det svenska teamets insatser i andra länder' (EPC): 'Under tiden i Minnesota fick vi själva ta ansvar för att nå in i en stad och en stat och arbeta samman med ledarna på alla områden.' On the Finnish team, see Ekstrand 1993:168.

<sup>208</sup> Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1939, Aug. 18 (UUB). This was reported to Stolpe by Edward Goulding. A translation of Harry S. Truman's speech in the Senate on the national meeting for Moral Re-Armament in Washington June 4, was translated directly from the Congressional record (Amerikas förenta stater... 1939).

Armament through Parliaments. At a subsequent conference, about 200 Oxford Group men from the Nordic countries gathered to confer on the situation.<sup>209</sup> In the 'Listening to God'-action, December 1–3, the women's organizations were mobilized. Ten to twelve of the leading women in Norway were assembled, together with a few from the Group, and an executive committee was formed by the presidents of four organizations and Nina Prytz from the Group. The immediate result was a meeting in the Home Mission Hall in Calmeyergaten together with a march of 2,000 women for peace and reconciliation between nations, as well as study circles in the female organizations all over the country.<sup>210</sup>

In the higher schools in Norway, the educational function had been demonstratively denied in favour of the purely teaching one.<sup>211</sup> An appeal by teachers to the Norwegian people, inspired by the similar Swedish manifest, and signed by 5,000 teachers, was of importance in creating an atmosphere of spiritual preparedness before the German occupation and the coercive measures taken against school teachers.<sup>212</sup> Meetings on education were arranged at Garv February 10–11, and in Kristianstad February 17–18, 1940. A new educational direction was sought by the principal of the Lærerskole, Håkan Wergeland, who emphasized the need for an orientation towards the absolute.<sup>213</sup>

Among the critical books published in Norway in these years was a translation of Marjorie Harrison's *Saints Run Mad* with a preface by the Bishop of Durham, which in its turn was criticized by Sigmund Mowinckel in *Kirke og kultur*. Danish Home Barthian criticism was spread in Norway through P. G. Lindhardt's article on Gospel or experience in *Norsk Kirkeblad* 1936. Radical criticism came from Kristian Schjelderup in *Fritt Ord* 1938, who compared Frank Buchman to Martin Niemöller as the banquet guest and the martyr of the Church, respectively. Critical towards the talk of a Christian world revolution, Schjelderup was most upset about Buchman's silence, and the fact that he did not protest against the war, the race hatred, the persecution of the Jews, etc., and warned against the Christian drawing-room religion, while stating that the Christian faith shows its power and truth in its preparedness to suffer for truth.<sup>214</sup> It is obvious that Schjelderup judged the Oxford Group only by its public display, without considering its personalistic attitude in social matters. Strained relations between radical theologians and the Oxford Group became obvious also in a debate in spring 1939, in which the vicar Peder

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<sup>209</sup> Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1939, Aug. 18 (UUB), Blomberg to J. Hemmer 1939, Oct. 3 (ÅAB), World Strategy (EPC).

<sup>210</sup> Översättning av norskt teambrev 'Oslo den 15/2 1940. Kära vän!' (EPC).

<sup>211</sup> See Dale 1982:86.

<sup>212</sup> Fraenki 1979:31.

<sup>213</sup> Översättning av norskt teambrev 'Oslo den 15/2 1940. Kära vän!' (EPC). 'Trenger vi en pedagogisk nyorientering?' (Aftenposten 1940, Feb. 19).

<sup>214</sup> Schjelderup 1938:165 f. As early as in 1934, Schjelderup published in *Fritt Ord* some critical observations by the British psychologist William Brown.

Christensen attacked the Group for its alleged attack on the Humanistic Academy of Schjelderup and Dr. Anders Wyller. Ronald Fangen denied the accusations, but the debate continued for some weeks.<sup>215</sup> Gordon Johnsen attacked the M.R.A. programme, since he found that the Biblical vision was that this earth should not be changed, and that the way to liberation went through suffering and persecution, with eternal service as its goal.<sup>216</sup>

The political effects of the work for a moral rearmament in Norway were small. The cultural effects of the Oxford Group were probably greater, notable especially in the preparedness for the widespread moral resistance during the war, and in the commonly accepted central position taken by the Church in this resistance work. However, the change was not total, and the talk of a united Church frontier as a result of the Oxford Group work in Norway does not explain the facts that Professor Hallesby in 1937 – i. e. after the most intense Oxford Group years – refused to welcome Bishop Berggrav to the see of Oslo until he had reassumed his former liberal positions, while in 1939 – after a few years of less intense Oxford Group influence in the country – he together with Berggrav signed an appeal to the Christians in Norway for fearlessness and prayer.<sup>217</sup>

### III.4. The Isolation Phase

#### *III.4.1. The Oxford Group, Bishop Berggrav, and National Reconciliation*

In his confessional book of 1936, Sven Stolpe had written about Sweden's task to work for the reconciliation of peoples and for peace, but the first active Scandinavian Oxford Group reconciler was Fredrik Ramm, who confessed – in Danish radio, in January 1935 – his own journalistic sins in agitating against Denmark in the struggle about the fishing rights around Greenland.<sup>218</sup> In July 1938, the question was raised by Oxford Group people in Scandinavia, whether

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<sup>215</sup> P. Christensen: 'Den bleke humanisme,' TT 1939, March 28; R. Fangen: 'Humanist-akademiet og gruppe-bevegelsen,' TT 1939, March 31.

<sup>216</sup> Johnsen 1940:112.

<sup>217</sup> Wisløff 1971:413, 423. Christensen 1961:451 states in an evenhanded way that the Oxford Group was of a certain importance for the relaxation of tensions in Norwegian religious life, and smoothed the way for the cooperation between religious movements during the years of occupation.

<sup>218</sup> Stolpe 1936:118, Lean 1985:224 f. The Scandinavians were almost pioneers for an active peace work in the Oxford Group. The booklet *The Drums of peace* was not published until 1936!

the Nordic countries could become the reconciler of peoples,<sup>219</sup> and at the Nordic house-party at Visby in August, this was presented as the theme. Both in *Tider skal komme*, and in *Kan Norden bli folkförsonaren?* the importance of the spiritual Oslo Front was emphasized. The Oxford Group had long before this tried to make a strategical use of the Oslo States or the Oslo Alliance.<sup>220</sup> In 1937, J. L. Mowinckel, the Norwegian father of the Oslo Convention, had welcomed the idea of a spiritual Convention of Oslo.<sup>221</sup> On July 23, the foreign ministers of the Oslo States met in Copenhagen, discussing the general political situation and attitudes to the League of Nations, the question of disarmament, the refugee problem and the problem of the Jewish consuls in Germany, and finally the industrial and trade interests of the seven states in Spain.<sup>222</sup> The Oxford Group articles on reconciliation of the peoples did not treat the political problems in detail, but dealt with the minority question, the responsibilities of democracy, the need for a moral renewal, and, what Fredrik Ramm called the imperialism of the Oslo States, i.e. the expansion taking place within the borders of each single state through drainage, reclaimed land, rebuilt homes, etc. The example and the task of the Nordic North was emphasized, also in the spiritual building of new homes, in a new spirit represented by changed men.<sup>223</sup>

At a party in Hurdals Verk September 15–25, 1939, 200 leaders from Scandinavia met to plan further activities, and to advance their programme of ‘The North, Reconcilers of the Nations.’ A telegram was sent to each of the four Prime Ministers simultaneously meeting in Copenhagen, which emphasized the purpose ‘through Moral Re-Armament to make Scandinavia the reconciler of the nations,’ and supported the governments in their peacemaking efforts. During the meeting, the Danish historian C. P. O. Christiansen gave a lecture on the Greenland question. It led to a joint statement from the Danes and Norwegians present, that ‘if Scandinavia is to fulfil its task as reconciler of the nations in the world, then every disagreement between the countries of

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<sup>219</sup> *Kan Norden bli folkförsonaren?* 1938, collected articles from *Stockholms-Tidningen*, *Berlingske Tidende*, *Nationaltidende*, and *Tidens Tegn*, by S. Stolpe, Gudrun Egebjerg, P. Brodersen, and Fr. Ramm, as well as statements by the Dutch Foreign Minister Patijn, the Norwegian President of the Parliament Hambro, Finland’s Foreign Minister Holsti, and Prime Minister Spaak from Belgium.

<sup>220</sup> Consisting of Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. See further Ch. II.1.6.

<sup>221</sup> Van Roon 1989:264. Mowinckel’s letter was reprinted in *Vänd strömmen*. Cf. Lean 1985:268, that ‘some of the politicians who had been influenced by Buchman were among those who created an organisation called “the Oslo States”.’ According to van Roon 1989:11 f., the first agreement of the Oslo Convention was signed as early as December 22, 1930, without any inspiration by Buchman. But the cooperation between the Oslo States in the political field was intensified and broadened from 1937, see van Roon 1989 Ch. VIII.

<sup>222</sup> Van Roon 1989:234.

<sup>223</sup> *Kan Norden bli folkförsonaren?* 1938: 10 (Ramm), Ramm [1937]:21 f. and *passim*.

Scandinavia must be cleared out of the way in the spirit of mutual understanding,' and an appeal to the two countries to take up the work of solving the Greenland question. To avoid suspiciousness and not to cause bad blood, the British full-time workers had to keep themselves as strictly as possible out of the way.<sup>224</sup>

After the Munich agreement, Bishop Berggrav wrote an article for *Tidens Tegn*, but on the advice of Ronald Fangen he decided to leave it unpublished. Contrary to some Oxford Group men, for example Sven Stolpe, Berggrav could not regard Neville Chamberlain as the saviour of peace. In his unpublished article, he regarded Chamberlain as a Pilate, and Hitler as a Barabas.<sup>225</sup> But from the latter half of 1938 until April 1940, Bishop Berggrav tried to form a front of peace and reconciliation. He received many messages of support and sympathy. Church leaders from the four Nordic countries met in Oslo in November 1939, and declared their support, and the Norwegian King Haakon VII agreed to the idea of mediation.<sup>226</sup> In this work, Berggrav was inspired by the example of the late Swedish Archbishop, Nathan Söderblom, who had tried to work towards a reconciliation during the First World War.<sup>227</sup> It has been said that Berggrav's 'opportunities for amateur diplomacy' (Ludlow) stemmed largely from his association with the ecumenical movement and the Oxford movement. In his peace action together with a few Scandinavians of varying professional and ideological background, Berggrav's part was that of a traveller.<sup>228</sup> Here the Oxford Group was active in different ways and on different levels.

In *Nordens innsats*, Berggrav published his recent speeches, delivered in Oslo, Bergen, Copenhagen, and Stockholm. His views are personalistic and ideological. Neutrality means standing outside the battle, though not outside humanity. The effort was not only for peace, but for reconciliation. The aim was to push the statesmen, as well as to give them a basis for their efforts.<sup>229</sup> Political reconciliation was dependent on human climate and disposition or mentality.<sup>230</sup> Democracy needed an inner front, that aim stated to be a sacred

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<sup>224</sup> Moral Re-Armament in Scandinavia since the outbreak of the war (dupl., Caux Archives). The statement was signed by Johan E. Mellbye and Count Aage Moltke. H. Blomberg to J. Hemmer 1939, Oct. 3 (ÅAB). Hurdals Verk 15–25/9 1939 (dupl., 350, UBO), 'Kära Vän!' 1939, Sept. 25 (dupl., EPC).

<sup>225</sup> Voksø 1984:17 f.

<sup>226</sup> Van Roon 1989:327. See further Martin 1974:194 ff., Heling 1992:106 ff., Heiene 1992, Ch. 10.

<sup>227</sup> See, for example, Visser't Hooft 1973:116, and, especially, Heiene 1992, Ch. 10.

<sup>228</sup> Ludlow 1974:6. According to Ludlow, relying on Berggrav's diary, most of the travels were paid for by the Norwegian conservative politician and industrialist J. H. Andresen. Cf. Rodhe 1990:81 n.32, that it has been said that Berggrav's travels were paid for by the Oxford Group.

<sup>229</sup> Berggrav 1939:forord, 6 f.

<sup>230</sup> Berggrav 1939:10 f.

one. At the outer front, neutrality meant political neutrality, but responsibility for matters concerning humanity or Christianity.<sup>231</sup> Praying for peace and reconciliation made way for activity, and was the source of sacred action.<sup>232</sup> Berggrav gave concrete proposals for peace, such as a free 'Congress-Poland' for the Polish. The main point in these proposals was that peace could not mean betraying any nation's central right to life.<sup>233</sup> A continuing war could not win long-ranging guarantees. The guarantee presumed a good atmosphere, a mutual atmosphere, which created the necessary tools for the states' lives together.<sup>234</sup> To the democracies, the battle was not limited to a battle against the totalitarian states, but for the soul of democracy, for the faith in men living and working together as brethren, without any single people or race as their lord. The efforts of the reconciler and of the democracies would begin in earnest when peace came.<sup>235</sup>

On September 27, 1939, Berggrav was interviewed by Howard Blake, an American full-timer in Stockholm, which led to publicity and support from Oxford Group people.<sup>236</sup> Fredrik Ramm prompted Berggrav to act as host at a dinner for the Prime Minister. According to Ludlow, it was presumably as a result of Blake's initiative that Berggrav addressed the American listeners on Hilversum Radio on December 2.<sup>237</sup> In his book on the peace negotiations, Berggrav tells of his visit to Holland on his way to London on December 7, 1939. At the airport of Amsterdam, he was unexpectedly met by Howard Blake. They drove to Rotterdam to meet two of Blake's banker friends, H. C. Hintzen of Mees & Sons, and the president of the Rotterdam Chamber of Commerce, K. P. van der Mandele. Mr. Hintzen had found Berggrav's booklet *Nordens innsats* valuable, and translated the last chapter into English, and through Hintzen, Berggrav came into contact with the former Foreign Minister, J. A. N. Patijn. Howard Blake had prepared for dinner with the press attaché von Hahn at the German legation at the Hague, who revealed himself as eagerly hoping for a possibility of peace.<sup>238</sup> On his return journey on December 20, Berggrav

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<sup>231</sup> Berggrav 1939:23 ff.

<sup>232</sup> Berggrav 1939:33.

<sup>233</sup> Berggrav 1939:41.

<sup>234</sup> Berggrav 1939:44, 47.

<sup>235</sup> Berggrav 1939:48. On Berggrav's efforts, and especially the political use the German occupation authorities tried to make of his notes on his journeys for peace, see also Stolpe 1942:79 ff. As Heiene (1991:152) points out, Berggrav, inspired by the Oxford Group, 'hatte in einer Weise von "Versöhnung" zwischen den Völkern gesprochen, die mit Nachgiebigkeit gegenüber Deutschland verwechselt werden konnte.'

<sup>236</sup> Ludlow 1974:22.

<sup>237</sup> Ludlow 1974:41.

<sup>238</sup> Berggrav 1960:74 f., van Roon 1973:266 f., 269, 1989:327 f., Ludlow 1974:41 f., Martin 1974:183 f., de Loor 1986:164 ff. In Ludlow 1971 and in Heiene 1992, the Oxford Group is left out of the view. On the ecumenical efforts for peace, and Berggrav's conferences with Bishop E. M. Rodhe of Lund in Gothenburg in February 1940, before

stopped off in Holland, and attended a dinner in Vught given by Mr. and Mrs. van Beuningen-van der Mandele, at which Patijn gave a speech. Before leaving Holland, Berggrav met Aschmann, adviser to the German legation.<sup>239</sup> In January 1940, Berggrav returned to attend a meeting of the Administrative Committee of the World Council of Churches, still in the process of formation, at a resort hotel at Zilven, hosted by the two Oxford Group bankers, but he did not achieve what he had hoped.<sup>240</sup> Having taken part in the World Alliance's meeting in Geneva, Berggrav went to Berlin, his efforts culminating with his encounter with Hermann Göring at Karinhall on January 21, 1940.<sup>241</sup>

Bishop Berggrav's attitude towards Finland is a sensitive matter, often omitted by his biographers. He took part in the Nordic service in the Stockholm Cathedral on November 30, 1939, but only after pressure, and his wordy answer to the Finnish Archbishop Kaila's appeal during the Winter War, was criticized in Finland as a public washing of hands.<sup>242</sup>

Here the observation must be made that Berggrav – inspired by the Oxford Group – himself did inspire the stronger emphasis on democracy in the Oxford Group during the following years, which opened the way for its change of the function or the use of its mentality from an entirely personalistic one into a mixed personalistic/ideological one, while the structure of the Oxford Group fellowship simultaneously developed from an absolute structure of mentality into a mixed structure of both mentality and ideology.<sup>243</sup>

Fredrik Ramm represented a somewhat different view. Identifying himself with the Oxford Group, he found that the Group should not operate as a special organization, but continue along the old road – life-change – changing

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the latter's journey to England, see Rodhe 1990:59 f.

<sup>239</sup> Van Roon 1973:269 f., 1989:328. On the couple van Beuningen-van der Mandele, see van Beuningen 1970.

<sup>240</sup> Ludlow 1974:43, van Roon 1973:270 f., 1989:328 f. Taking part were, among others, Archbishop Eidem of Uppsala, the Finnish Bishop Gulin, Bishop Berggrav, the Danish Bishop Noack, William Temple, Archbishop of York, Bishop Bell of Chichester, the Protestant leader of France, Dr. Marc Boegner, from Switzerland A. Koechlin, from the United States R. P. Barnes, from the Secretariat W. H. Visser't Hooft, H. Schönfeld and N. Ehrenström. In his memoirs, Visser't Hooft (1973:117) states that 'Berggrav rather forced my hand with regard to the place of meeting. As a supporter of the Oxford Group he was in touch with a Dutch businessman in Rotterdam who was very eager for the cessation of the war and considered Hitler to be a lesser evil than communism.' Heiene 1991 and 1992 are both lacking by having overlooked van Roon's accurate analyses.

<sup>241</sup> See Heiene 1992, Ch. 10.

<sup>242</sup> On the Nordic service, see E. Arbin to A. Lehtonen 1939, Nov. 7, 13, 23, Dec. 21 (RAH). The other bishops taking part were Eidem, Fuglsang-Damgaard, and Lehtonen. Berggrav 1940. On the critics, see, for example, Martti Ruuth to Hjalmar Holmquist 1940, March 9 (Estate of Oscar Hedlund, Vänersborg), in which it is stated that the late Bishop Lunde would have answered in another voice and with a different emphasis.

<sup>243</sup> During 1938–1939, the Oxford Group in Norway worked actively on the question of peace, emphasizing the political side of its work, see Johnson 1971:79.



individuals and mentality. The other work had to be left to the experts to decide.<sup>244</sup> In the earliest period of the war, before the German occupation, this meant an intensified work on spiritual preparedness, inspired by Denmark and Sweden. In Norway, it was applied partly in new ways, for example by keeping close relations between the south and the north of the country, when people in the north lived so close to the World War. A team of 60 left Trondheim for Lofoten in March, to work among the fishing population.<sup>245</sup>

### *III.4.2. Occupation and Resistance*

In Norway, the German occupation on April 9, 1940, meant military confrontation, harsh occupation policies, and a strong secret resistance. The King and the Government left for England in June, and in September, all ruling powers were taken over by the Germans. Of the British full-time workers in Scandinavia, both Edward Goulding and David Grimshaw were in Norway at the time. Grimshaw got away from Oslo across the Swedish border on the first night of the occupation, while Goulding finally arrived in England. The young Norwegian Oxford Group men fighting against the Germans returned safely to Oslo, having had 'neither to die nor to kill in the service of their country.'<sup>246</sup>

Fredrik Ramm was arrested and imprisoned from June 25 until July 24, 1940, and in September 1941, he was again imprisoned and sentenced to prison for life. From Grini he went by way of Akershus to Fuhlsbüttel near Hamburg. After his release in the autumn 1943, he died in Denmark, November 15, on his way home.<sup>247</sup> During his imprisonment, Ramm wrote several letters to his friends, duplicated and spread by his wife, as well as notes on Bible texts. His letters, sometimes restricted to one every third month, emphasized the importance of older Christian literature and a historical perspective, in times of great need – all from his first imprisonment in the summer 1940. He defined patriotism in a personalistic way, as love for the individual compatriots, and emphasized supernatural reconciliation instead of hate and bitterness. Still, he regarded the Norwegian political vision, which aimed at peace between classes and nations, as Christian, even if the individuals were not. After the death of Ramm, Alan Thornhill wrote the play 'And still they fight,' which spread knowledge of Ramm, his life and work. Through this play and through many articles, his symbolic importance to the Oxford Group as its first martyr was established.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Ramm to H. Blomberg 1940, Jan. 9 (UUB).

<sup>245</sup> 'Karlstad den 5 mars 1940' (dupl., EPC).

<sup>246</sup> See S. Linton to E. Goulding 1940, May 31 (DWC). On the other full-timers, see Chs. IV.4.2, V.4.3.

<sup>247</sup> Bugge 1952:282.

<sup>248</sup> Fr. Ramm to 'Kjære venn' 1940, July 30; 1941, Jan. 7 (dupl., Alnäs), Arbin 1943b:149

In 1943, the well-known Swedish priest Nils Bolander – future Dean and Bishop of Lund, criticized the Norwegian writer Helge Krog, who five years earlier had written a rather spiteful and scornful article against the Oxford Group, stating that none of its members had run any risk for the sake of their faith. Now, during the war, we had seen the heroic acts of Berggrav, Fjellbu, Ramm, and Fangen, while the quick-witted and proud Norwegian critic had fled across the border to Sweden, as soon as the place was getting to hot for him, and was at the time living completely undisturbed behind the nice Swedish frontier. Nevertheless, Krog's words from 1939 were reprinted without comment in 1947.<sup>249</sup>

In November 1940, Ronald Fangen, too, was arrested, and stated to the German authorities that he had not taken part in the work of the Oxford Group during the last years.<sup>250</sup> Nevertheless, Josef Terboven, the German State Commissioner in Norway in February, 1941 wrote that

Fangen gehört zu den bekanntesten Oxford-Angehörigen in Norwegen, bezeichnet sich selbst als 'Scribent' dieser Bewegung und konnte bislang tatsächlich als der geistige Führer der Oxford-Gruppenbewegung in Norwegen angesehen werden.<sup>251</sup>

According to a report by Sven Stolpe, the Norwegian Oxford Group was at an early stage investigated by the German occupants, who found it harmless, and the work was intensified – though without any organization. In the autumn 1940, some of the Germans even attended Oxford meetings, out of a private interest, as it seemed. Then some NS-priests started a campaign against the Group, explaining that Oxford had poisoned the soul of the Norwegian people, that Oxford and the Secret Service were identical, and that Hambro – as a British-oriented Jew – had introduced Oxford to the Nordic countries. According to Stolpe's early reports, this campaign had brought Fangen almost to insanity.<sup>252</sup> Later on, in a printed report, Stolpe stated that the arrest of

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emphasized Ramm's importance as a martyr. Further Ramm 1946, Terning 1947:146, Lean [194?]:1, which compares Ramm to Florence Nightingale. Ramm's two novels are treated in Ch. II.3.11.2.

<sup>249</sup> Bolander 1943:43 f. Helge Krog: 'Kristlig maskerad' in Oxford och vi 1939:87 f., reprinted in Krog 1947:148 – 'Men det fins ikke én iblandt dem som for sin tros skyld har utsatt seg for den minste fare eller tatt en aldri så ubetydelig risiko.' Cf. Fr. Ramm, who died 1943 on his way back to Norway after his imprisonment in Germany.

<sup>250</sup> Rough copy of Fangen to the German authorities 1940, Nov. 19 (Pa. 320:10, RAO), Oftestad 1981:78.

<sup>251</sup> Copy of Terboven to Victor Mogens 1941, Feb. 20 (Pa. 320:10, RAO), see further Nøkleby 1992:154 f.

<sup>252</sup> S. Stolpe to M. Björkquist 1941 [1942?], Jan. 1 (SIB). On a visit to Sweden in the autumn 1940, Erling Wikborg suggested they should remove all organization, which he found was the strength of the situation of the Norwegians when the Group was investigated (copy of S. Linton to H. Blake 1940, Oct. 15, DWC).

Fangen was a consequence of the campaign, and of the discovery of a rather innocent English document in his home. When Fangen was taken ill and removed from the prison to the Ullevål hospital, false rumours said that torture of him had led to insanity. Fangen had not been tortured, and his illness was entirely physical. After six months of imprisonment, he was released.<sup>253</sup> During his period of illness, Fangen went through a deep crisis of faith. He recognized the transcendence of God in a new way, understanding that the love of God was not human, and that the change of suffering into victory was a change in the time and way of God.<sup>254</sup>

The former secretary of the Oslo Home Mission, Lars Frøyland, once influenced by the Oxford Group, now the Nazi-appointed 'Bishop' of Oslo, criticized Fangen for his opinion that the National Socialist ideology was in fact a new religion. Frøyland stated that the new ideology was applied Christianity, and that the priority of common interest before self-interest was according to the words of Christ.<sup>255</sup> Both the accusations of collaboration with the Secret Service and the emphasis on Hambro's Jewish parentage re-appeared in an article by R. Sandstad in *Fritt folk* in September 1941. The Oxford Group was accused of creating wars and wretchedness in the world, and its connections with the League of Nations were stressed. The religious side had been only a disguise for political, anti-German and pro-Jewish propaganda. Individual priests involved had even gone to England 'for instruction,' and to Germany in order to visit Niemöller's family and those who shared his opinions. From such clerical homes, an evil secret agitation was said to be directed against both Norwegian and German authorities. Neither a revival, nor a cassock ('prestekjole') or a bishop's cope could in the end hide a traitor.<sup>256</sup> Because of the accusations that the Oxford Group was an instrument of the Secret Service,

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<sup>253</sup> Stolpe 1942:174 ff. See also the later version of Mrs. Solveig Fangen, in Stolpe 1975:259 ff.

<sup>254</sup> Oftestad 1981:189.

<sup>255</sup> L. Frøyland, 'Helhjertet kristendom,' *Fritt folk* (quoted in Stolpe 1942:177). Fangen's criticism in Fangen 1938b, Ch. 'Nasjonalsocialismen.' Already in his sermon at the academic service at the University on September 1, 1935, Fangen openly criticized Fascism, Nazism, and Communism as heathen religions (Fangen 1935b:51 f.). Larsen 1982:290 (Lundby 1980:189 f), states that Frøyland's articles in the 1930s, as editor of *Bymisjonæren*, on the dictatorship of the Holy Spirit, etc. disposed him for his later support of the NS-Church. Frøyland was not a party member, but was made 'Bishop' of Oslo by Vidkun Quisling, after the resignation of the bishops in March 1942. However, the specially noted articles by Frøyland do not seem to contain anything but general reflections on political dictatorship, and, especially, on the Oxford Group teaching of the Dictatorship of the Holy Spirit. See, for example, his editorials 'Diktatur' and 'Nytt leie?' (*Bymisjonæren* 1935, Apr. 6). As late as in 1938, Frøyland translated Oswald Chambers' *Workmen of God*, with a foreword by H. H. Gran. The question of a 'disposition' must be broadened far beyond the limits of one single person. See further Ch. II.3.7.1.

<sup>256</sup> 'Er Oxfordbevegelsen arrangert av Secret Service?' (*Fritt folk* 1941, Sept. 23). Stolpe 1942:174 f. refers to an earlier article in *Fritt folk* by a vicar, Ø. Hoem.

the card register of people interested in information from the central team in Oslo was destroyed early during the occupation.<sup>257</sup>

Still, the Oxford Group continued to meet in private homes, for example with the Eckbo family, where 60 people met on three consecutive evenings. On the first one, Eiliv Skard talked about Man's activity and passivity, the next evening 'Lauritz' talked about the Way to God, and on the last evening Alexander Johnson talked about Christian Fellowship, all with short testimonies as well. A report described them as 'good old lifechanging evenings.'<sup>258</sup> In the spring, 1942, Nina Prytz, Kathrine Bugge, Signe Krohn, and Fanny Holmboe arranged three consecutive morning meetings with about 100 ladies. The men planned a three days' meeting for about 80 businessmen and academicians at the Eckbo family's.<sup>259</sup>

On November 30, 1943, some twenty professors – among them Eiliv Skard – and 1,200 students at the Oslo University were arrested and intended to be subsequently deported to Germany. About 700 were deported, of whom 17 died in Germany. The University was closed.<sup>260</sup> This event marked the impossibility of further public activity of the Oxford Group.

According to Alex Johnson, there were three reactions to the occupation among Group people in Norway. The discipline of the Nazis appealed to some, who thus sympathized with the occupation forces. Others naïvely expected the Germans to be 'changed'. Others – like Fangen – tried resistance. But in order to resist as a Norwegian patriot, it was impossible to be 'absolutely honest.'<sup>261</sup> We may further conclude that of these three attitudes, only the second one represents an unmixed personalism, and that an ideologization of the Group mentality in either direction – pro-Nazi or resistance – was forced by the way the occupation developed. The methods, on the other hand, were almost totally limited to personal ones, and lacked the liberty of national action found in certain institutions or associations of Danish Oxford Group work. In the Church, there was at least some liberty, and Church Group revivalism continued, advocating, for example, the four absolute standards as a help for people as long as they were not especially well acquainted with the Bible, or first checking guidance against the absolute standards, then with a fellow Christian, and if still in doubt by waiting!<sup>262</sup> After the war, it was ascertained that the number of Group priests in Norway was greater than in the other Scandinavian countries.<sup>263</sup> However, this has to be considered in relation to the

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<sup>257</sup> Hestvold 1987:132 f.

<sup>258</sup> Copy of S. Linton to H. and P. Blake 1941, Nov. 17 (DWC).

<sup>259</sup> Letter from Nina Prytz, quoted in copy of S. Linton to H. and P. Blake 1942, June 8 (DWC).

<sup>260</sup> Wisløff 1971:463.

<sup>261</sup> Govig 1966:131.

<sup>262</sup> Lundby 1940:20. His view is entirely revivalistic, omitting the working fellowship of a team

<sup>263</sup> Sten Bugge to A. Runestam 1945, Dec. 13 (Runestam Coll.I).

fact that during the later war years, there was no need for and no possibilities of any demarcation between Church Group revivalism and the Oxford Group.

At the house-party in Lund in Sweden, August 1944, Norwegian and Danish Oxford Group people met with some from Finland. The Swedish Group people hardly grasped how sensitive the situation was. No Danes at the time living in Sweden were invited, as they had been active in illegal resistance work in Denmark, but a Danish business-man was honoured for showing an attitude of reconciliation by keeping German business relations. The Swedes even wanted the Norwegians to be reconciled with a Norwegian Nazi who was present. The reconciliation was also planned to be manifested by massed banners, but Mrs. Vera Molland chocked the Swedes by announcing that the Norwegians would walk together with Kaisu Snellman and Lennart Segerstråle only behind a Cross, but not behind one Norwegian and one Finnish flag. Professor Einar Molland, himself not present at Lund, found it unsuitable to arrange demonstrations for Nordic unity until the Norwegians had talked with the Finns on what he regarded as Finnish treachery of the Nordic fellowship in the autumn 1940.<sup>264</sup>

From a British full-timer in Sweden, the situation was reported to Frank Buchman in the following way:

The Finns came [to Lund] with their conviction that their war has been a private war, which they expected all the Northern countries to understand and support fully. The Norwegians consider it anything but a private war, and were under instructions from their lawful government not to appear on the same platform as Finns at any public meetings. The Norwegians feel very strongly about this. The Swedes, who have talked so much about *Folkförsoning* [Reconciliation between nations] that they feel everyone ought to be good friends by now, did not know how to handle the situation, the simplest and easiest form of *Folkförsoning* we shall ever be called upon to deal with – that among changed people.

The Norwegians in this country do not like Sweden. They escape to this country expecting to be welcomed as front-line soldiers and sent at once over to England – a treatment which they would not like us to apply to German soldiers escaping from Finland and wishing to be sent through to Germany. Clever German propaganda in Norway has convinced them that the Swedes have helped the Germans much more than they have (it was the German interest to tell the Norwegians that both Sweden and Denmark were pro-German, so why not?). The result is that the Norwegians in this country keep themselves to themselves a good deal, and do not care to mix more than necessary with Swedes, for whom they have all the feelings that a fighting people usually have for neutrals.

Sweden is still keen on Nordic unity. Norway won't hear of it, they want to hitch on to the Atlantic powers. Finland seems bound to hitch on eastwards. Voices are raised for Nordism everywhere, but the tide is flowing the other way at the moment.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> E. Molland to A. Runestam 1944, Aug. 22 (Runestam Coll.I).

<sup>265</sup> S. Linton to F. Buchman 1944, Nov. 25 (NLC). On Oxford Group work among

### *III.4.3. Plans for Building a Post-War Norway*

During the occupation, men of cultural interests gathered around Ronald Fangen, for example Johan E. Mellbye, Carl Fredrik Engelstad, Erling Wikborg, and Stephan Tschudi. Several were inspired by the Oxford Group, some had worked actively in its fellowship. Their plans included a Christian effort in national politics, a Church Academy (inspired by the Swedish Sigtuna Foundation), and a new Christian newspaper. The Group inspiration in the creation of the Christian political party, Kristelig Folkeparti, and the Christian newspaper, *Vårt Land*, is obvious, mostly as an inspiration for the mentality of fellowship. This is made clear, for example, through a literary exclamation by the main character in a novel by Engelstad, that the subsequent excesses and singularities of the Oxford Group could not take away his experience of the richest human fellowship, and the purest faith and readiness he had ever met.<sup>266</sup>

The Church Group revivalistic experience, rather than the visions of war emigrants like C. J. Hambro, who while isolated from Group work in Norway had kept in close contact with Frank Buchman, had some remaining importance for the building of the post-war Norway. The reconciliation between Church parties during the war, as well as the cultural importance of the Group revival in the post-war development, was more clearly noticeable in Norway than in the other Scandinavian countries, while the effects of the Moral Re-Armament strategy were smaller. The Norwegian development went from an Oxford Group revival, earlier and stronger than in the other Scandinavian countries, to an integrated Church Group revivalism.

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Norwegian refugees in Sweden, see Ch. V.4.4.

<sup>266</sup> Oftestad 1981:211 ff., Engelstad 1957:92 f.

## IV. DENMARK: FROM INDEPENDENT GROUP REVIVALISM TO NATIONAL REVIVAL

### IV.1. The Information Phase

Although the depression had brought extensive unemployment and an agricultural crisis, and social gaps were wide, Denmark in the early 1930s was a rising country. Since 1929, the Social Democrats were in power, together with the Radical Liberals. The cultural climate of radical criticism of religion – with its roots partly in the Danish 19th century radicalism of Georg Brandes, partly in Marxist materialism – forms an important part of the Danish background. As J. H. Schjørring has pointed out, the whole cultural problem was brought forward by the debate about the new proposed school law in 1935, whether the school should be Christian, or only impartially inform pupils regarding religion.<sup>1</sup> Another important prerequisite was the special Danish Church structure with a National Church, a ‘folkekirke,’ which not only allowed, but often demanded the assistance of different Church parties and organizations to manage congregational activities, apart from the ordinary services, sermons, and administration of sacraments. Here the Y.M.C.A. had a key position as the Youth movement of the Home Mission. The leading inspirer of the Danish Y.M.C.A. (K.F.U.M.), Olfert Ricard, partly created a Danish equivalent to the Swedish Young Church movement and partly anticipated Group revivalism, employing three different means: a strong emphasis on Christian faith as experience, Jesus as the great ideal to his disciples of a righteous human life, and arriving at the religion by way of morals and ideals, and through confession of sins in these areas.<sup>2</sup> Another important presupposition was the influence of the Keswick meetings, mostly through the Nyborg Strand meetings, which was much stronger than in any other Nordic country. This gave the Danes, more than other Scandinavians, a distinct pre-comprehension of what it was all about.<sup>3</sup>

An important prerequisite for the Norwegian Group Revival had been its theological platform in dialectical theology, especially in the thinking of Emil

<sup>1</sup> Schjørring 1976b:93, Morthorst 1968:13 f.

<sup>2</sup> Sørensen 1965:79 quotes Lindhardt’s criticisms of Ricard as a liberal theologian.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Beyer 1954:116 f.

Brunner. This influence, too, was much stronger in Denmark, though forming only a part of the heavy Barthian influence on theology and Church life, which was stronger and of greater variation than in any other Nordic country, even on priests and laymen who never turned Barthians.<sup>4</sup> Here Group revivalism meant a reaction and/or a practical ethical complement. A significant, propagandistic use of the latter is the back cover of the Danish edition of Russell's *For Sinners Only*, advertising the translation of Allen's *He that Cometh*, with the account of Allen's spiritual development, which lead him through Barthian theology into the Oxford Group Movement.<sup>5</sup> As on the Continent, Barthian criticism of the Oxford Group was frequent in Denmark, but the significant Danish reaction was a mixture of influences from Barth *and* the Oxford Group, especially in Church Barthian circles, which turned neither Orthodox nor orthodox Barthian. In the Netherlands, for example, the Barthian reaction was not only a much more united negative reaction, but Barth and the Oxford Group had different audiences as well.<sup>6</sup>

In May 1932, Miss Ingibjörg Olofsson wrote about the Oxford Movement in *Kristeligt Dagblad*.<sup>7</sup> In September, the General Secretary of the Danish Y.M.C.A. (K.F.U.M.), Gunner Engberg, reported the Oxford Groups as a new Youth movement, in its Copenhagen journal, and *Præsteforeningens Blad* noticed the so-called new Buchman Movement in their review of the year 1932 in Denmark's neighbour churches.<sup>8</sup> On New Year's Day, 1933, the vicar of Herlufsholm on Zealand, Knud Hee Andersen, mentioned 'the remarkable Oxford Group' in his chronicle. Five weeks later, he presented a summary of Russell's *For Sinners Only*, and in March, the Dean of Odense, the well-known revival preacher Carl Skovgaard-Petersen, presented the Group as representing

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<sup>4</sup> For example, the Home Mission leader, Christian Bartholdy 1958:130 – 'Jeg blev aldrig barthianer, endsige tidehverv. [...] Men mødet med Barth betød en frigørelse, som har betydet noget for mig hele livet.' On the Brunner and Barth influence in Denmark, see Schjørring 1976c, Keller [1933]:117 ff., which emphasize the 'preparedness for the message of the Barthian theology, which was produced by the after-effects of Kierkegaard' (p.121). See also Eduard Geismar, 'Søren Kierkegaard og Buchmanismen' (Politiken 1936, Feb. 3).

<sup>5</sup> On Barthianism as a contrasting preparation for Oxford, see C. H. Clemmensen: 'Kampen mellem Oxford og Barth. Den dybe Afgrund mellem de to Vækkelses-Bevægelser. Fra Tidehvervs-Oprøret 1926 til Oxford-Dagene 1935' (Dagens Nyheder 1935, Apr. 3), Ammundsen 1935:111. Helweg-Larsen 1935:131 even wrote of a swing of the pendulum, while Carlsen 1935:73 found that Barthianism and Oxford agreed in subjectivism and enthusiasm (– *xæ* let God speak). Cf. Søe 1935d. Professor I. P. Bang ('Moral og Religion i Barthianisme og Oxfordisme; Sorø Amtstidende; quoted in PrB 1935:382) found that both Barthianism and Oxford ignored the human conscience. Another comparison was made in Norway by N. A. Dahl 1935, who concluded that while Barth was speaking of St. Paul, the Groups dared to speak like St. Paul (p.273).

<sup>6</sup> De Loor 1986:11, 69 f., 177 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Ingibjörg Olofsson: 'En ny evangelisk vækkelsesbevægelse' (KD 1932, May 25).

<sup>8</sup> Engberg 1932, 'Fra vore Nabokirker 1932' (PrB 1933).



true Christian life ('Noget af det rigtige') in a series of articles in *Berlingske Tidende*. Skovgaard-Petersen's Oxford experience was an entirely literary one. On a three-week vacation in Jämtland (Sweden) in January 1933, he read five or six English books, finding a popular Christian revival, modern in its form and apostolical in its core. After his return, Skovgaard-Petersen spoke about the Group Movement in his parish, and later in the spring 1933, to several hundred people in the Odd Fellow Lodge at Roskilde, in a positive vein. During the subsequent Oxford Group phase, his attitude was still open and positive, though he questioned Frank Buchman's attitude of not wanting to discuss things, and was critical of what he saw as exclusiveness, uniformity, and of the identification of Christian faith with Oxford work.<sup>9</sup>

In 1933, the 150th anniversary of N. F. S. Grundtvig's birth was solemnly celebrated. In some ways, Grundtvigianism meant a preparedness for alienation towards the Oxford Group campaign, though Grundtvig's emphasis on God's plan for Denmark, and its special task in the history of the world, could be a positive bridge to social Group work.

In April 1933, two Oxford Group men, a clergyman, Howard Rose, and a layman, Basil Hodgson, arrived in Copenhagen, invited by the K.F.U.M. Most of their meetings were held for closed circles, among them one for the clergy of Copenhagen, but one was open to all young men, and another was public without restrictions. Through the presence of four Swedes, these meetings brought impressions of the Oxford Group to Sweden as well. Before continuing to Oslo, Rose and Hodgson visited Aarhus.<sup>10</sup> In June 1933, Hee Andersen shared his impressions of the Oxford Movement in the Copenhagen monthly of the K.F.U.M., and at the same time, Gunner Engberg wrote in its national journal, *De Unges Blad*, on the Oxford Circles ('Oxford-Kredsene').<sup>11</sup> In November 1933, Hee Andersen – in the journal of the Danish clergymen's association – recommended Sverre Norborg's first book on Group revivalism together with a book on the restoration of private confession, written by the Dean of Copenhagen, Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard.<sup>12</sup> They were both significant exponents of a Scandinavian Church Group revivalism. In December, G. Sparring-Petersen, in a more objective vein, presented the Oxford Groups in

<sup>9</sup> Dagens Nyheder 1933, Jan. 1 ('Nytaar i Kirken'), Feb. 5 ('Kun Syndere har Adgang'). Helweg-Larsen 1935:100. Skovgaard-Petersen 1939:307 ff. In 1934, Skovgaard-Petersen asked Knud Hee Andersen to speak in Roskilde, and he himself wrote more articles in *Berlingske Tidende* in February, July, August, and October, and finally, in the beginning of 1935, he gave a radio discourse, also printed in BeT.

<sup>10</sup> Engberg 1934:15, Helweg-Larsen 1935:101. On the Swedish group, see Sandberg 1933 (in the Swedish Methodist weekly).

<sup>11</sup> Andersen 1933, Engberg 1933. Engberg's purpose was to bring about a presentation and inspiration, not criticism and discussion. He had presented the new movement in KD 1933, Feb. 17 ('>Oxford-Gruppen«  
En ny Vækkelses bevægelse'). A year later, he wrote a book on the Oxford Movement, half supporting it.

<sup>12</sup> PrB 1933, Nov. 24. On Fuglsang-Damgaard's book, see above Ch. II.2.3.3.

*Politiken* as spiritual guides in dinner jackets and sports shirts.<sup>13</sup>

The first Danish observers visited a house-party in Oxford during the summer 1933, and two of them were deeply moved by the message.<sup>14</sup> One of them, Knud Hee Andersen, was soon regarded as the leader of the Danish Group Movement. His way into Group revivalism went through an inquiry from the publisher P. Haase & Søn for an abridged translation of Russell's *For Sinners Only*. A condition had been that Hee Andersen went to Oxford.<sup>15</sup>

The first Danish translation of an Oxford book was an abridged version of Begbie's *Life Changers*, with a foreword by Professor N. M. Plum, soon followed by Hee Andersen's edition of *For Sinners Only*, the Chief Librarian H. O. Lange's translation of Allen's *He that Cometh*, and Inger Lindhardt's translation of Walter's *Soul Surgery*, with a foreword by Henry Ussing.<sup>16</sup> The edition of Begbie's book is significant in several ways. The title was changed in a conventional, revivalistic direction, from *Life Changers* to *Forvandlede Mennesker* [*Changed Men*], and the chapters were shortened. The partly critical foreword by N. M. Plum, significant of a more independent Group revivalism, stated that the practical method was to work in groups, where some good friends became each other's fellow-workers in the work to rescue others.<sup>17</sup> Plum made some clear reservations, stating that the tenor of the movement had to be adjusted in order to reach the Danish people, finally referring to Emil Brunner's position, and literally underlining Brunner's description of the Group as bringing not a new theology, but a new way of using theology.<sup>18</sup> When the

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<sup>13</sup> *Politiken* 1933, Dec. 4; reprinted as Sparring-Petersen 1934. The description refers to the recently published Danish versions of Russell's, Begbie's and Allen's books. Sparring-Petersen (1934:13) points to the contrast between listening Barthians and acting Buchmanians, finding the solution in Brunner's example (14 f.).

<sup>14</sup> Hee Andersen to J. Nørregaard 1933, July 12 (having heard Allen, Thornhill, and Grensted, writing of his experience of personal renaissance, and asking forgiveness of Nørregaard; Pa. 6073, RAK), Emil Brunner 1934, May 15 (ZZ). Helweg-Larsen 1935:101 mentions both the enthusiastic Hee Andersen and the more moderate Engberg.

<sup>15</sup> Asta Hee Andersen to the author 1992, March 16. Russell 1933b:[2]. Hee Andersen tried, without success, to get the Bishop of Haderslev, Valdemar Ammundsen, to write a foreword to the Danish edition. Ammundsen to Hee Andersen 1933, May 22 (Pa. 5034, RAK), further Beyer 1954:115 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Helweg-Larsen 1935:101 f., Engberg 1934:27. On Lange, see also Lange 1935. Of preparatory importance were also the Danish editions of Redwood 1933 and 1933b, each with a foreword by Aage Falk Hansen, a priest well-known for his practical commitment to the workers.

<sup>17</sup> Begbie [1933]:5 f.

<sup>18</sup> Begbie [1933]:7 ff. Plum's foreword was so hesitant that it was used against the Oxford Group in Göteborgs Stifts-Tidning 1934, Nr. 35, 'Mot Oxfordrörelsen.' In September 1934, Plum introduced Brunner to the Danish public (BA 1934, Sept. 17), but during the international Oxford Group campaign, he kept public silence. He explained his attitude to A. Bentzen 1935, May 13 (Pa. 5108, RAK), as understanding the movement and the

unabridged Norwegian translation was published a year later, N. H. Søe was severely critical of C. J. Hambro's enthusiastic introduction, which replaced the critical one of Professor Plum, and of the complete edition as such, as he described Begbie's religion as moralistic rationalism with only a very thin Christian veneer.<sup>19</sup>

## IV.2. The Revival Groups Phase

As early as in November 1933, Knud Hee Andersen spoke of the new movement in Denmark as a reality, and the first Danish house-party or 'stævne,' as Hee Andersen tried to translate it,<sup>20</sup> was arranged on the estate of Eskildstrup near Haslev January 2–6, 1934, with 30 permanent and up to 100 occasional participants. The daily programme was determined by the guidance coming to the small team each morning. During the week-end February 13–15, 1934, a clergy meeting on the Oxford Circle ('Oxfordkredsen'), with more than 150 clergymen and 50 wives, was arranged at Nyborg Strand. The party was planned as a brotherly deliberation with the possibility of sharing experiences and difficulties, leading to something of the spiritual renewal that the Oxford Circle was known to have given to many.<sup>21</sup> It was not, as sometimes stated, the very first house-party in the Nordic countries, but it drew clergy from all the Nordic countries, as well as from different Danish Church parties (Home Mission, Grundtvigians, High Church men, and others), and made deep personal impressions on priests from the Swedish West coast or the Finno-Swedish Ostrobothnia. Two thirds of the participants were under the age of 40.<sup>22</sup> The location of the meeting was of great importance, as the Nyborg

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necessity of it, personally becoming more fearless, but critical or doubtful of its methods, especially guidance. Since writing the foreword to Begbie's book, both his attitude of being attracted by and his attitude of rejecting the movement had become stronger. Plum concluded that he could not identify himself totally with the movement, and that his motives were not totally pure. See also Schjørring 1976c:182.

<sup>19</sup> Søe 1934b:329 ('et meget tyndt lag kristelig Fernis').

<sup>20</sup> Hee Andersen to J. Nørregaard 1933, Nov. 28 (Pa. 6073, RAK). Russell 1933b:[1], Andersen 1934:5 f., 17. N. M. Plum tried, without success, to introduce 'hjemmemøde' as translation of 'house-party,' see Begbie [1933]:6.

<sup>21</sup> Andersen 1934:17, Hee Andersen: 'Oxfordbevægelsen i Danmark' (Næstved Tidende 1934, Jan. 27, 29). Helweg-Larsen 1935:102. Præstemøde om Oxfordkredsen (PrB 1933, Dec. 29), signed by Henry Ussing, Knud Hee Andersen, Jørgen Nissen, and E. Pontoppidan-Thyssen. See further Ussing 1940:133, which indicates the number of wives to be 75.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. and see Krook 1973:144 f., Chr. Holt: 'Hvad trænger vi til netop nu?' (KD 1934, Feb. 19), Ohrt 1934, which emphasizes the positive mixture of different Danish Church

Strand meetings in summer were inspired by the Keswick meetings, though built upon a Lutheran foundation, and often with speakers of different theological opinions.<sup>23</sup> On May 30, Hee Andersen spoke about the Group Movement on the radio, from Nyborg Strand, and at the regular Nyborg Strand meeting in the summer 1934, he spoke on sin in a very Group revivalistic way, Skovgaard-Petersen on grace, and Sverre Norborg on forgiveness of sins.<sup>24</sup> The inspiration by Keswick of the Nyborg Strand meetings explains partly both the commitment of Henry Ussing to Group revivalism, and the freer and less dogmatic position of the Danish Home Mission compared to that of Norway.

During this period, articles continued to appear in the newspapers. As early as in January 1934, Hee Andersen reported on revivals in the congregations, at which two or three were stricken and shared with each other, and circles were founded as a result. When a few more people joined the circle, they arranged open meetings with testimony of life instead of discourses. Hee Andersen went on with a report from the Eskildstrup party.<sup>25</sup> In Christian Holt's report from the Nyborg Strand party, the combination of a common need for the Oxford Group way of life and a hesitant attitude towards the Oxford Group itself was clearly noticeable.<sup>26</sup> In July, Børge Hjerl-Hansen, in *Dagens Nyheder*, answered the so-called critics of the Oxford Movement, and stated that

1. We do not wish any 'Oxford'- Movement, but we do wish a *Group* Movement. [...]
2. We do not wish direct import of a movement, that is 'made in U.S.A.' [...]
3. Several of us are personally indebted to the leaders of the movement in England or in America, but we do not wish the sweet traces of Frank Buchman & Co. as a papal seal of our work.
4. We deny any relationship to possible morbid imitations or degenerated forms of the Oxford Group Movement, whether abroad or at home [...]<sup>27</sup>

Hee Andersen's attitude was similar. In his brochure *Oxford og Danmark* (1934), he reassured those afraid of all things imported, that the movement already was taking a Danish form. The Oxford label was to be used for a short time, as it was the well-known term, but one could already speak of a Danish Group Movement, without any supplement.<sup>28</sup> Hee Andersen continued to speak on the

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parties in the spirit of a Group revival for priests.

<sup>23</sup> See Ussing 1940:60 ff.

<sup>24</sup> Nyborgmødet 1934:23 ff., 31 ff., 67 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Andersen: 'Oxfordbevægelsen i Danmark' (Næstved Tidende 1934 Jan. 27, 29), Andersen 1934:5 emphasizes Emil Brunner's importance as a road from Barth to Oxford.

<sup>26</sup> Holt: 'Hvad trænger vi til netop nu?' (KD 1934, Feb. 19).

<sup>27</sup> B. Hjerl-Hansen: 'Til Oxfordbevægelsens Kritiker' (Dagens Nyheder 1934, July 30).

<sup>28</sup> Andersen 1934:19. A Group influence is notable also in a small book on modern man and Christian faith, Hefte & Hjerl-Hansen 1934:10, 5, revealed in descriptions of God as

Oxford Movement, for example, in the Parish House at Randers, with a public quiet time, on February 19.<sup>29</sup> His attitude was the same as that of Sverre Norborg, who visited Denmark several times during this period. Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard, Henry Ussing, H. O. Lange, Kai Jensen, Axel Malmstrøm, Count Aage Moltke, and Dr. Th. Jørgensen took part in these arrangements. In July, Lange wrote to Norborg that he was not happy about Buchman's visit: We cannot bear more advertising, and we must not come under English-American command. The Movement must be translated into Scandinavian.<sup>30</sup>

During 1934, a few translations from the English enlarged the literature on Group revivalism. Stuart Wood's *Glorious Liberty* is a confessional book. Although the author stated it was not an Oxford Group book, it was advertised as such, and criticized for not bearing enough witness of the principles and methods of the Oxford Group. The book tells the story of a man who, after years of transgression and sin, found reconciliation, joy, and peace by surrendering to Christ. Through the example, the help, and the reprimands from the Oxford Group, Wood found God and consecrated his life to the service of Christ.<sup>31</sup> Another, shorter book, translated from the English, was Jack Winslow's *Why I Believe in the Oxford Group*, which explains that his new belief did not displace his faith in the Creed of the Church. Among his eight Oxfordian answers to the question of the title are both 'Because it brings revival in Church,' and 'Because it shows the right road to a solution of the World problems.' The foreword was written by the Episcopal Metropolitan of India, Foss Westcott. Compared to Wood's much longer description, it is – in other words – a most authentic Oxford Group book.<sup>32</sup> Sam. Shoemaker's *The Conversion of the Church* was translated into Danish in 1934, though it does not seem to have become of great importance in Denmark.<sup>33</sup> Bishop Henson's hostile book on the Oxford Group was not translated, but exhaustively reviewed by the Royal 'Confessionarius,' Dr. Michael Neiiendam, who characterized the new movement as a somewhat elastic synthesis of German Lutheranism and Anglo-American revivalistic piety.<sup>34</sup> On July 12, a critical speech by Henry Christoffersen on the Church and the Oxford Group Movement was

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the planning and working Spirit behind the whole existence, or the Holy Ghost as the Spirit, who controls men who have surrendered themselves to God.

<sup>29</sup> Randers Amts Avis 1934, Feb. 20.

<sup>30</sup> Norborg 1962:158 f. ('29. juli 1934: Takk for samværet i København. Vi håper på ditt besøk nu i høst, og du må endelig komme til det neste Nyborg-møte, som vi vil utvide til 4 dager. Det siste fikk en uberegnelig betydning. Jeg er ikke glad over Buchmans besøk. Vi kan ikke tåle mer reklame, og vi må ikke inn under engelsk-amerikansk kommando. Bevegelsen må oversettes til skandinavisk. Den utfolder seg best i ro.')

<sup>31</sup> Wood 1934:7 f.

<sup>32</sup> Winslow 1934:9 f., 37 ff., 41 ff. The translation was made by H. O. Lange.

<sup>33</sup> Shoemaker 1933, translated by Harald P. Madsen: *Skal Kirken omvende sig?*

<sup>34</sup> Neiiendam 1934:385.

broadcast.<sup>35</sup>

From June 28 to July 7, 1934, a ten day 'stævne' was arranged at Hindsgavl, with only a few clergymen, about 200 laymen of different categories, and a small Norwegian group attending. During the year, no less than nine more parties were given. As a result, several so-called Oxford Groups were founded here and there, some of them being Bible circles or Brother circles ('Broderkredse'), inspired by Oxfordian thoughts, but no working teams, certainly not in direct fellowship with the international team, and presumably not altogether willing to live the Oxford Group way of life.

Significant of the Danish situation was a book on *Kristendom og moral*, containing among other items an article by Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard on Christianity and morals, which quotes Emil Brunner and E. Stanley Jones, and emphasizes the moral crisis of present time, and the forgiveness of sins as the power of the Christian faith, a faith that was never alone.

An early Church Barthian answer to Group revivalism was given in *Politisk drøm og kristent haab* (1934) by the vicar of Sønderborg, the future Bishop of Lolland-Falster, Halfdan Høgsbro. While rejecting Communism, National Socialism, and Rauschenbusch's Christian Socialism, Høgsbro criticized the Oxford Movement as well, for its emphasis on the believing, moved, and sanctified man, which led to legends of saints instead of preaching the Gospel.<sup>36</sup> Høgsbro was invited to the Hindsgavl party, but answered with a reserved attitude. According to his previous impressions, the Groups had lacked the respect of that wound in both the individual and the social life which God has not given us any remedy for, and about which He says: My grace is all you need.<sup>37</sup>

In August, a Nordic theological meeting preceded the great ecumenical conference on Fanø, arranged by the World Alliance for Friendship through the Churches, together with Life and Work. The theology of Emil Brunner played an important part at the theological meeting, but this does not seem to have had any effect on the development of Group revivalism in Denmark. August 4–7, Faith and Order arranged a conference at Hindsgavl, with Sverre Norborg among the participants.<sup>38</sup> In September 1934, Emil Brunner lectured at the University of Copenhagen. His first pamphlet on the Group Movement was widely read in theological circles in Denmark. Brunner was informed by Hee Andersen about the influence of Group revivalism in Denmark – including its notably small influence in student circles, and he was asked to speak on the Group Movement before a student assembly.<sup>39</sup> Brunner was contacted by the

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<sup>35</sup> 'Kirken og Oxfordgruppebevægelsen' (Dagens Nyheder 1934, July 12).

<sup>36</sup> Høgsbro 1934:129.

<sup>37</sup> H. Høgsbro to Hee Andersen 1934, May 25 (Pa. 5034, RAK). Høgsbro was still critical in 1935, see Høgsbro 1935:134 (Oxford led to a purely human fellowship around certain religious experiences).

<sup>38</sup> See Schjørring 1976c:175 f.

<sup>39</sup> Ammundsen 1934:102, Hee Andersen to Brunner 1934, May 15, June 23 (ZZ). On the efforts of getting Brunner to speak at a meeting of so-called Nyborg-friends or at a

critical, Barth-influenced circles in Denmark as well, which lacked an understanding of his connection to the Oxford Group, and asked him to speak about his position on the Group, and his comprehension of it.<sup>40</sup> From December 1933, Brunner corresponded on theological matters with the Danish theologian Eduard Geismar, who invited him to the Theological Faculty in Copenhagen.<sup>41</sup>

In Autumn 1934, the until then most extensive Danish examination, Gunner Engberg's book with personal reflections on the Oxford Movement, was published. Engberg wrote from a standpoint of partial agreement, and treated the movement as nothing more or less than one of the revival movements.<sup>42</sup> He put some emphasis on the observation of sharing as the entrance ticket to the fellowship.<sup>43</sup> Hee Andersen was critical of Engberg's book, and stated that his hesitation had its roots in the matters of guidance and sharing, but without guidance and sharing, only ordinary things were left. N. H. Søe was especially critical of guidance, agreeing with Engberg in his final statement.<sup>44</sup>

On October 13–16, the Group in Sønderjylland arranged a house-party in the Rønshoved folk high-school, supported by Hee Andersen. Count Aage Moltke suggested visits to the very southern places in the border district. As a preparation, Moltke himself visited several important persons in the area.<sup>45</sup>

In November, the newly elected young chairman of the Home Mission, Christian Bartholdy, declared in an interview that the Home Mission ('Indre Mission') did not have a monopoly on revivals, especially in those parts of the country where their attitude was more possessive than aggressive.<sup>46</sup> Compared to the dogmatic declarations of the Norwegian Home Mission leaders, Bartholdy's attitude towards Group revivalism was from the very beginning a much more open and positive one, though not without reservations. Of greatest importance for Danish Group revivalism was the international Oxford Group campaign in Norway in late autumn 1934. The Danish press paid much

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bigger Group meeting, see also H. Ussing to H. O. Lange 1934, July 16, Aug. 2 (KBK Ny Kgl. Saml. 3736-4<sup>o</sup>). Hee Andersen translated Brunner's *Um die Erneuerung der Kirche* into Danish in 1935.

<sup>40</sup> Henry Christoffersen to Brunner 1934, Jan. 22 (ZZ): 'wir meinen, daß es Psychologi [sic], nicht Christentum, Religion nicht Offenbarung, Etik ohne Verständnis der führenden Grundgedanken des Christentums ist.'

<sup>41</sup> On the relations between Geismar and Brunner, see Schjørring 1976c, on Brunner and Group Revivalism in Denmark, especially p.177 ff. Professor, N. M. Plum, too, wrote an introductory article in BA 1934, Sept. 17.

<sup>42</sup> Engberg 1934:18.

<sup>43</sup> Engberg 1934:44. Further, Engberg was critical to the definition of sin, p.134 f., and the unhistorical attitude towards the early history of the Church, p.155 ff. See also G. Engberg: 'Hvad vil i Grunden "Oxford"-Bevægelsen?' (BeT 1935, March 27).

<sup>44</sup> Hee Andersen: 'Engbergs Oxford-Bog' (KD 1934, Oct. 23); Søe 1934:649.

<sup>45</sup> Vock 1989:180 f.

<sup>46</sup> BA 1934, Nov. 28.

attention to the Norwegian revival. Count Aage Moltke visited Høsbjør, saw Frank Buchman, and challenged him to come to Denmark with his team. Moltke regarded the contemporary Group activities in Denmark as a 'preparatory work,' and asked Ronald Fangen for help to create a fellowship on the basis of 'Oxford' thoughts, and planned an attack with a Norwegian-Danish team, whether Buchman came or not.<sup>47</sup> In early November 1934, – coincidentally with the Høsbjør party in Norway – Sverre Norborg took part in a five day series of public meetings in Copenhagen, on the deepening of the 'Oxford' thoughts, arranged by the group around Henry Ussing.<sup>48</sup>

In November, a big public meeting took place in a secular hall (Haandværkerforeningens Sal) in Viborg. Eleven planned testimonies were delivered, by Landinspektør Ove Nauntofte from Viborg, Pastor Th. Gaarn Larsen from Århus and two other clergymen, two female teachers and a headmistress, Count Aage Moltke, a dock labourer, a doctor, and a manager. Bishop Johannes Gøtzsche of Viborg spoke a blessing on the Oxford Movement in Viborg, and after another, improvised testimony, the meeting closed with a quiet time, followed by small Group meetings in private houses.<sup>49</sup> Further meetings were arranged in Augustenborg, Sønderborg, Graasten, Tinglev, Tønder, Esbjerg, Nyborg Strand, and, in November, in Ribe, with 300 participants, then, early in 1935, in Haderslev and Aabenraa, in February in Tønder, and in April in Graasten. The essence of these meetings was that a national renewal was possible only through a Christian revival.<sup>50</sup>

On 28 December, *Berlingske Tidende* published statements from so-called members of the Group Movement, among them Børge Hjerl-Hansen, H. W. Sprechler, and Christian Harhoff,<sup>51</sup> and in his New Year's sermon 1935, Professor Eduard Geismar voiced his views on the unacceptable choice between Barthianism and Group revivalism. While Barthianism denied the theological justification for speaking of a personal change, the Group Movement postulated this change as an experienced reality, even making it the central contents of the Gospel. To Geismar, the Barthian denial of personal change denied the new creation through the Holy Spirit, and was as such a reduction of the Gospel, while the immediate assurance of an experienced change in Group revivalism had to end in Phariseeism.<sup>52</sup>

Simultaneously, Frank Buchman, Sherry Day, and Sciff Wishard visited

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<sup>47</sup> Moltke to Fangen 1934, Nov. 29 (UBO 488a). On the manuscript Fangen has written some notes, probably from a quiet time, and among them: 'Snakk ut med Frank' [Have it out with Frank!]. See also R. Fangen: 'Hvad er "livsforvandling"?' (BA 1934, Dec. 27).

<sup>48</sup> Norborg 1962:160 f. According to Norborg, 20,000 people attended the public meetings in Copenhagen. Norborg may have confused these meetings with the later meetings in Copenhagen, in February 1936.

<sup>49</sup> 'Oxford-mødet i Viborg' (Viborg Stifts Folkeblad 1934, Nov. 16).

<sup>50</sup> Vock 1989:182.

<sup>51</sup> 'Oxford-Bevægelsen synes at brede sig rivende i Danmark' (BeT 1934, Dec. 28).

<sup>52</sup> Schjørring 1976c:178.



Denmark on a reconnoitring tour, making personal acquaintances through personal life-changing work on a small scale.<sup>53</sup> While staying at Skodsborg, Buchman saw both the expectations and the disappointments of the first public Danish house-party.<sup>54</sup> This house-party or 'stævne' was arranged by two young clergymen from Århus, Gaarn Larsen and Juul Nielsen, together with the Inspector Ove Nauntofte from Viborg, at Hadsten, the first week of January 1935. The many reports from the Norwegian campaign during the previous months raised the expectations to considerable heights. According to Nauntofte's report, the party had about 200 regular participants, while at least 1,000 – of whom many were critical outsiders – took part in one or more meetings. Press photographers and illustrators made the impatience greater, and the leading team – which included none of the most well-known Group leaders – did not have enough courage to send away the press and the many unannounced participants. Many participants were offended because nobody had time to share with them. Some un-Oxfordian discussions and exalted scenes, especially the dramatic reconciliation of pastor Granild with the actress Anna Larsen-Bjørner, her husband, Inspector Bjørner, and Dr. Carl Næser, were carried on, and the newspapers wrote much about these. Nauntofte's report ends with a testimony of how the leading team regained their fearlessness through the living faith in God, only twenty minutes before the evening meeting on the second, rather chaotic, day of the party. The party ended with a Holy Communion service, though some feared a sectarian development. The evaluation by the arrangers was divided.<sup>55</sup>

The public interest in the capital was met by a big discussion at the Student's Association, February 16, with an introduction by Sverre Norborg. The rest of the meeting oscillated between personal testimony (shipowner Harhoff, Pastor Ohrt, Judge Hoppe) and positive, sceptical, as well as critical contributions to the discussion (Chr. Bartholdy, Eduard Geismar, and Tage Schack). The 'Home Barthian' (Tidehvervsman) Schack claimed that Oxford created religiosity instead of preaching the Kingdom of God.<sup>56</sup> But the impression made by this and other late arrangements during the revival groups phase was shortly

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<sup>53</sup> See Dr. Poul Ernst in *Vort møde med Oxford-Gruppen 1935*:7 f.

<sup>54</sup> The earlier house-parties had not been public ones. Buchman's staying in Denmark was soon publicly known, even in Sweden, see SvM 1935, Feb. 8.

<sup>55</sup> Ove Nauntofte: 'Gruppestævnet i Hadsten' (KD 1935, Jan. 8; on Nauntofte, see further 'Min Synd' in *Oxford i Danmark II*:61 ff., and below 3.7), Helweg-Larsen 1935:107 f., Ammundsen 1935:111 f., Hoffmeyer 1935. For a critical, Grundtvigian report, see Højmark 1935. Reports of the party were immediately published in Sweden, see, for example, StTD 1935, Jan. 3, 'Märklig försoning på danskt Oxfordmöte' on the front page!

<sup>56</sup> PrB 1935:137 ff., Schjørring 1976c:179. The designations Home Barthians for the Tidehverv party, and Church Barthians for theologians like Høgsbro or Søe, are translations of Schwarz Lausten's descriptions, 1983:310, 'den hjemlige Barthianisme' and 'denne kirkelige barthianisme.'

weakened by the Oxford Group campaign.

Despite the mistakes and the un-Oxfordian actions of this phase, it worked as an effective preparation for the Oxford Group phase in at least two ways. First, the personalistic mentality of the Oxford Group way of life, or certain sides of it, prepared the way among some old Christians. An illustrative example is given in the memories of Christian Bartholdy, the president of the Home Mission Society (Kirkelig Forening for den Indre Mission i Danmark). He heard Hee Andersen at a clerical convent at Aalestrup in January 1935, speaking of clearing bad relations with human beings instead of waiting for an excuse, even if the other part was wrong. To Bartholdy, this meant a vocation to visit one of his parishioners, with a changed, personal relation as its consequence. Largely due to this, Bartholdy never rejected the Oxford Group.<sup>57</sup>

Secondly, during this phase the Church of Denmark got a new primate, as Bishop Harald Ostenfeld retired, and died later in the year. The editor of the Christian newspaper *Kristeligt Dagblad*, Christian Holt, who was a member of one of the early groups, nominated the new Dean of Copenhagen, Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard, also a group-member. Holt gave some information about the Minister's dislike of the previous main candidate, and after a campaign full of intrigues, Fuglsang-Damgaard was elected and appointed Bishop of Copenhagen. On the very day of his appointment, Paul Brodersen – to become for a long time a leading Danish Oxford Group man – was appointed his successor as Dean, without the position having, in the usual way, been declared vacant.<sup>58</sup> This change meant new and positive conditions for an international campaign in Denmark.

### IV.3. The Oxford Group Phase

#### *IV.3.1. The Dismantling of Group Revivalism*

A significant problem in revivalistic Group work in Denmark was that the people involved regarded their Church work as a Danish branch or transformation of the Oxford Group, often using the Oxford label and practices, while omitting the message of an international fellowship and a national and supernatural revolution and renaissance. For example, the original German subtitle of Oehler's *Fruchtbare Schweigen* was 'die Grundgedanken der Gruppenbewegung,' while the Danish translation had 'Grundtankerne i Oxford-Gruppe Bevægelsen,' though Oehler did not assimilate the Oxford

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<sup>57</sup> Bartholdy 1959:180 f.

<sup>58</sup> Lindhardt 1966:213, Schjørring 1980:44. On Brodersen and Fuglsang-Damgaard as Oxford Group theologians, see Ch. II.2.3.3.

Group vision of a supernational renaissance.<sup>59</sup> Despite the publications and the local groups, Group revivalism was, still in January 1935, in some Church circles interpreted as a variety of the classes of the British Methodists, with a presumed importance mostly to the small Danish Methodist Church.<sup>60</sup>

In Norway, with its very short revival groups phase, and in Sweden, these groups had similar Church-based views of the work, and revivalistic methods similar to those in Denmark, but they followed the clear advice of Frank Buchman not to arrange big house-parties without support of the international team. This was regarded as unguided action. Even in Germany, where for political reasons Group work very early got a national and independent form, and no international house-party took place, Frank Buchman and the international team played a more important part than in Denmark before the international campaign in 1935. The use of the Oxford label at the sensational Hadsten party in January 1935 obviously became too much for Buchman and his team, who were at the time present in Denmark. Their efforts of repairing the damage through a preparatory meeting with Group people in Denmark do not seem to have been any success.<sup>61</sup> This is the most decisive explanation of the international team's radical dismantling of early, independent Group work in Denmark.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. the Swedish 'grupprörelsens grundtankar,' in conformity with the German title. On Oehler's influence in Denmark, see also Andersen 1934:14.

<sup>60</sup> Carl Ferdinand Wagner to Calina Fuglsang-Damgaard 1935, Jan. 12 (Pa. 6997:3, RAK). On Wagner, see further 'En gammel Præst om Oxfordbevægelsen' (Oxford i Danmark II:35 ff.).

<sup>61</sup> See 'over Deltagerne i Sammenkomsten med Oxfordgruppens ledere paa Sct. Annæ Plads 3, FREDAG AFTEN den 11' Jan. 1935 (dupl., Institut for kirkehistorie, Copenhagen): later well-known Oxford people, such as Dr. Poul Ernst, Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard, Kai Hammerich, the Harhoff family, Hee Andersen, Børge Hjerl-Hansen, and H. O. Lange, mingled with other famous people such as the Grand Duchess Olga, General With, Kammersangerinde Emilie Ulrich, and the actor Johannes Poulsen. For the list of the international team, see Appendix Nr. 2. See also Morthorst 1968:108.

<sup>62</sup> Buchman wrote to H. Kenaston Twitchell 1935, Jan. 30 (Lean 1985:225 f): 'The local forces are not clever enough to handle the situation. So I have asked them for the moment to refrain from anything that would catch public attention. Everything had been wonderfully prepared, the Bishop favourable, when some old-fashioned Christians started a house-party on old lines and did not know how to handle the press. They had a prayer meeting for reporters and so gave them a splendid chance to get a scoop. We will not be able to start with a house-party, because of the wrong sort they have been having [...] unless we do something quickly, this nation will be overripe and the Christian forces will sensationalize the Groups and people will not have the opportunity to know the real message.' See also Buchman to R. Fangen 1935, Sept. 20 (UBO 488 a), writing on Sweden, that he felt that 'we want to free the work there from the peril of misunderstanding that we suffered from all through Denmark through unguided advance work'; further a message from Buchman to E. Arbin in H. Blake to Arbin 1936, Dec. 11 (copy in Okat.saml.Blomberg, UUB). See also Spoerri 1971:96 f. – 'Es war unvermeidlich, daß ein Zusammenstoß mit den lokalen Gruppen, die sich an ein allzu

This dismantling was probably modelled on the Swiss campaign in the summer 1934. During his visit in Denmark in autumn 1934, Emil Brunner had told Knud Hee Andersen of his former dissatisfaction with the arrival of an international team, since he thought a good Swiss variety of the movement was at that time being shaped. But at the house-party he understood that his fear of the talk of a world revolution as leading away from the central, Christian message, was unfounded, since the only way shown by the Group was the change of single persons. Secondly, Brunner had found that the Swiss particularly needed the greater vision and the wider horizon presented by the foreign team. At that house-party, decisions were taken to abolish all 'groups' – 'nicht Gruppen, sondern Truppen' – and the work was instead directed towards the change of certain circles: teachers, doctors, etc.<sup>63</sup> This preparation by Brunner explains how Hee Andersen without difficulties accepted the new order established by the international team, and worked in loyalty to the new directions.

The critical P. Helweg-Larsen grasped the character of the Oxford Group work, and its contrast to independent Group revivalism, by stating that neither quiet time nor guidance or sharing was new as such. The new element in the Oxford Group was the way it was all practically systematized and made functional through 'team work.'<sup>64</sup> But the impressions from the Group revivalistic period were not easily changed, and as late as in early January 1936, thoughts of Oxford as another revival circulated on the island of Fyn: 'We have had a most significant House-party here [Svendborg], which is already changing the whole conception of the work, both among the Fyn leaders themselves, and among the general public who up till now have had no interest or else suspected another "Revival".'<sup>65</sup>

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persönliches, weiches Erweckungschristentum gewöhnt hatten, erfolgte.'

<sup>63</sup> Hee Andersen to H. Høgsbro 1936, Feb. 8 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK). On the reactions of the older groups in Switzerland to the international campaign, see Spoerri 1971:100 ('Die an ein gemächlicheres Tempo gewohnten lokalen Gruppen wurden überrannt.'). 107 ('Daß es in allen lokalen Gruppen solche gab, die sich vergewaltigt fühlten und das ganze Vorgehen als unschweizerisch empfanden, war nicht erstaunlich.')

<sup>64</sup> Helweg-Larsen 1935:132 f. The attempts to establish independent groups inspired by the Oxford Group, though working in a non-Oxfordian way were rejected by Mestral 1939:289 f. as 'groupisme,' with explicit reference to Denmark before the arrival of the international team. All such intentions to 'fonder' a group must fail, and their meetings have to be dissolved. An 'équipe' (team) was something different. Cf. the unhistorical approach in Lindhardt 1951:6, 1966:212 ff., who makes no difference between Group revivalism and the Oxford Group.

<sup>65</sup> George M. Fraser to H. Høgsbro 1936, Jan. 30 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

### *IV.3.2. The 1935 Spring Campaign*

Since Frank Buchman was eager to be welcomed by the leading Churchmen, he visited Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard in February 1935, to confer on the start of the Oxford Group work in Copenhagen. His visit was very well received by Dr. Fuglsang-Damgaard, as a sign of the Group's principle to act not beside, but in the Church.<sup>66</sup>

Frank Buchman gathered an international team of 200–300 – some directly from Norway, and additional ones from England<sup>67</sup> – for three days of training. Their headquarters were in Hotel Phønix in Copenhagen. Buchman openly declared that it was about more than a revival: a spiritual revolution, perhaps ending in a new and major reformation. Then the campaign opened with a much debated meeting in the Odd Fellow Palace in Copenhagen, March 27, in the presence of the Minister for Church affairs, P. Dahl, and several foreign diplomats. The foreigners were welcomed by the Bishop of Copenhagen and the former Dean, Dr. Henry Ussing, while the new Dean, Dr. Paul Brodersen acted as interpreter. To many listeners – especially to those listening on the radio – the contrast was embarrassing between the sincere Danish and Norwegian speakers, and the humorous foreigners, who spoke mostly about themselves, and were greeted with loud applause. The meeting was concluded with a quiet time, the Lord's Prayer, and the Blessing, given by Bishop Logan H. Roots of Hankow.<sup>68</sup> In the following week, 20,000–30,000 people attended Oxford Group meetings in Copenhagen (for example, morning meetings for women), and as early as on the second evening, the impression was different. At

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<sup>66</sup> Fuglsang-Damgaard 1936Da:12. Fuglsang-Damgaard was somewhat critical after the first meeting, but cleared this with Buchman (Lean 1985:226). His father-in-law, the resident chaplain of the Århus Cathedral, Carl Ferdinand Wagner, had emphasized the importance for the Danish Church of the leadership of the Oxford Group in Denmark (to Calina Fuglsang-Damgaard 1935, Jan. 12, Pa. 6997:3, RAK).

<sup>67</sup> Of the first 210 team-workers, over 130 were British. 17 came from the U.S.A., 11 from Holland, 5 from Switzerland, 2 from France, 3 from Germany, and 9 from Norway. Of the total number, 7 or 8 were clergymen (Lundgren 1935:26 f). On the Dutch participation, see de Loor 1986:86 f.

<sup>68</sup> Oxford-Gruppen i Danmark. Aabningsmøde i Odd Fellow Palæets store sal i København...1935. Ammundsen 1935:112, Helweg-Larsen 1935:108 ff., Lundgren 1935:7-24, Hammerich 1960:134, Lean 1985:226. Theophil Spoerri's short speech is published in Spoerri 1975:176 f., who quotes Kierkegaard: 'Geist ist, wie viel Macht eines Menschen Erkenntnis über sein Leben hat,' and states that the need of our time is that 'Es gibt sehr viele intelligente Menschen, die aber nicht aktiv sind. Es gibt sehr viele aktive Leute, die aber nicht sehr intelligent sind. Das Geheimnis der geistigen Führerschaft ist, daß Erkenntnis und Leben zusammenkommen.' Among the other speakers were Buchman, Loudon Hamilton, H. A. Armitstead, Jimmy Watt, Lady Richmond, G. Light, Cuthbert Bardsley, George and Alex Wood, Wilfred Squire, George Daneel (South Africa), Elisabeth Morris (New York), and from Norway, Bergliot Larsen, Ronald Fangen, Fredrik Ramm, and Erling Wikborg.

the following Sunday evening meeting, Buchman said that they now were proceeding to speak about the Cross of Christ, the foundation for the whole movement. Then the campaign continued with three daily meetings for men at the Y.M.C.A, followed by meetings every Tuesday in April. In the second week, the team went out on the town, speaking in churches, parish houses, and private homes. Some in the team left, and others came instead, so that approximately 500 foreigners worked in Copenhagen during this period. While most of the personal work in Norway was done by Norwegians, the foreigners did everything in Denmark. Working in the international team were, among others, Rev. John Watt from Scotland, Canon Streeter and Professor Grensted from Oxford, Loudon Hamilton, the former communist Jimmy Watt, the Americans Bishop Roots, who had arrived from China, and Professor Wood from Harvard, from Norway Fangen, Ramm, and Miss Bergliot Larsen, and Professor Spoerri from Switzerland. Their strength was in the personal talk.<sup>69</sup>

The house-party at the Home Mission centre in Haslev started April 17, continuing for twelve days with three successive parties for students, priests, and business people, respectively. On Easter Eve, there were 600–700 communicants in the church, and on Sunday after Easter, 2–3,000 visitors came from Zealand. Here the Danes began to lead meetings, the missionary doctor Chr. Fridodt-Møller being the first. Bishop Roots preached about the Cross on Thursday in Holy Week, and Bishop Linton from Persia paid a short visit. While the start of the Danish campaign had a much more superficial character than its Norwegian equivalent, the first house-party went deeper than Høsbjør – largely because of the reverse order. The Cross of Christ, guidance, and the importance of life-changing work through changed men and women in their ordinary occupations were emphasized, and one of the newspapers even described the Haslev party as a life-changing conference.<sup>70</sup>

Following this a private meeting was held at Gisselfeld, and a meeting for country people at Hellestrup. On May 16–25, a campaign was arranged on the island of Fyn, starting with public meetings in Odense (the first one with an audience of 3,000), continuing with smaller arrangements, and a couple of meetings in Svendborg, concluding with a house-party at Nyborg Strand from May 21. 7,000 – 8,000 people were reached, and a Danish team of 50 worked side by side with the international team. A journalist from *Berlingske Tidende*, Miss Gudrun Egebjerg, testified at the meeting in Svendborg, and at a meeting for clergy in Odense speeches were given by Dean Brodersen, Pastor Helweg, and Professor Bentzen.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Helweg-Larsen 1935:111 ff., Oxford i Danmark I 1935:50 (Emil Blythgen-Petersen, ‘Fra Odd Fellow-Palæt til Kronborg’), Lean 1985:226 ff. On the Danish campaign, see also Scharpf 1935.

<sup>70</sup> Helweg-Larsen 1935:113 ff., Lundgren 1935:115 ff., BT 1935, Apr. 23.

<sup>71</sup> Helweg-Larsen 1935:115 ff., Oxford i Danmark 1935:52. ‘To Gange 1000 Mennesker til Oxford-Møde i Svendborg’ (Svendborg Amts Tidende 1935, May 20). Frank Buchman took an active part in the planning, see, for example, Buchman to Henry

The finale of this spring campaign was the big manifestation at Kronborg Castle in Helsingør (Elsinore) on Whit Sunday. After a short training party at Marienlyst, a public house-party grew to a final manifestation with approximately 10,000 participants. Speeches were given by Frank Buchman, Lord Addington, Professor Runestam from Sweden, and three Danes, concluding with the Bishop of Copenhagen saying the Benediction.<sup>72</sup> Buchman's motive for the big service was:

A new illumination coming to the Scandinavian countries through an outpouring of the Spirit of God, bringing a new quality of leadership, free from the bonds of fear, rising above ambition, and flexible to the direction of God's Holy Spirit; a new quality of public opinion, whose values are dictated by the standards of Christ; a new spirit of honesty, dare and effectiveness in business; a right conception of news in the Press; an awareness of politicians of what is the true destiny of a country; nothing short of a national resurrection influencing the international family.<sup>73</sup>

The Kronborg meeting was the first in a row of big European meetings outside Britain used by Frank Buchman to spread his latest visions in further countries on the Continent, through the newspapers, the radio, and through long quotations in the invitations to other house-parties.<sup>74</sup>

Frank Buchman had been anxious to get in contact with the labour world. In Copenhagen this was realized, to a great extent thanks to the Christian labour work of Rev. Aage Falk Hansen. This work was started as arrangements for unemployed men by the Danish Y.M.C.A. (K.F.U.M.) in 1919, and Falk Hansen had taken over as leader in 1927. It was widely noted during the Oxford Group campaign, when the association of Social Democratic students at Copenhagen University arranged an anti-Oxford meeting in Grundtvig's House, April 4, 1935. Their purpose was probably to deliver a decisive blow against the new offensive for Christian faith and morals. Their leader was Bernhard Bøggild, a wholesaler and former student of theology. Additional

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Ussing 1935, May 14 (Pa. 6480, RAK): 'I hope you can come with us and help in the team in Odense. We travel at 9.10 Thursday morning, and begin that night, with three meetings on Friday, and continuing through Saturday. Sunday will be spent in the churches and in homes. [...] I know that there are many in Fyn who would not only welcome your presence, but whose whole life direction would be altered.' On Gudrun Egebjerg, see 'Tre Søndage i Jylland og en Aften i København' (Oxford i Danmark II:48 ff.), and several letters to Halfdan Høgsbro (PA 6922:B.3, RAK), and Barbro Alving (A 96, GUB).

<sup>72</sup> Helweg-Larsen 1935:117 ff. On the Kronborg party, see, for example, B.T. 1935, June 10, SvD, Dagens Nyheder 1935, June 11.

<sup>73</sup> Buchman to A. Runestam 1935, May 20 (Runestam Coll.II).

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, Les Groupes d'Oxford en Suisse. Rencontre à Rheinfelden 12–21 Octobre 1935:[3], with a whole-page-quotation from Frank Buchman's speech at Kronborg.

speakers were Per Meurling from Sweden, and Erling Schreiner from Norway. In the audience were two of the critical Home Barthian (Tidehverv) ministers (Tage Schack and N. I. Heje). The speakers tried to ridicule the Oxford Group, Meurling explaining their absence from Sweden as due to Swedish laws against the entry of foreign artists, variety stars, and actors, and emphasizing the hostility of the Oxford Group towards the workers. After a couple of opening, critical contributions from the audience, eight Christian workers in two hours simply changed the anti-Oxford evening into a manifestation of their Christian faith. These workers were not Oxford Group men – they had been trained by Falk Hansen for a Christian crusade among the capital's labourers, and they declared themselves to be Christian Social Democrats. To the journalists, the evening was a sensation, and the events were animatedly commented in the newspapers.<sup>75</sup>

Less successful were the efforts to make an Oxford manifestation out of the consecration of Bishop Axel Rosendal of Roskilde, May 5, 1935. In the presence of Frank Buchman and several of the international team, Dean Brodersen gave an Oxford-inspired introductory speech, while the new Bishop, Grundtvigian, and rather reserved to the Oxford Group, put a certain reverse emphasis on his sermon.<sup>76</sup>

The importance of the Oxford message to business life was emphasized in a pamphlet on unselfish, Christian life, published by the Oxford Group in the parish of Maglegaard. Its main principle for business was that what is right, is also wise. The 'right' thing was explained as right and reasonable with respect to the others, too. The task of the Christian businessman was to be the salt of business. Though this was no quick way to outwardly success, the businessman who by nature and spontaneously did what was right, was in the long run a winner.<sup>77</sup>

As the rush of the public had been great, and the Danish press mostly favourable, with the radical attacks too superficial to cause any real damage, the Oxford Group campaign was studied and discussed throughout the country. Of special importance was the impression made by the testimony of editors and journalists like Christian Holt in *Kristeligt Dagblad*, as well as Carl Henrik Clemmensen and Emil Blytgen-Petersen in *Dagens Nyheder*, and especially Gudrun Egebjerg in *Berlingske Tidende*, who completely identified herself with the Oxford Group. The many newly won seem to have been mostly stagnated Christians, religious seekers, who had at least been raised in Christian homes.

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<sup>75</sup> Viggo Jensen: 'Anti-Oxfordmødet i Grundtvigs Hus' (Falk Hansen 1937<sup>2</sup>:146 ff.), and Amundsen 1935:114, Helweg-Larsen 1935:111, Lundgren 1935:100 ff., Lean 1985:227. Per Meurling regarded the events at the meeting as Fascist tactics (!), see *Ny Dag* 1938, Aug. 18 (pen-name John Garter). On the radical Social Democratic views, see Nielsen 1935:356, who concludes that there was no place in Denmark for either Elmer Gantry, Buchman, or Hitler.

<sup>76</sup> 'Stærke Oxford-toner ved bispevielsen i gaar' (*Dagens Nyheder* 1935, May 6).

<sup>77</sup> Mørup 1935:8, 12, 14.



To many young people reacting against their religious homes, the Oxford Group meant a new alternative. Those with a totally areligious background were few. During 1935, the influence was rather limited to the cities.<sup>78</sup>

#### *IV.3.3. The 1935 Summer Campaign in Jutland*

At the end of June, Frank Buchman stayed in Aarhus for eight days of orientation, and also visited the bishops of Haderslev, Ribe, and Aarhus. About 100 Danes followed him to the house-party in Oxford. Here, Buchman began to speak of 'God-controlled supernaturalism' as 'the only enduring foundation for world peace,' as internationalism had failed and nationalism could unite a nation only. The new vision was launched in the big Jutland campaign, in August.<sup>79</sup> The international team was the biggest ever in a foreign country: 300 persons, working together with 300 Danes, and then yet another 100 foreigners. Responsible for the preparations was Count Aage Moltke, who received Buchman in Esbjerg, at the end of July. During the drive to Ribe, he especially noted Buchman's understanding of the border question. Great interest in and need of help from the international team had also been shown in Flensburg on the German side.<sup>80</sup>

The team was welcomed to Bygholm near Horsens on August 1, and started with a closed training-party, then opening with a public house-party for priests and teachers, August 5–12, continuing with other meetings in Horsens. Another team was sent to Aalborg, August 5–8, and to Sønderborg, August 7–13, where several Germans took part in the work, and a fifth of the population attended Oxford Group arrangements. Here Danes and Germans gave mutual testimonies of their changed relations. Meetings were arranged at other places, for example Holstebro. Among those testifying were Gerda Mundt, Member of the Danish Parliament (Folketinget), and Gudrun Egebjerg, journalist from Copenhagen. On August 13–18, the whole team gathered in Aarhus, ending the campaign with a house-party at Fanø, August 19–26, with a simultaneous campaign in Esbjerg.<sup>81</sup>

The public interest was great. In Aalborg, where Bishop Paul Oldenburg

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<sup>78</sup> Ammundsen 1935:114. Helweg-Larsen 1935:110 wrote that only a rather small part of the audience stayed for tea and conversation after the first meeting. Cf. Lean 1985:226, who states that 'many of the workers and atheist intellectuals stayed on to talk with the speakers, some deciding to experiment then and there with the ideas they had heard.'

<sup>79</sup> Buchman 1942:3. F. D. Buchman: 'Oxford – supernatural' (Oxford i Danmark 1935:9 ff.), E. Blythgen-Petersen: 'Oxford-døgn over Jylland' (Oxford i Danmark II:69 ff.). See also Ch. II.5.

<sup>80</sup> Helweg-Larsen 1935:120 f., Vock 1989:185 f. On the Jutland campaign, see also Scharpff 1935b.

<sup>81</sup> 'Oxford-Stævnet paa Fanø' (KD 1935, Aug. 23), Helweg-Larsen 1935:121, Scharpff 1935, Vock 1989:187 f.

greeted the team, each evening meeting was attended by 4,000–5,000 people, and about the same number gathered in Horsens. Here a meeting was held even in the State prison. In Sønderborg, in the border region, all the 24 German members of the international team took part, greeted by the vicar, Halfdan Høgsbro. In Aarhus, where both the Bishop, F. C. Bruun-Rasmussen, and the Dean, Skat Hoffmeyer, kept their distance, the great meetings were held at the Stadium, with the Bishop and Dean of Copenhagen taking active part, and on the final evening, August 18, 4,000 people gathered in the Cathedral, with 2,000–3,000 listening outside.<sup>82</sup> Among the foreign speakers were the Metropolitan of India, Foss Westcott, who regarded the Oxford Group as a revolution of the missionary work. More than 1,000 attended the house-party at Fanø – having a clear supernatural, social emphasis.<sup>83</sup> The last meeting, in the Cathedral of Haderslev, gathered about 2,500 people. Halfdan Høgsbro testified to the immense results in the form of a changed atmosphere in the Border region. The Jutland campaign had both supernatural and ecumenical effects, as Danes and Germans, of Lutheran or Reformed confession, together received Holy Communion at a service where one Danish, one German, and one American pastor officiated.<sup>84</sup>

A personal example is Alfred Nielsen, manager of one of the largest sawmills in Jutland, recalling that his eyes were opened to his selfish pride towards his wife, his workers, his colleagues, and the Germans in Sønderjylland/Nordschleswig. Previously, Nielsen had refused his employees a wage increase, on the grounds that the firm's finances could not stand it. In 1937 he told his men that the true reason had been his own avidity. Together they agreed upon adequate provision for everyone.<sup>85</sup>

After the campaign, many of the international team went off to Geneva, while only the American pastor Howard Blake and his family were left in Denmark. The period closed with a smaller meeting in Flensburg, on the German side of the border, September 10, although local campaigns continued throughout the season.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> E. Blythgen-Petersen: 'Oxford-døgn over Jylland' (Oxford i Danmark II:72 ff.), 'Oxford-Finalen i Aarhus Domkirke' (Aarhus Stiftstidende 1935, Aug. 19).

<sup>83</sup> 'Oxford-Gruppen For Verdens Genopbygning...': 'Paa en Tid, hvor en hel Verden befinder sig i Nød, er der mange, der ønsker at blive kvalificeret til at tage ledelsen i en national Genfødsel.'

<sup>84</sup> Helweg-Larsen 1935:121 f., Vock 1989:189. While Bishop Westcott was in Horsens, Archbishop Temple of York attended a Faith and Order Committee meeting at Hindsgavl, where he was surprised by the question from a journalist if he thought the Oxford Group was the solution of the problems of the world and the individual.

<sup>85</sup> Lean 1985:230.

<sup>86</sup> For example, in the Church of Herlufsholm, September 27, with Knud Hee Andersen, the K.F.U.M.-secretary Kaj Petersen, and others ('Oxfords første store Fremstød i Næstved,' Næstved Tidende 1935, Sept. 28).

#### IV.3.4. Danish Oxford Group Publications

Christian Holt was Editor-in-chief of the Danish Christian daily, *Kristeligt Dagblad*. He had encountered a personal challenge in the Oxford message, either to personal change or to leave it behind. He learnt from the Group that behind all personal sins was the totally materialistic, pleasure-seeking and selfish will, which he had never surrendered to God. While his sins had been left at the Cross, he had not crucified his life. The Oxford Group stopped him in his escape. He described what he got as nothing more, no baptism in the Spirit, but the consequences, i. e. the obedience of faith. His theology did not change, but his politics did.<sup>87</sup> On September 22, Holt published his apologies to his readers for having written in a Pharisaical or scornful manner in matters of Church politics, resigned from his post, and returned to the Church as a minister.<sup>88</sup>

In *Præsteforeningens Blad*, Knud Hee Andersen raised the question if the Danish Church was ready for a revival. The demand was for active cooperation in the work for changing people. The weak point was often the lack of total sharing. In the subsequent discussion, N. Otto Jensen accused the Oxford Group of placing itself in God's place, and also criticized the special Oxford services as a sort of private enjoyment.<sup>89</sup>

A Christian social vicar of a Grundtvigian family, Halfdan Helweg, had met Oxford at the Hindsgavl party in 1934, at meetings in Denmark and Sweden (!), and finally through Frank Buchman's work in Copenhagen in 1935. Unsatisfied with the impersonal preaching of the Gospel in the Barthian spirit, Helweg – through his encounter with the Oxford Group – won what he described not as a conversion, but a change through the Spirit, leading to personal testimony, and thus approaching the Lutheran idea of a common priesthood.<sup>90</sup> In his book on Church on march, Helweg found that the hope of eternity was necessary for the work of the Christian, while this work was necessary if his faith and love were to be true and genuine. The Kingdom of God was realized through the world revolution of the mind, and when Jesus returned to let the Kingdom appear in glory, the personal hope would move with Him, because through the work, man had been working together with Him.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> *Vort møde med Oxford-gruppen* 1935:49 f., 52 f. Holt further published a pamphlet, in which he, 193?:24 f., recalled Zinzendorf's words before the image of the Crucified: This I have done for you. What have you done for me? and Holt's answer was: I have given you my sins, but I have not given you my whole life. See also Holt [193?]. Of decisive importance to Holt's surrender was a talk with Fredrik Ramm at the Langelinie in Copenhagen, and a subsequent talk with his wife, Eli (Morthorst 1968:91, 93 ff.).

<sup>88</sup> See Holt [193?], Morthorst 1968:95 f. Holt had written letters of personal confession, asking forgiveness, several months earlier. See, for example, Holt to A. Bentzen 1935, Apr. 21 (RAK).

<sup>89</sup> Andersen 1935:646 f., Leth 1935, Jensen 1935:732.

<sup>90</sup> *Vort møde med Oxford-gruppen* 1935:45 ff.

<sup>91</sup> Helweg 1935:76 f.

As in Norway, testimonial statements and articles were collected and published in two books titled *Oxford i Danmark*. The second one also contained a popular theological presentation of the message of the Oxford Group, by Paul Brodersen. Through these books, information and propaganda was widely and quickly spread in Denmark. Already in 1935, the events of Copenhagen and Haslev were presented in Swedish as well, together with excerpts from Danish newspapers, as the triumphal progress of the Oxford Group in Denmark (*Oxfordgruppens segertåg i Danmark*). *Vort møde med Oxford-Gruppen* (1935) is a printed presentation of the Oxford Group work through seven personal testimonies. It was translated in manuscript, read and authorized by Frank Buchman personally. The contributors represented different sections of the upper middle-class Danish society: a doctor, a missionary doctor, a manager, a lieutenant-colonel, an editor, a dean, and a vicar.<sup>92</sup>

#### *IV.3.5. Differing Reactions by Religious and Theological Parties*

As opposed to the Norwegian situation, the Oxford Group in Denmark had no changed famous political or cultural key persons corresponding to Hambro, Fangen, or Ramm. The businessmen involved were not used to making religious or political statements, and consequently the development was more dependent on the reactions by religious organizations, groups, and theologians. The public theological debate in Denmark was not of long duration, but intense, the index to the 1935 volume of *Præsteforeningens Blad* showing 1 1/3 columns of printed articles, items, and letters on the Oxford Group – reviews excluded. As Paul Nedergaard summed up the year 1935: many saw a brother in Oxford, other saw a big bad wolf.<sup>93</sup>

On the invitation and explicit wish of the K.F.U.M. in Copenhagen, the international team took over their Tuesday meetings during April 1935, to present an authentic picture of their work. To the youth organization this meant

- 1) A change of form for the Tuesday meetings from the one speaker/one leader-system to a teamwork;
- 2) A new view regarding fellowship with an honest surrender to one another;
- 3) A renewed view regarding the aim of the K.F.U.M. through the question of what to do for all those who did not come to the meetings.

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<sup>92</sup> The contributors were Poul Ernst, Paul Brodersen, Christian Frimodt-Møller, Gunnar Gregersen, H. A. V. Hansen, Halfdan Helweg, and Christian Holt. Frimodt-Møller to Halfdan Høgsbro 1935, June 18 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK). To Frimodt-Møller, Buchman's censorship was positive, and worked as a guarantee against misunderstanding the Movement.

<sup>93</sup> Nedergaard 1935:866.

The K.F.U.M. had a rich heritage from Luther, Barth and the Home Mission. But the Oxford Group had showed that despite this they had shirked from their duty.<sup>94</sup> In the summer 1935, the Danish K.F.U.M. conference listened to some critical lectures on Luther and Oxford, by the Church Barthian lecturer N. H. Søe. His views were coloured by the discussion between Barth and Brunner about the possibility of a connecting point for the Gospel in man, and whether man had a natural 'receiver,' or if God, in sending his word, created the receiver as well. Søe found the Oxford Group teaching on sin so superficial that it was almost useless in attacking the home-made harmony between his best efforts and the grace of God.<sup>95</sup>

The American form of Oxford Movement was so centred on the Self and its experiences that the Gospel of the Cross was not allowed a voice of Lutheran clarity and power. And when Frank Buchman in his Whitsun proclamation to the Danish people spoke of the great truth, revived by the Oxford Group, that God speaks to men, it was either untruth or un-Christian enthusiasm. Guidance had to be either a new revelation to be obeyed, or unsafe, to be tested in the light of the Scriptures.<sup>96</sup> Further, Søe found a lack of eschatology: the peace and the happiness were already unbroken realities, and the bliss already realized.<sup>97</sup>

In October 1935, Søe – together with Paul Brodersen – initiated a discussion on the Oxford Group and the Danish Church in the Menighedskonvent, and emphasized the confusing and ambiguous character of Group work. The combination of Dr. Ussing and the superficial book by Begbie was confusing, and so was the fact that people like Søe himself neither wished to be associated with Frank Buchman, nor to reject the Group as such, as this would be not less than a sin. The confusion depended largely on the ambiguous use of 'forvandlet' (changed).<sup>98</sup> Brodersen, on the contrary, emphasized the aim of the Oxford Group as putting new truth and new power of life into personal faith, to create a new fellowship in the Church, and to challenge the Christian Church to new activity and new conquests, since the isolation of the Church was felt to be a great lack.<sup>99</sup>

Two years later, Søe published his views on the Oxford Group in Denmark in the German *Junge Kirche*. He recognized its positive effects on both previously uninterested people from the upper classes, and old Christians. The practice of sharing had been of great importance – often surely a sort of psychoanalysis with a Christian flavour – as was the demand for restitution as well. Old

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<sup>94</sup> The K.F.U.M.-secretary, Kaj Petersen, 'Ungdomsarbejderen' (Oxford i Danmark I:117 ff., 122). See also Petersen 1935, 1936. Cf. the critical attitude of the General secretary of the K.F.U.M., Chr. Baun.

<sup>95</sup> Søe 1935:8, 19. Fyns Tidende 1935, June 14 'Docent N. H. Søe om Oxfordbevægelsen.'

<sup>96</sup> Søe 1935:21, 28 f.

<sup>97</sup> Søe 1935:33.

<sup>98</sup> Søe 1935c:779, 781.

<sup>99</sup> Brodersen 1935:810, 814 f.

sins, misunderstandings, and walls between human beings had been taken away. New and deep friendships had been established across the former borders of Church parties. But new walls had been built as well, in families and congregations. Non-Oxfordians were treated as second-class Christians, and their reservations were regarded as consequences of hidden sins. When sharing was treated as a condition for change, and the absolution was omitted or played an incidental part, the result was a new psycho-analytical legalism. Guidance was also criticized. In many parts of Denmark, the practice had been modified in an evangelic direction, but the danger of 'Phariseism' was still there, in three ways:

1. Man appelliert an das normale ethische Bewußtsein bei den Menschen und weiß nicht, daß wir uns von der Bibeloffenbarung lehren lassen müssen, was z. B. Liebe heißt.
2. Man verschiebt sehr leicht das Schwergewicht der Belehrung ins Moralische. Und
3. man redet oft (seltener bei uns als in den englisch-amerikanischen Kreisen), als wäre es möglich, jede Sünde restlos zu überwinden.<sup>100</sup>

Many of the newly changed had been lost, while others had grown in their faith. The genuine Oxford Movement could not become more than an episode in the Danish Church. Its remaining benefits were 'mehr Missionswille und Laienaktivität, mehr Ernstnehmen der schlichten moralischen Forderungen des Christentums, mehr Gemeinschaftssinn.'<sup>101</sup>

Professor Eduard Geismar, at first rejecting the simple choice between Barthianism and Group revivalism, while – influenced by Emil Brunner – expressing his moderated, but critical evaluation of the Group Movement, was asked for an explanation of why he, being influenced by Søren Kierkegaard, had not unambiguously criticized the Oxford Group. Geismar answered by criticising the methodism, the happy self-testimony, and mass agitation with the aid of the absolute standards, though he still found a striking similarity between Kierkegaard's words on Christ as the archetype ('Forbilledet'), imitation ('Efterfølgelse'), and Buchmanism.<sup>102</sup>

Among the early critics were the circles influenced by Danish Home Barthian<sup>103</sup> (Tidehverv) theology, and its objective, purely eschatological

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<sup>100</sup> Søe 1937:136 ff.

<sup>101</sup> Søe 1937:139 f.

<sup>102</sup> E. Geismar: 'Søren Kierkegaard og Buchmanismen' (Politiken 1936, Feb. 3). See further PrB 1936:156 ff., Schjørring 1976c:179 f. Geismar explained his views to Brunner 1935, Apr. 30 (Schjørring 1976c:193): 'Das Wort changed muß offenbar vieldeutig sein. Selbst weiß ich nicht recht, was ich mit diesen Menschen anfangen soll. Denn das wichtige, was sie sagen, hat Kierkegaard mich mein ganzes Leben gelehrt. Aber dennoch bin ich ein Sünder.'

<sup>103</sup> Keller [1933]:123 stated that Barth, during his visit to Denmark, refused 'to be used

understanding of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. In November 1933, Christian Lindskrog reviewed the Danish edition of Allen's *He that Cometh in Tidehverv*, and described the Oxford Group as the purest, finest, and most accomplished and deep Phariseism to that day, as revealed in man's efforts to manage before God with God's help by doing enough, and becoming at least partly free from sin. His final judgment was that the Oxford Group was a temptation.<sup>104</sup> In 1934, Tage Schack rejected Group teaching on guidance as contrary to the Gospel, by treating God as a hotel porter, of whom one may at any time demand the most detailed information about anything, i.e. as a false religion.<sup>105</sup> A sharp protest against the Oxford Group as a treason to the Gospel and the people – written by Schack – was published in several Copenhagen newspapers, March 31, 1935. It was answered by the Norwegian Bishop Berggrav at a meeting in the Odd Fellow Palace the same afternoon.<sup>106</sup>

A majority of the Grundtvigians were reserved, because of the unsacramental character of the Oxford Group. While Jens Krustrup in Holstebro criticized the preaching of a passive gospel in Grundtvigian circles, and found in the Oxford Group a healthy reminder of the needed activity for seeking victorious power over sin, Asger Højmark rejected the Group. Aage Møller, the folk high-school principal of Rønshoved in Sønderjylland, who already in 1934 had opened his school to a Danish Group revivalistic house-party, branded the international campaign as a hunt for success without any trace of the Spirit of God, even as heathenism in the same spirit as Hitler's or Lenin's. Some Grundtvigians, who had earlier enjoyed, for example, the clerical house-party at Nyborg Strand in 1934, rejected the international campaign, while other Grundtvigian priests changed their minds and took a positive attitude on the Oxford Group.<sup>107</sup>

Before the 1935 campaign, one of the leading Home Barthians, Knud Hansen, wrote a series of articles in the Grundtvigian *Højskolebladet*, subse-

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simply as a criticism of the church by a group of young and negative thinking minds,' and that 'it became evident that Barth himself was more moderate and cautious than certain of his followers, and that the difference between Barth and the Barthians must never be forgotten.'

<sup>104</sup> Lindskrog 1933:144.

<sup>105</sup> Schack 1934:144 ff. ('1. Den kender for det første *intet til Synden*. [...] 2. [...] udslætter [...] *Forskellen mellem Gud og Mennesket*. 3. [...] er de ikke *bundet av Ordet*.'

<sup>106</sup> For example, *Politiken*. See also Lundgren 1935:73 ff., Tidehverv 1935:56 f., further p. 57 ff. (review of Harrison 1935), 61 f., 79 ff., 81 ff. (review of Hansen 1935), 153 ff. (= Filskov 1935), and the series 'Kendte Mænd om "Oxford"-Bevægelsen', with statements about the Oxford Group from Martin Luther, Ludvig Holberg, and N. F. S. Grundtvig [!], 1934:156, 1935:32, and short 'Eversharp' comments by Schack, 1935:16, 64, 83, 96, etc.

<sup>107</sup> Ammundsen 1935:115 f., Helweg-Larsen 1935:126 f., 'Grundtvigianerne og Oxfordbevægelsen' (PrB 1935:337 ff., 445 f.), Krustrup 1935:520, 522, Højmark 1935 and other articles in *Højskolebladet*. See also the early, positive report by Thyssen 1935.

quently published as *Oxfordismen eller evangeliet*, a book that might have become one of the most severe criticisms of the Oxford Group ever published. However, its deliberate misunderstandings and misinterpretations did reduce its value and importance, and made some of its statements superficial and simply hostile, and it was severely criticized even by the Church Barthian N. H. Søe.<sup>108</sup> Oscar Geismar, himself averse to the Oxford Group, described Hansen's method as aiming a machine-gun towards all the corners of the world.<sup>109</sup> Halfdan Helweg found it remarkable that a Grundtvigian journal (*Højskolebladet*) should judge a new spiritual movement by its books, while Grundtvigians elsewhere emphasized the importance of the living, spoken word.<sup>110</sup>

A constant shortcoming of Hansen's book was the theological criticism of un-theological accounts, such as those by Russell or Kitchen. Russell's second book in the genre (*One Thing I know*) was used as a reliable and central source, in spite of the fact that it had never been authorized by the Oxford Group. No variations or nuances among Group people were accepted in matters of theology – normally, the worst example was chosen to represent the opinion of the whole fellowship. Relying on Bishop Henson's report, Hansen, from his objectivistic position, referred to Luther and Grundtvig as his theological authorities. He tried to avoid polemics against the revival movements, except when one or the other of their leaders had made some statements in favor of the Group, but his criticism of the evangelistic approach to human beings did hit the Home Mission as well. He stated that they did not take an interest in their neighbour because of what he was, and did not respect him as a human being, with an independent life of his own. They took an interest in him only as far as it was possible that he might become what they themselves had become. They loved this possibility in him, not himself.<sup>111</sup> Hansen even pointed out that the God being worshipped in 'oxfordism' was not the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, but a god named The Changed Person. Instead of finding the revelation in Christ, they found it in their own souls by listening to the heavenly voice.

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<sup>108</sup> Søe 1935b:267 (Hansen's 'Dom rammer ved Siden af'; 'skæve Indstilling'; 'kaster Barnet ud med Badevandet,' states that the question Oxford or the Gospel, was distorted). Hansen had criticized the Oxford Group Movement in *Højskolebladet* already in April 1934. Here Hansen mentioned Brunner 1934, without taking further notice of its contents, while books by Allen, Russell, and Shoemaker were heavily rejected ('haabløst vrøvl,' 'et sammensurium af farisæisme og de mest fladbundede uhyrligheder, man overhovedet kan tænke sig i retning af religiøs litteratur,' Hansen 1934:217). See further Schjørring 1976c:183.

<sup>109</sup> Geismar 1935:236. Geismar criticized Hansen for not having rewritten his articles before the publication of his book. The Swedish folk high-school principal Gunnar Furuland, 1935:69 ff., criticized Hansen for his unfair attack on the late Danish writer Jeppe Aakjær.

<sup>110</sup> Helweg 1935b:94. Cf. Hansen 1935b.

<sup>111</sup> Hansen 1935:74.



Hansen regarded Gospel and personal experience as contradictory.<sup>112</sup>

Interesting from the perspective of later development of the M.R.A. movement is Hansen's suggestion, that all the special oxfordian inventions could be put into still better practice by Moslems (or Buddhists or Hindus), among whom there was no need to bother about a gospel about lost man and the salvation by God. And among Hindus and Moslems were people more changed than the nice people in the Oxford movement, for example Gandhi.<sup>113</sup>

In *Dagens Nyheder*, the Church Barthian Hal Koch, Professor of church history at Copenhagen, attacked the Danish Church because of its totally irrelevant ('usaglig') attitude towards the miraculous nature of the Oxford Group. While criticizing the foreign Oxford literature, Koch recommended Knud Hansen's book because of its emphasis on the preaching and contents of the Gospel. To a Lutheran Church, the Oxford Group, or any other revival movement, could not become anything but supplements to the preaching of the gospel at the Sunday services.<sup>114</sup>

The Church Barthian Halfdan Høgsbro – formerly critical – now took the reverse stand,<sup>115</sup> propagating the Oxford Group in a discourse before the 'Kirchenleitung' in Schleswig-Holstein, published in *Kirche im Angriff*, 1936. He described the situation in the parish of Sønderborg before the international campaign as a nucleus congregation ('Kerngemeinde') with an isolating shell which prevented an active relation with the rest of the population. The effect of Frank Buchman's visit was that the shell was shattered and partly removed. An active relation was realized, 'eine gemeinsame Sprache ist gefunden, Kräfte sind freigeworden und weitere Möglichkeiten eröffnet.' Fourteen new Bible circles were started.<sup>116</sup> In a subsequent analysis of the nature of the Group, Høgsbro stated that this movement 'von Natur aus echt volksskirchlich ist,' with the aim of placing the life of the nation under the 'Herrschaftsanspruch und die

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<sup>112</sup> Hansen 1935:37, 52.

<sup>113</sup> Hansen 1935:44, 100. Cf. Thyssen 1935:28, 38, and Bramsen 1936, who point to the positive benefits of the Oxford Group on the Danish field mission in Santalistan. Other critics of less importance were the Unitarian Kierkegaard 1935, S. F. Hansen 1935, Rieper-Holm [1935]:1, 'at Oxfordbevægelsen ikke er af Gud, vil enhver sand kristen [...] ikke have vanskeligt ved at forstaa'; p.6: the Oxford Group lacked 'den sande kristnes "salige Haab"', and the Christian faith did not aim 'at reformere, forbedre eller forvandle Verden, men at forkynde Guds Evangelium til Frelse for dem, der tager imod det og saaleds *udfries* af [...]'

<sup>114</sup> Hal Koch: 'Er kirken saglig?', 'Skal kirken være luthersk og dogmatisk?', 'Skal kristendommen forvandle mennesker?' (*Dagens Nyheder* 1935, Apr. 26, May 8, 9).

<sup>115</sup> Important to Høgsbro's changed attitude was his brother's joining the Group in the summer 1935 (Harald Høgsbro to Halfdan Høgsbro July 1, 1935; Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>116</sup> Høgsbro 1936c:361 f. See further the discussion between Høgsbro and Martin Hansen in *Dybbølposten*, reprinted in PrB 1935:536 ff. The Swiss Professor Th. Spoerri also presented himself as both a Barthian and an Oxford man (KD 1935, Apr. 7, reprinted in Lundgren 1935:79 f).

Verheißung Gottes.’<sup>117</sup> In his German contacts, Høgsbro took a neutral stand, acting freely without attaching himself to either side in the Church struggle.<sup>118</sup>

Høgsbro published a popular introduction, *Oxford-noter*. This book – used in the Oxford Group campaign on Fyn even before its publication – has many nuances in its presentation of traditional Group practices, as regarded from a sacramental, unpietistic viewpoint. Høgsbro stated, for example, that confession could take place without a human listener, but always as a confession before God. The importance of the absolution was emphasized, with reference to Luther.<sup>119</sup> Høgsbro regarded daily renewed surrender as a renewal of baptism, and stated that full surrender is not faith in one’s own surrender, but liberation from one’s surrender and all trust in oneself. Quiet time was not a listening for voices or revelations, but a two-way-prayer concerning coming tasks.<sup>120</sup> The final aim was more than an international revolution and renaissance, as even a worldwide national renewal was temporary, and must vanish together with the present world. Even a renewed nation needed the prayer for God’s Kingdom to come, for daily bread, etc, and had not found Paradise. The final aim was a new heaven and a new earth, according to the promise.<sup>121</sup>

Høgsbro’s presentation and his views on the Oxford Group work were widely read in Scandinavia. *Oxford-noter* was translated into Swedish, and warmly recommended in a preface by Arvid Runestam. Høgsbro spoke at the Student Union in Oslo, was received as one who unified Oxford and Barth, and published a few articles in the Norwegian *Kirke og Kultur*. In the summer 1937, Ronald Fangen stayed with Høgsbro in Sønderborg, working for the Group, and discussing the problems of the relation between Church and Group.<sup>122</sup> But

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<sup>117</sup> Høgsbro 1936c:365. See, also to the following, further Ch. II.2.3.3. Høgsbro also was in contact with J. F. Laun, who visited Høgsbro to seek help against Knud Hansen’s articles in the German press and to ask Høgsbro for a partly theological discourse, with special direction towards the Barthians (Laun to Høgsbro 1935, Sept. 18, resp. 1936, July 4, Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>118</sup> Howard Blake to Høgsbro 1936, Sept. 11: ‘I feel you were quite right in your answer to the clergymen in Altona. Our only real chance to give substantial help to Germany is to come in quite free and from the outside, without being bound to any side in a German controversy’ (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>119</sup> George M. Fraser to Høgsbro 1936, Jan. 30, Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK), Høgsbro 1936:25, 29, 28, 34. See also Høgsbro 1936d.

<sup>120</sup> Høgsbro 1936:43 f., 48.

<sup>121</sup> Høgsbro 1936:71, 73 f. Høgsbro might also have been influenced by critical voices, for example from Germany (‘Besonders bei Steffen [sic!] Foot klingt jene Auffassung vom Reiche Gottes als einer christlich gemachten Welt hindurch, welche sich nah mit dem katholischen Reichsgottesbegriff berührt,’ Asmussen in Elmshorn b. Hamburg to Høgsbro 1936, Oct. 25; Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK). Søe 1937b was not satisfied, as Høgsbro had not drawn the line *within* Oxford clearly enough.

<sup>122</sup> See Høgsbro 1937:5 f.; Alex. Johnson to Høgsbro 1935, Apr. 16 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK), Høgsbro 1936d, 1936e (on the four absolute standards as indicating a positive attitude), also the mixed personalistic/political Høgsbro 1938 (on Church work at the

his *Oxford-noter* was not recommended or used by the leading Copenhagen team, which lacked an understanding of Høgsbro's eschatological emphasis.<sup>123</sup>

The combination of Church Barthianism and Oxford Group was obvious in Commander Kai Hammerich, the leader of Kirkens Korshær, the Danish equivalent of the Church Army. He identified himself with the Oxford Group, not because he had been given a new faith, but because of the emphasis on letting God decide instead of just asking for God's blessing of one's own decisions. Since the Church message had to a large part failed, God had sent this strange optimist movement.<sup>124</sup>

The Church Centre party ('Kirkeligt Centrum') was divided in its attitude, mostly adopting a wait-and-see policy. The Dean of Odense, Johannes Fog-Petersen was entirely positive, drawing the line from the New Testament over Luther to Grundtvig. Dean Fog found 'Oxford' strongly ethical, not identic with the Christian stage, but, quoting Grundtvig's words: Human first, and then Christian, Fog declared that the Christian stage had to build on the ethical stage. The Home Barthian (Tidehverv) cry for a return to the Gospel was correct, but at first a new ethical foundation had to be laid.<sup>125</sup> The president, Pastor Gjørup, was positive with reservations, while Bishop Bruun-Rasmussen and Dean Hoffmeyer of Århus were critical, Dean J. L. Horstmann more positive, and Dean H. Lütshøft more negative. The vicar Svend Lerfeldt declared that though Oxford knew the forgiveness of sins, it was fundamental in the full surrender of the will, in the faith in our own possibilities.<sup>126</sup> The Christian Social movement too, was divided, the secretary, Pastor Norlev, being strongly against, and the president, Pastor Helweg entirely in favour of the Oxford Group.<sup>127</sup>

The Home Mission movement was divided in its attitude. The first international house-party in Denmark was given at its centre Haslev. Some Home Mission men, like Christian Holt, identified themselves with the Oxford Group.

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Danish/German border, first published 1937 in KoK); Fangen to E.Berggrav 1937, July 15 (Pa. 320:10, RAO).

<sup>123</sup> Copy of Høgsbro to Cuthbert Bardsley 1938, July 19 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK): 'My little book "Oxford-notes," [...] has never been mentioned with a word in the Danish group-publications and announcements of group-literature.' See also the book-list in *Nyt Liv*, June 1937 (Danish versions of books of Foot, Russel, Helweg, Fangen, Lean & Martin, Viney, and What is the Oxford Group?).

<sup>124</sup> Hammerich 1960:138, 136. Hammerich's views on the Oxford Group are coloured by his later disappointments of the ideological, pantheistic, almost stereotypical uniformity of M.R.A., instead of the direct evangelism of the 1930s.

<sup>125</sup> Fog 1935:90 ff.

<sup>126</sup> 'Oxford-Bevægelsen' (Fyns Stiftstidende 1935, Apr. 5), Ammundsen 1935:116, Helweg-Larsen 1935:125 f., Svend Lerfeldt to Halfdan Høgsbro 1935, Dec. 16 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK). On Hoffmeyer and the Group revivalistic Hadsten party, see Hoffmeyer 1935.

<sup>127</sup> Helweg-Larsen 1935:125.

The president of the Home Mission, Christian Bartholdy, was not uncritical, but – as stated above – through a Group revivalistic meeting he had himself been helped to deal with a bad personal relation. While he found the ‘theology’ of the Oxford Group, to be quite elastic, he also found that God used the Group, and he was not ready to share the purely doctrinal attitude of the Norwegian Home Mission leaders, who emphasized the difference between import and impulse. After his return from the Scandinavian Home Mission meeting in Oslo, September 1–5, 1937, Bartholdy wrote on the one and only theme of the Norwegian – in so many ways blessed – preaching: the Atonement on Golgata. In Denmark, however, he found that the Home Mission had a vocation to preach the whole of God’s counsel: from the Cross light fell on both the Creation, the works of the Holy Spirit and the Sacraments.<sup>128</sup>

In *Præsteforeningens Blad*, Pastor Georg Bartholdy from Copenhagen – brother of the Home Mission leader – testified about his experiences. He had been furious at the first meeting in the Odd Fellow Palace, but was soon defeated. In 14 years as a priest, he had not been given so many to help as during the last months. While observing the doctrinal weaknesses in the Oxford Group, he himself emphasized the importance of the atonement, concluding that through the Oxford Group he had achieved personal liberation, happiness in the priestly service, and a richer experience of the Community of Saints.<sup>129</sup> In a broadcast sermon, April 28, he voiced his former sin and his new certainty and strength in the faith – impressive in its total subjectivity. Bartholdy also testified at a broadcast discourse (July 11) about the message of the Home Mission.<sup>130</sup> A. Fibiger, P. C. Davidsen, and A. Westergaard-Jacobsen took a positive stand.<sup>131</sup>

Other Home Mission men showed a negative, doctrinal attitude, and the question of opening the Mission Houses for Oxford arrangements was answered with a reference to the normal rules, which meant that the decisions were placed in the hands of the local leaders. While the Home Mission societies were mostly positive in the provinces, but reserved in Copenhagen, the situation at the K.F.U.M. was the reverse.<sup>132</sup> Some of its critical members found that if the

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<sup>128</sup> Bartholdy 1958:184, ‘Oxfordfolkene havde en højst mangelfuld teologi, hvis de i det hele taget havde nogen, deres teologi var det rene gummielastikum, men Gud brugte dem,’ 1937:464 f.; ‘Der vilde have rullet Bestyrelses-Hoveder – Indre Missions Formand forklarar, hvorfor man ikke tog Afstand fra Oxford’ (BA 1937, June 10); KD 1937, June 10.

<sup>129</sup> G. Bartholdy 1935:313 ff.

<sup>130</sup> G. Bartholdy 1935c; 1935b:5, 13 f.

<sup>131</sup> See Indre Missions Tidende 1934:515, 545, Fibiger 1935; 1935:293 ff., 461 f.; 559.

<sup>132</sup> Among the critics in the Home Mission were Johs. Pedersen, Gustav Tange, Chr. Baun, Chr. Nygaard Andersen, and Thomas Mollerup (see, for example, Mollerup 1935, Tange 1935, J. Pedersen 1936; further A. M. Guldager Pedersen: Oxfordgruppebevægelsen som vækkelsesbevægelse i Danmark; dupl; with the author). See PrB 1935:292 f., 416 f., Helweg-Larsen 1935:127 ff., and further a series of articles in Indre Missions Tidende (Pedersen 1936), which especially criticize guidance. G. Bartholdy

Home Mission was to co-operate with the un-confessional Oxford Group, it ought to drop the first word in its name, Church Association for Home Mission, while others found that the passive attitude of some Home Mission people was better described by a change to The Edifying Association for the Friends of Home Mission.<sup>133</sup>

The former Dean of Copenhagen, Henry Ussing, who had welcomed Frank Buchman at the first meeting in the Odd Fellow Palace, published a book on the Oxford Movement as seen in the light of the Bible. The weaknesses of the 'Oxford' literature were excused as personal testimonies of the writers. Neither these books nor the public meetings aimed at a thorough explication, but – in their strange way – to attract attention and questions from the audience.<sup>134</sup> Ussing emphasized sharing as private confession, and its voluntary character, as the living way on the basis of baptism under the Word of Grace, open to every sinner without human mediation. Change was used by the movement itself at different levels of the development. The risks with guidance were noticed, and direct guidance, without set alternatives, was an exception.<sup>135</sup> Ussing notices that eschatological dogma was as unquestioned in the Oxford Group as in the Church, where it was regarded as a distant and future prospect.<sup>136</sup>

In three subsequent discourses on the Group movement and the Danish congregation, delivered in the Cathedral of Aarhus, Ussing emphasized some values of the Danish Church needed by the Oxford Group, such as Justification by Grace, the Sacraments (especially Baptism), Absolution, the Ecclesiastical office, and the Language of Canaan. The vocation of the Group was to be the aggressive vanguard of the Church. Valuable terms like guidance and sharing had to be used with consideration of their limits. Ussing further emphasized the personal responsibility.<sup>137</sup>

In his broad, semi-official review of the first Oxford Group year in Denmark, P. Helweg-Larsen quoted Bishop Johannes Ammundsen, who stated that 'Oxford' preached sanctification to the unconverted, i.e. preaching the wrong way round. Helweg-Larsen meant that if people entered the Kingdom of God backwards, this was cause for rejoicing, but no reason for others to start preaching backwards as well. The grammar of God had both rules and exceptions, but Helweg-Larsen could not make rules out of the exceptions, even if the latter were many at the present. Instead of calling themselves a First Century Christian Fellowship, the Oxford Group ought to say a Twentieth

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1936:9 stated that some Home Mission people were annoyed since they believed not in Jesus, but in their own conversion. He emphasized the need for daily quietness (guidance), of openness and honesty (sharing), and of help to total surrender (p.24 f.).

<sup>133</sup> Ammundsen 1935:118 (Vicar A. F. Moe and Ove Nauntofte, respectively, to Halfdan Høgsbro 1936, June 12 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>134</sup> Ussing 1935:11.

<sup>135</sup> Ussing 1935:40, 49, 41 f., 44 f.

<sup>136</sup> Ussing 1935:50 f., 54.

<sup>137</sup> Ussing 1936:30 ff.

Century Christian Fellowship. It had raised the personal question to the individual human being, it had challenged the Church by using a modern language in its mission mentality, in its personal soul-care, and in the revival it had brought to Denmark. The Oxford Group had left a task to the Danish Church: to translate this foreign movement into Danish, to take care of the awakened people, and to see to that 'Oxford' was not enclosed within new walls replacing those pulled down. Helweg-Larsen ended by comparing the Oxford Group to the medieval Franciscans.<sup>138</sup>

One of the most important consequences of the Oxford Group campaigns was that the attention for some time was turned from outward Church politics to personal matters. A consequence was that old walls in Church or nation had been pulled down. Thanks to their Oxford experience, Grundtvigians, Modernists, and Home Mission men could speak together at the same meeting, and in the border region, Danish and German priests were able to celebrate Holy Communion together.<sup>139</sup>

#### *IV.3.6. Continued Oxford Group Work, 1935–1937*

The Danish team met at Hindsgavl to plan the autumn season. The aim was now to gather working teams together, not – as in the pre-Oxford revival groups phase – to found 'groups.' On October 1, Dean Brodersen preached at the opening service of the Parliament in Slotskirken, warning of political dictatorship, stating that factionalism, discussion, and fear could curtail the energy, and instead recommending new unity and cooperation. He emphasized the need for honesty, unselfishness, and love.<sup>140</sup> In early October, 1,500 young people attended a meeting in the Copenhagen Cathedral. Then came the great meeting in the Copenhagen Forum, October 18, 1935 – four days before the parliamentary elections – with parallel meetings in St. Marcus Church and the Cathedral, the total number rising to approximately 25,000. Paul Brodersen transformed the Social Democratic slogan 'Stauning or Chaos' into 'God or Chaos.' The most important election question was whether God was elected to guide personal life, and thereby national life, or not.<sup>141</sup> At the same time, Sverre

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<sup>138</sup> Helweg-Larsen 1935:139 ff. The Roman Catholic Messerschmidt 1936 recognized the function of St. John the Baptist in the work of the Oxford Group.

<sup>139</sup> Ammundsen 1935:118 f.

<sup>140</sup> 'Stiftsprovst Brodersen slynger Oxford-Kravene mod den danske Rigsdags Medlemmer [...]' (BA Oct. 1). It is notable that Brodersen omitted the demand for absolute purity. The work on Parliament members continued, for example with an evening at the Hotel d'Angleterre, March 25, 1936, with speeches by different Group members on the work and purposes of the Group (Brodersen to Halfdan Høgsbro 1936, March 13. Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>141</sup> Helweg-Larsen 1935:122 f., Ammundsen 1936:103. Oct. 19, BeT reported 12–14,000 in the Forum, and the two churches completely full; Oct. 19, BA stated a total number of

Norborg's efforts to combine the Haugian revival tradition with Group revivalism was still of topical relevance, and was further spread in the Scandinavian countries by the publication of his speeches in Copenhagen in February 1936.

In November 1935, a house-party was arranged in Viborg, and in January 1936, Bishop Gøtzsche of Viborg, himself a Home Mission man, published a letter on Oxford, which described his experiences of the Oxford team. His attitude was personalistic, to try to listen first for a man's inner direction, if he was honest, not to investigate whether his catechism was strictly Lutheran or not.<sup>142</sup> In the summer 1935, he had been visited by Frank Buchman and two fellow workers. Gøtzsche bid him welcome to Viborg, at the same time telling him that if he were to repeat the identification by a show of hands as he had done at Haslev, many would never come back. Buchman replied that he would not start with that. Then they came, some directly from Geneva to Viborg! As many as possible were accommodated at the Bishop's residence, and the whole team had tea there once.<sup>143</sup>

At the first meeting in a hotel, the Bishop greeted the team, and expressed the hope that they had come, not with a new gospel, but to help people to take a decisive position for God. Short testimonies followed, and a tea party with conversation. The following two evenings, Saturday and Sunday, meetings took place in homes, even in the Bishop's residence. The big meetings started on Monday, continuing for four days, simultaneously in the Cathedral and in a hotel. Many of the testimonials were weak, though some spoke of the Cross and salvation through Jesus Christ. There were special meetings for different categories, and on the last evenings meetings for those the team had met personally, at which they were encouraged to declare if they had decided to surrender to God, and taught how to go on. The Bishop was invited to the private meetings with the team as well. He felt sympathy for them because of their eagerness to win others, their fear of sin and wrong, their diligence, the wisdom of their leaders, their discretion, and their humour.<sup>144</sup>

Bishop Gøtzsche concluded that many had made a decision to give their hearts to God, and had declared this publicly. The work was not without Biblical foundation – he had himself attended a Bible hour led by Pastor Bardsley. Neither were they unsacramental. Though he never heard them speak on Baptism, they had specially asked for Holy Communion, and valued it. Asked if he could identify himself with the Oxford Group way of life, the Bishop said no – because of his short acquaintance, his aversion to all sorts of uniformity, and their demand for sharing as a condition for being helped – although he admitted that he had liked their company, and that he had much to learn from

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16-25,000 – some reports said 15–16,000 in the Forum. Dagens Nyheder Oct. 19.

<sup>142</sup> Gøtzsche 1936:6.

<sup>143</sup> Gøtzsche 1936:8 ff.

<sup>144</sup> Gøtzsche 1936:13 ff.

them.<sup>145</sup> Their vision of a world revolution was magnificent, and could be interpreted in a millennialistic way, though Gøtzsche dissociated himself from it. Both the Grundtvigians and the Home Mission people needed something of 'Oxford.' His final opinion was that in the same way that Brorson and Grundtvig had translated German and English hymns into Danish, the new movement could be translated into Danish only when it approached people's hearts.<sup>146</sup>

The local offensive work in Viborg continued with an Open House in Hotel Preisler every first Thursday of the month. A presentation of the Church on march was followed by glimpses of different forms of Group work, testimonies from newly changed people, and, later, also presentations of branch teams. Such an evening could gather 140 participants staying till Midnight.<sup>147</sup> In Aarhus, too, the work was carried on by local leaders. At the turn of the year, about 30 decided people met at Dr. Ring's, planning a meeting at the Concert Palace for January 15, with only new people leading and testifying. They planned the speeches of Dean Ussing in the Cathedral, and finally asked Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard to repeat his discourse on Luther and Oxford in Aarhus, preferably soon after January 14, when Dr. Søe was to speak at the K.F.U.M.<sup>148</sup> In March, a series of meetings was concluded with Halfdan Helweg speaking in the Cathedral. To some of the 'old Christian' Group participants, these meetings meant a new understanding of their task in Group work as helping 'old Christians' leave behind distrust and criticism of the new ways, and showing the new ones that they had something to learn from the old ones.<sup>149</sup>

The expected peak of the season was the Easter house-party at Ollerup on Fyn, April 9–13, 1936, preceded by a preparation party for about 500 people, April 3–9. Though planned for up to 40,000 participants, only 10,000 or, according to some sources, 15,000 finally showed up. Frank Buchman spoke on 'Chaos or Christ,' presenting in his 'Call to the Nations,' April 12, 1936, his views on patriotism: 'A true patriot gives his life to bring his nation under God's control. A nation's enemies are those who oppose that control.' World peace was possible only through 'nations who have achieved God's control.'<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Gøtzsche 1936:24 ff. An identification with the Oxford Group way of life seems to have been only a first step. In her letters to Bishop Lehtonen of Tampere (1936, Feb. 1, Oct. 20, RAH), Agnes Dawson writes of an identification 'with us in the Oxford Group Movement' and 'in the fellowship,' which clearly indicates an identification with the Oxford Group work as well.

<sup>146</sup> Gøtzsche 1936:32 ff.

<sup>147</sup> *Nyt Liv*, 1936 Dec., p.8.

<sup>148</sup> C. F. Wagner to the Fuglsang-Damgaard Family 1936, Jan. 1 (Pa. 6997:3, RAK). Ussing 1936.

<sup>149</sup> Wagner to the Fuglsang-Damgaard Family 1936, March 30 (Pa. 6997:3, RAK).

<sup>150</sup> House-party i Ollerup 3.–9. April 1936. Oxford-gruppen. Holme [1936]:7. The Ollerup party was referred to also in a mystery novel by Hans Scherfig about a young painter testifying at Ollerup, and speaking of his vocation as an artist as God's microphone. His 'change' also meant a change from modern to traditional (p. 59 ff.).



The winter 1935–1936 had been used for instructing the Danish teams on preparation work. As in Norway, emphasis was put on team training, and on education of the character and the work of a team. In November 1935, Howard Blake wrote:

There are a good many, however, who seem to have the idea that a team meeting just ‘happens.’ You come together, talk, perhaps have a quiet time, etc. They don’t realize that that sort of a meeting also must be prepared under guidance. It will mean a great deal, I believe, if you could gather together a few in advance and get guidance about what the needs of the team are and have to meet them in the coming meeting. And the secret of a really good team meeting, is for each person there to prepare himself as if he was to be the leader, to think through the evening, and ask for guidance about the whole.<sup>151</sup>

In his report on the Oxford Group’s first year in Denmark, Reginald Holme noted the progress from the first meetings in 1935 to the Ollerup house-party. The city had been divided into branches (Danish: ‘fag’): ‘engineers, journalists, nurses, clerks, managers, tram-drivers, artisans, teachers, artists, musicians, unemployed, housewives, business women and youth of all classes.’ This development made three things possible:

- 1) each person was able to spread his or her own experience among those whom he met daily in the workshop or office, together with them working out its practical application in the trade or calling;
- 2) the new life was not a hobby tacked on after office hours but a vital activity carried into the working hours of the day from 9 to 5;
- 3) the development of cross-sectional activity automatically isolated and exposed those ‘meeting-tasters’ who had yet to acquire a taste for revolution.<sup>152</sup>

The famous leader of the Gymnastics Institute in Ollerup, Niels Buhk, greeted the Oxford Group, convinced of their service to God, while the principal of the local Grundtvigian folk high-school, Lars Bækthøj, found this Easter a poor one for Danish Christians, with much talk about what Oxford had done and what a changed Denmark should do, but only a little about God’s saving acts, the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ. The singing of the the Royal anthem (‘Kong Christian stod ved højen mast’) had drowned the only Easter hymn that was sung. In the mass-meetings Bækthøj recognized the Puritan dream of a visible Kingdom of God on earth, the quiet times of the Quakers, the mass

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Scherfig states that after the Ollerup party there was not much talk on Oxford. The publicity stopped, Buchman and his team left, and in Denmark the Movement petered out, as if people forgot that it had ever existed (p.71).

<sup>151</sup> H. Blake to H. Høgsbro 1935, Nov. 18 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>152</sup> Holme [1936]:2 f. See also the illustrated, more propagandistic *Første Aar 1936*. Meetings for different categories were held in the winter, for example for 250 businessmen at Skodsborg in January 1936 (Vock 1989:191).

suggestion of the Methodists, the open confessions of the Salvation Army, and the Nazi marches with banners and music. Despite all this, he found that many had found peace in Christian faith through the Oxford Group, and that the Grundtvigians must feel humiliated by the fact that so many, by sharing in the Group, had achieved a Christian fellowship they had not previously found among Grundtvigians.<sup>153</sup> The attitude of the Tidehverv party was continually hostile, as when Ove Lundbye in an open letter – rejected by *Nationaltidende* – accused Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard of the Oxfordization of the Church (Folkekirke).<sup>154</sup>

The Ollerup party worked as an inspiration for the international Oxford Group work as well: 'The youth march – the special songs – these are all new in the history of the Oxford Group,' and the inspiration from Ollerup would mean 'a step toward finding England's national destiny, as Denmark has already begun to find hers.'<sup>155</sup> Simultaneously, Danish criticism was spread in other countries. For example, a criticism of the Ollerup party by Regin Prenter was printed in the Netherlands three weeks later.<sup>156</sup>

Having written several articles on Oxford in the newspapers, and welcoming the international team to Denmark, though without personal identification or joining, the famous priest and author Kaj Munk published an article on the planned Oxford campaign on Lolland, in *Nationaltidende*, August 28, 1936, which was critical of improvement by way of unrealistic talk regarding the abolition of evil and sin. On September 1, Hee Andersen answered, asking Munk to join the movement. Munk's reply came in the form of a both serious and witty book, *10 Oxford snapshots*. An eleventh snapshot was published in *Nationaltidende*.<sup>157</sup>

Next came a Whitsun house-party at Kjelstrup Strand near Haderslev and the last big campaign, September 1–15, 1936, on Lolland-Falster, traditionally unaffected by revivalism. The campaign emphasized peace between classes and

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<sup>153</sup> Bækthøj 1936:263 ff., Ammundsen 1936:103 f. Bækthøj noted that only a few of the participants seemed to be acquainted with Grundtvigian high-school life.

<sup>154</sup> Lundbye 1937:123 f., 'Folkekirkens Oxfordisering.'

<sup>155</sup> Dorothy Prescott to Halfdan Høgsbro Apr. 16, 1936 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK). Especially the Bridge-Builder Song was frequently sung in the following years.

<sup>156</sup> R. Prenter: 'Oxford' (Woorden Geest 1936, May 8; see de Loor 1986:190).

<sup>157</sup> One example of the welcoming articles in Jyllands-Posten 1935, Apr. 7. *Nationaltidende* 1936, Aug. 28, Sept. 1, Oct. 23, Munk 1936, Marcussen 1945:25 f. Hee Andersen reviewed Munk 1936 in *Nationaltidende* Sept. 24, requesting the author to surrender unconditionally. Stolpe 1944:121 f., described Munk's position on the Oxford Group as interesting, praising Munk 1936 as one of the most important and characteristic works in the Oxford literature. Stolpe emphasized Munk's criticism of sharing, as well as his acceptance of guidance. In the propaganda, the Lolland-Falster campaign had been described in advance as a revolution that would overshadow the Spanish one, since it had God as its organizer (Aarhus Amtstidende 1936, Aug. 24 resp. KD 1936, Aug. 27).

parties, nations and races, and between man and God. Tens of thousands came to the meetings, and many were won for the Christian faith. The campaign started with a special campaign on the thousand homes, led by Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. V. Hansen.<sup>158</sup> On September 13, 7,000 or 8,000 people gathered at Nykøbing, but this meeting did not – as planned – become the biggest Oxford meeting in Denmark.<sup>159</sup> During this campaign, even telephone meetings were held, with twelve telephone subscribers simultaneously in contact every morning at 6 a.m. The leader gave the appeal, and each of the twelve participants shared the results of his or her quiet time, which had taken place immediately before the telephone meeting. These meetings went on for two weeks, and were then continued as a morning group, at which plans and tasks came first, while personal sharing was dealt with individually.<sup>160</sup>

A short period of separate so-called Oxford services did not last, and the formerly negative Dean Hoffmeyer found that the Oxford men in many parishes were now among the most loyal participants in Church services, even when the priest was not in sympathy with them.<sup>161</sup>

The Oxford theologian Professor B. H. Streeter reported, after going with the Group to Denmark three times, that what he saw there convinced him

that the movement was not merely an instrument of moral rebirth and psychological liberation for individuals, but was capable of moving nations as such by initiating a new mental attitude in economic and political conflicts. On the first occasion, the work was done by persons from some twenty different countries – mainly from Great Britain, America, South Africa and Norway, though with smaller contingents from Germany, Holland and France. On the second occasion, in August, half the work was done by Danes who had come into the Group in the previous April. On the third occasion, the initiative had passed to the Danes themselves, the activities of the foreign contingents being supplementary. That is to say, within the year the Oxford Group had become in Denmark a national force under Danish leadership.<sup>162</sup>

#### *IV.3.7. Life Changing in the Service of National Change*

After the patriotic emphasis of the Ollerup party, the messages of true patriotism, the need for a new revolution in the world, and God-control or Chaos as the only alternatives, were spread in Denmark and subsequently in the other Scandinavian countries. On July 12, Thorvald S. Pedersen testified at Oxford about his experiences of changed business, for example his sharing with several

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<sup>158</sup> Oxford-gruppen Houseparty Lolland-Falster. Fra 1.Sept. 1936. Nakskov. Maribo. Nykøbing F. Nationaltidende 1936, Sept. 14.

<sup>159</sup> Vest-Lolland 1936, Sept. 14.

<sup>160</sup> 'Lyngby-Gruppen melder,' signed K. Friderichsen (Nyt Liv, 1937, Jan.).

<sup>161</sup> Hoffmeyer 1937:116 f.

<sup>162</sup> Howard 1946:35 (published 1:0 as a 'Letter from B. H. Streeter to Frank N. D. Buchman, July 1937, in The Church of England Newspaper 1937, Sept. 17).

of his employees, and paying several of them higher wages. In seven months, the whole staff of nine persons was ‘changed.’ When the staff was changed, business had to change, with a new price list, the same for all customers, which resulted in increased sales and profits. ‘Visiting the customers now means life-changing.’<sup>163</sup> In August, Børge Hjerl-Hansen wrote in *Berlingske Aftenavis* on the Oxford revolution in modern industrial life, and the introduction of a new spirit in business and industry, referring to the house-party at Oxford, July 1936, to Lean & Martin’s booklet on new leadership, and to the international publication *Drums of Peace*. In November, Hjerl-Hansen emphasized the personalistic solution to national and international problems, with the dynamic force of the minority deciding the extension of the world revolution. The fight was the fight of the Church for a God-born world. In October, a house-party for young people on new leadership was arranged in Aarhus.<sup>164</sup>

From December 28, 1936 to January 3, 1937, seventy Oxford Group men from all of Denmark gathered at Kolding. The printed report says that they met to find out which was the national responsibility given them by God.<sup>165</sup> They found that the nation expected that they thought out and realized the demand for a God-controlled Denmark. This could be realized according to four points:

1. A God-controlled government is realized when the public opinion demands it.
2. We must use the instruments offered today to reach public life.
3. The public opinion is set by thousands – therefore we must mobilize thousands.
4. First of all we must demand something much higher and something rather new from those who have taken a leading responsibility for the Oxford work.<sup>166</sup>

All life changing should from now on be in the service of national change, challenging people to surrender their lives with the precise aim of bringing Denmark under God’s control. Testimony should lead to the transformation of personal experiences to the circumstances of the nation and the world. All experiences of Christ had to be connected to a problem in society or the world, and thus show a part of its solution. A positive front should be built, in which personal life was to be guided by God under the four absolute standards in such

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<sup>163</sup> ‘Changed Business by Thorvald S. Pedersen and Staff’ (ms., Tirley).

<sup>164</sup> Hjerl-Hansen 1936:5 f. (‘En Verden efterlyser ny Revolution,’ 1:0 in BA 1936, July 23), 12 (‘Oxford-Revolutionen i moderne Industriliv,’ 1:0 in BA 1936, Aug. 20, 21), 29 (‘Krisen og Kirken’, Speech at K.F.U.M.’s Centralforening, Copenhagen 1936, Nov. 3). Nyt førerskab. En gudført Ungdom er Svaret paa Verdens Nød. [...] 24.–25. Oktober 1936.

<sup>165</sup> See further Blake 1992:81 ff., who emphasizes the ‘tendency to get together in groups, and talk it over, and share and share and share. But we were convinced that we needed to keep on growing and to get clear as to what the next steps should be. We did not want to remain ingrowing.’

<sup>166</sup> Nytaarssamling i Kolding [1937]:1 f.

a way that certain forms of negative thinking and appearance ceased to exist.<sup>167</sup>

In the same way that St. Paul and the apostles built a Christian front, the Church now was responsible for the future of the nations. The Oxford Group had been the bridge leading from the indifference of defeat to loyal service in the Church. Together with a few others, Christian Holt had written eight theses on the task of the Church in the modern world, though only two of the theses explicitly spoke of the Church and its national duty to help the country find its place in God's plan.<sup>168</sup> The front was to be built against moral illnesses, and in social areas. It did not consist of organisations or institutions, but of a quality of life. Two important parts of it were the youth front and the women's front. While Jens Tvede taught the participants to read the newspapers with an eye to the possibilities of life-change, Francis Goulding taught them to read both the Old and the New Testament in such a way that they were looking forward to the events of Isaiah, Jeremiah or St. Luke taking place in Grøntorvet, on Himmelbjerget or in Dybbøl.<sup>169</sup>

Leaders in different areas of national life were asked what they regarded as the country's greatest need, and what should be done about it. Howard Blake recalls the answers:

For the next six weeks we had about five evenings each week filled. [...] We would ask them to take as long a time as they wanted to address the question. After that there would be a time for questions from the floor. We made one firm decision among ourselves. We were not going to pounce on some weak point where we thought the speaker vulnerable. Rather we would look for some part of the speech which indicated a real knowledge of some important area, and we would ask the speaker to enlarge on that. It worked like a charm! Each picked an evening, and we heard them all gladly. Several of the speakers were rather nervous, as the reputation of the Oxford Group as life changers made them fear we were leading them into a trap. But they found nothing to be afraid of. [...] This series of evenings lasted well into February.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Nytaarssamling i Kolding [1937]:3, 22 f.

<sup>168</sup> Nytaarssamling i Kolding [1937]:3 f. ('Det er Kirkens nationale Pligt at skabe gudførte Borgere, der giver alt, for at deres Land skal fylde den Plads, som Gud har tiltænkt det. Den sande Samfundsborger er den, som uden Frygt og frigjort fra moralske Nederlag, er villig til at tage Ansvar og lader sig føre af Gud. Den sande Leder er den, som uden Frygt, frigjort fra moralske Nederlag og hævet over personlig Ærgerrighed, lader sig føre af Gud. Som Lederen er, bliver Folket, og som Folket er, bliver Lederen. Ethvert Menneske er enten en Del af Verdens Krise eller af dens Løsning. Den, der lever som Livsforvandler, efter de fire Absolutter og under Guds Førelse, er en Del af Løsningen. Den sande Patriot er den, som sætter Livet ind paa sit Lands aandelige Genrejsning. Kun hvis Kirken bestaar af saadanne Patrioter, kan den opfylde sin nationale Pligt og hjælpe Landet til at finde sin Plads i Guds Plan').

<sup>169</sup> Nytaarssamling i Kolding [1937]:5 ff., 9 f. On the women's front, see further Jarlert 1993:403 f.

<sup>170</sup> Blake 1992:83 ff.

This new and broader direction of the work – a social personalism – included a different attitude towards the individual, with personal change explained as leading to work for national change outside of the active Oxford Group fellowship as well. Many of the Group's new and positive acquaintances returned to their professions and duties to work for national change from there. While downplaying the personal, Christian message, this meant nearing the Lutheran attitude towards the calling, unnoted by the critics of the Group.<sup>171</sup>

An important prelude to the Kolding party, with political elements, was a private house-party in Roskilde, November 6–8, together with a few Norwegians, and Helmer Rosting, former Deputy High Commissioner of the League of Nations at Danzig, who was totally disillusioned about the possibilities of the League.<sup>172</sup>

Following the line from Kolding, a Danish house-party for teachers was arranged at Haderslev during Easter 1937, at which guidance and the maximum school were emphasized. The theme was: The country's youth – the country's future; God-guided education – God-guided youth; New youth – a new Denmark. Determining the aim of education was a fundamental national task. The work was to continue in both Denmark and Sweden. About 20 of the 100 participants from outside the area were Swedish (from Malmö, Lund, Gothenburg, Stockholm, and other places). The work was described as bridging generation gaps, social distances, races, countries, etc. The party included the testimony of a changed Jewess. The Danish nationalist Helene Moltke, and the German nationalist Annelene Bruun both testified about their new cooperation. A joint Communion was celebrated in the Cathedral, with a Danish and a German priest officiating together. A result of the meeting was a new and Nordic vision instead of the nationally limited one: The Nordic North guided by God. Simultaneously, a Scandinavian conference for businessmen and -women was arranged in Aarhus.<sup>173</sup> At the house-party in Nærum, August 4–22, 1937, Professor Aage Bentzen stated that the Oxford Group had inaugurated a new era in the history of personal life in Denmark and the world. The Nærum party was attended by 25 Swedes as well.<sup>174</sup>

From December 1936 to November 1937, the journal *Nyt liv*, was published by the Student Group, as an organ of the Oxford Group in Denmark, with the

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<sup>171</sup> The shift of emphasis may be registered in the Danish version of Hallen Viney's pamphlet on how to begin (Viney 1937:7), which emphasizes a world under God's direction, compared to the emphasis on God's possibilities to change human nature in the previous Norwegian version (Eckhoff & Johnson [1936]:7 f).

<sup>172</sup> E. Wikborg to H. Blomberg 1936, Nov. 17 (UUB).

<sup>173</sup> LTV 1937 Nr. 15, Apr. 10, Nr. 37 (Sept. 11), Nr. 49 (Dec. 4), *Nyt Liv* 1937, April, p.2 'Landets Ungdom – Landets Fremtid.' Er der ikke Varer nok at handle med – ? [...] Indbydelse Fra hele Danmark og vore Nabolande mødes Handelens Mænd og Kvinder [...] i Paasken 1937.

<sup>174</sup> *Nationaltidende* 1937, Aug. 23, Carl Lindahl: 'Från Nærum' (LTV 1937 Nr. 39, Sept. 25).

aim of supplying information, from other countries as well, and keeping in contact with the different Danish teams. The journal was important in spreading the vision of a national and Nordic change. On December 4, 1937, the Danish edition of the international Oxford Group journal *Rising Tide* was published as *Vend Strømmen*, being introduced before 200 invited guests two days before.<sup>175</sup> It emphasized life-change as the road to solve the common national, political task in the lives, the homes, and the place of work of each single person.

Partly as a reaction to the signals of a growing national emphasis from Ollerup and Kolding, Halfdan Høgsbro, without consulting the leaders in Copenhagen, started to plan a clerical house-party in the spirit of Church Group revivalism. In the summer 1936, Howard Blake specially pointed out that it ought to be, 'if held, not a separate sort of a thing, but right in the line of the national policy.'<sup>176</sup> Subsequently, Høgsbro received reserved reactions to the national emphasis of Kolding. For personalistic reasons, Ove Nauntofte did not totally accept the Kolding line, as he saw a national change and the royal dominion of God realized only through life-changing at a colossal scale, person by person, and through a continuous process of change (a daily conversion) in the changed persons. He regarded the practical meaning of national change through public inspiration, etc., as just an instrument for the purpose of changing individuals. Since he could not degrade life-change to a necessary instrument for the purpose of a God-born world, he found it to be political dilettantism.<sup>177</sup> In July 1937, Høgsbro went to Oxford, urged by two telegrams from Cuthbert Bardsley that his presence was 'invaluable' at the 'supernational team meeting first of kind', and that Høgsbro's help was needed in 'our planning to save Europe.'<sup>178</sup> It meant to him a new understanding of the necessity of the worldwide and eschatological background in order to work for the salvation and change of individuals.<sup>179</sup>

In March 1937, a house-party for intellectuals had been held at Skodsborg. Høgsbro's brother, the lawyer Harald Høgsbro, wrote about the need for spiritual leaders in the new Church, and for a new reformation of the Church, as Christ alone was eternal, but St. Paul and Luther were dated,<sup>180</sup> while Paul Brodersen reported rumours that Høgsbro had left the Oxford Group, and

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<sup>175</sup> BeT, KD 1937, Dec. 4.

<sup>176</sup> Blake to Høgsbro 1936, July 13: 'In any planning for a houseparty for clergymen I hope you will include Brodersen, Holt and Helweg, as well as the ones you mention' (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>177</sup> Nauntofte to Høgsbro 1937, Feb. 9 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>178</sup> Two undated telegrams from Bardsley to Høgsbro. The team meeting was arranged July 6–16; Paul F. Rothenborg to Høgsbro 1937, July 27, on Høgsbro's long and open sharing with Cuthbert Bardsley at Oxford, in which Høgsbro was criticized for his strange view on team-discipline (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>179</sup> Høgsbro to R. Fangen 1937, July 22 (UBO 488a).

<sup>180</sup> Harald Høgsbro to Halfdan Høgsbro 1937, Feb. 18, March 2 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

emphasized that the time had not yet come for a big, clerical house-party. A stronger message and a more solid fellowship were needed. A living nucleus had to be established among the priests of the Group. Like he had written before, Brodersen felt that Høgsbro ought to take more responsibility for the movement outside of his own neighbourhood as well, for instance for a planned house-party at Kollund. In the present situation, nothing should be done that might lead to separation.<sup>181</sup> The Kollund party gave Høgsbro a clear understanding of the need for a Nordic fellowship and for Nordic responsibility. At this party, several persons testified about what the Oxford Group had meant for the change from national hatred and distrust to understanding and love in the border region.<sup>182</sup> Høgsbro tried to broaden his plans, too, by inviting Christian Bartholdy, Skat Hoffmeyer, and probably some more Church men positive towards the Oxford Group without identifying themselves with it. He wished to invite Emil Brunner as well.<sup>183</sup>

In this situation of increasing tension between Group and Church in Denmark, Ronald Fangen advised the groups to call on the Church, even if they met hard resistance, and to make it clear to themselves that the Church was much more than a priest, i.e. also the Word and Sacraments. Still, the Church attitude could force groups into sectarian activities. The Danish clergy had to be reached with a renewed Christian appeal.<sup>184</sup> Høgsbro's plans for the Nordic clerical meeting were carried on, and one of his colleagues sent him an estimation of the number of Oxford priests in Denmark, as follows – Jutland: 23, Fyen: 9 + 2?, Zealand, etc.: 19, Copenhagen: 18.<sup>185</sup> To the house-party at Nærum, August 7–21, priests were welcome, and preparations were to be made for the Nordic meeting.<sup>186</sup> Simultaneously, there was a wide exchange of letters about the planned meeting or a smaller meeting for priests.

At the end of August 1937, Christian Holt invited Høgsbro to a joint preparation, before invitations were sent out by Ronald Fangen, Bishop Berggrav and other co-invitors. Holt wrote that he wanted to have Howie Blake, Sydney Linton and Francis Goulding along at the very first preparations, and at the decision on the whole plan, and he emphasized a broader aim than the personal renewal of priests. A preparatory meeting could be arranged, perhaps in Gothenburg, to think over God's plan together with the Church Front of the Nordic North ('Nordens Kirkefront'), and with the participation

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<sup>181</sup> Brodersen to Høgsbro 1937, Apr. 14, June 6, Aug. 26, Nov. 15 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>182</sup> Høgsbro to R. Fangen 1937, July 22 (UBO 488a). *Jydske Tidende* Kolding 1937, June 7.

<sup>183</sup> C. Bartholdy to Høgsbro 1937, Nov. 18; S. Hoffmeyer to Høgsbro 1937, Nov. 15 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK); Høgsbro to R. Fangen 1937, July 22 (UBO 488a).

<sup>184</sup> Fangen to E. Berggrav 1937, July 15 (Pa. 320:10, RAO). According to Fangen, even Brodersen found the situation desperate ('Han var enig i at stillingen var fortvilet og at noget måtte gøres').

<sup>185</sup> Verner Schroll, Svendborg, to Høgsbro 1937, Aug. 20 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>186</sup> Høgsbro to R. Fangen 1937, July 22 (UBO 488a).



of Arvid Runestam, Eivind Berggrav, Fuglsang-Damgaard, Brodersen, Fangen, Blake, etc.<sup>187</sup> Blake replied in a letter to Holt, Brodersen, and Høgsbro, stating that it was ‘necessary for the church to come out in some way into a much more intimate relationship with all the people. That particularly involves, of course, the labour class and the intellectuals who have given up the church.’<sup>188</sup>

While the ‘national’ wing of the Oxford Group criticized Høgsbro for emphasizing Church cooperation and a spiritual renewal of the Nordic clergy, his plans for a Nordic clerical meeting were regarded, from a Grundtvigian position, as having too much of the form and ‘technique’ of an Oxford Group meeting.<sup>189</sup>

The planned clerical meeting finally took place at Knattholmen near Sandefjord in Norway, June 14–18, 1938. The announced speakers were Berggrav, Fangen, Høgsbro, and Sigmund Mowinckel. According to the invitations, the meeting was arranged in order to deal with personal problems, the work among modern men, the tasks in the congregation, and personal deepening, without mentioning either a national or a world revolution. Eivind Berggrav wrote to Runestam that the meeting aimed not at being orthodoxfordian, but to use all the positive things learnt from the Group.<sup>190</sup> We may call it significant of Church Group revivalism – independently or in full fellowship with the Oxford Group.

The social reputation and influence of the Oxford Group in Denmark was severely weakened during the summer 1937, through the defamation lawsuit of the missionary Nathanael Hirsch and Mrs. Katja Almond against Countess Ebba Trampe, all three being labeled as ‘followers’ of the Oxford Group. The press paid much attention to the lawsuit, featuring it as an Oxford drama, or an Oxford lawsuit.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Chr. Holt to Høgsbro 1937, Aug. 31 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK). The letter was sent simultaneously to Brodersen, Georg Bartholdy, and Blake. On Holt’s position at the time, see Holt 1937, a broadcast sermon on guidance and fellowship. Ronald Fangen had invited Berggrav 1937, July 15 (Pa. 320:10, RAO), emphasizing that the Group would not try to commit Berggrav to become ‘ortodoksford’ in any way. ‘Det er vi i virkeligheden heller ikke selv.’

<sup>188</sup> H. Blake to Høgsbro 1937, Oct. 27 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>189</sup> High-school principal J. Th. Arnfred of Askov to Høgsbro 1937, Aug. 6 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK). While Bishop Berggrav and Høgsbro himself would be welcomed at Askov, Arnfred was reserved towards Fangen, Stolpe, and many others known as Oxford people, fearing that the Grundtvigians would thus become lookers-on to strange methods in their own home.

<sup>190</sup> Innbydelse til samvær av danske og norske prester på Knattholmen ved Sandefjord 14.–18. Juni 1938. Berggrav to Runestam 1938, Feb. 22 (Runestam Coll.I).

<sup>191</sup> Ekstrabladet 1937, June 21: ‘Stort Oxford opgør i dag for aabent tæppe,’ June 22: ‘Et Oxford-Drama,’ June 30: ‘Storvasken mellem Oxford-kristne!’ July 2, 5; Politiken June 22, July 3, 6; BeT June 22, July 1; Nationaltidende June 22: ‘Oxford-Processen,’ July 1, 6; KD June 22; Social Demokraten June 22, July 3.

A cooperation between the Church and parts of the Danish Oxford Group – as in Norway – was realized, when a congregational campaign was arranged at Aarhus, in September 1937. All Church parties, including the Grundtvigians, supported the campaign, and the Oxford men worked with full loyalty and fervour and joy side by side with the others. Modern propagandistic methods, with advertisements in the newspapers, the cinemas etc. were used, and the meetings were unexpectedly well attended. The first meeting in the Cathedral had to be repeated. In a subsequent Communion service in the Cathedral, eight priests from different parties officiated together. Several hundred new participants in Bible circles were among the measurable effects of this campaign.<sup>192</sup> It is hard to see that this revivalistic campaign was in accordance with the strategy planned at the New Year's meeting in Kolding. The participation of many Oxford people might have been motivated by the national, co-operative direction of the work. At the same time, it was an early sign of the coming disruption in the Danish Oxford Group.

In October 1937, the Swiss Group revivalistic pastor W. J. Oehler spoke at Nyborg Strand and in Copenhagen, and at Christmas 1937, the Danish version of the magazine *Rising Tide*, called *Vend Strømmen*, was published. Here, Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard and Dean Brodersen of Copenhagen were introduced as leaders of the movement.<sup>193</sup>

At the same time, Group revivalistic efforts were carried through in a rather pre-Oxford style, for example among the pre-varsity students at the Cathedral School in Odense. The inspiration came from Professor Aage Bentzen of Copenhagen, who spoke at a student meeting in Fredericia. The students had both practical and theoretical difficulties with specific Group methods, such as quiet time and sharing, and also disapproved of Bentzen's ban on discussions. The town of Odense was described as divided between Oxford and non-Oxford, with the Norwegian professor Hallesby an impending threat. The Group experiment failed, some students deciding for Barthianism, others for the ecumenical movement as leading to less division than Oxford.<sup>194</sup>

The effects of the Oxford Group on congregational life in Denmark were less notable than in Norway. In the diocese of Oslo, the total number of communicants had risen from 101,791 (1933), to 134,222 (1936), and – more slowly – to 145,037 (1939).<sup>195</sup> In Greater Copenhagen, the number rose from 213,692 (1934) to 244,529 (1936), subsequently to 251,545 (1938), then declining.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Hoffmeyer 1937:118.

<sup>193</sup> Prenter 1938:116.

<sup>194</sup> Several letters to A. Bentzen, 1937–1938, for example, from Erik Wendelboe 1938, Jan. 5 (Pa. 5108, RAK).

<sup>195</sup> Beretninger om den Norske Kirke i 1937:109, 1938:96, 1939:163.

<sup>196</sup> 'Alterbesøget i Storkøbenhavn' (PrB 1935:218, 1936:248, 1937:230, 1938:274, 1939:227, 1941:219 f. with the correct numbers also for 1939). The total numbers were 1934: 213,692; 1935: 228,267; 1936: 244,529; 1937: 245,785; 1938: 251,545; 1939:

#### *IV.3.8. Moral Re-Armament and the Disruption in the Danish Oxford Group*

In the autumn 1938, a gathering of Scandinavian writers with the message about the new man, the new society, and the Christian culture was planned for the coming February. The concern to get Kaj Munk into the Oxford Group was still great.<sup>197</sup> The so-called Oxford poems of the Swedish author Bertil Malmberg were praised by Dean Brodersen as those of a prophetic voice, and in other articles, the life-changing literature produced by Norwegian or Swedish writers (Fangen, Ramm, Malmberg, Blomberg, and Stolpe) was praised.<sup>198</sup>

During his visit to Denmark in December 1938, Stolpe – staying with Christian Harhoff – met with the team daily, as well as with Danish writers like Stangerup, Kjeld Abell, Arne Sørensen, Knud Sønderby, Kelvin Lindeman, and a few publishers. While Stolpe found that the Danish team had excellent relations with the top men in the business life, they lacked contacts with the intellectuals. Denmark needed a clear vision of the consequences of the Oxford programme for the whole culture. The leading cultural circles as well as the leading school people had to be made open to the understanding of Oxford as a plan for a Christian, democratic culture, and not just private life-changing. Gudrun Egebjerg saw this clearly when she stated that there was a need for a deeper breakthrough than that of radical Brandesianism. This was to be presented in the spring, 1939.<sup>199</sup>

Earlier plans to get Danish and German Group leaders together had been postponed, while individual contacts, for example between Carl Wagner (Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard's father-in-law) and the German Church Group leader J. F. Laun, were fruitful. Gudrun Egebjerg tried to interest Halfdan Høgsbro in what she regarded as one of the greatest national tasks, worthy to be the target on which all power and obedience were concentrated. Aage Moltke made preparatory contacts with Count Schack, but the political situation in Germany did not allow joint meetings across the border.<sup>200</sup> In 1939 Annelene Bruhn, Aage Moltke and Helene Moltke testified on the Scandinavian tour to the U.S.A. about conflicts between national groups as a reason to cooperate. Aage Moltke meant that the Danish majority was responsible for the minority, while Miss Bruhn stated that the minority, to which she belonged, was

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251,433; 1940: 250,807.

<sup>197</sup> J. C. Just to Høgsbro 1938, Nov. 28 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>198</sup> P. Brodersen: 'En profetisk Røst i svensk Digtning' (BA 1939, March 7), Christian Rasmussen & Sven Juel Møller & Knud Hee Andersen: 'Et Nybrud i svensk litteratur' (Næstved Tidende 1939, Feb. 4, also in other newspapers), Andersen 1939.

<sup>199</sup> S. Stolpe to H. Blomberg ('Kära vänner!') 1938, Dec. 20 (UUB).

<sup>200</sup> Vock 1989:207 f. Wagner translated Laun 1936b into Danish, with a foreword by Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard. G. Egebjerg to Høgsbro 1938, Oct. 27 (PA 6922:B.3, RAK).

responsible for the majority, and that the future was built on this common feeling of responsibility.<sup>201</sup>

A party for women from the Nordic North co-operating for Moral Re-Armament was given at Rønshoved High School, July 29 – August 5. The aim was to determine the greatest possible effort women could make in order to create a Nordic North, and show the road to inner and outer peace, by the unselfish and responsible acts of single human beings and countries.<sup>202</sup>

Still, the foreign full-time workers thought the problem with Denmark was that the work of the Oxford Group was not respected. Fresh, concrete results were needed, the unemployment work being exactly right for this, as soon as anything could be presented to the public. Many people still regarded Oxford as ‘something small and religious,’ and therefore refused ‘to make the mental effort of correlating it with such names as Roosevelt, Hoare, Kingsley Wood, Ford, and Co.’<sup>203</sup>

From within the Church, the critique was the reverse. In July 1939, P. Helweg-Larsen stated, in *Kristeligt Dagblad*, that the Moral Re-Armament movement, like other good movements, could be supported by Christians, although it was not a Christian movement. He raised the question if the M.R.A. was a deviation from, or a logical development of the original Oxford Group. When the Oxford Movement reached Denmark, he had asked himself whether it was a Christian revival, albeit with a strong emphasis on ethics, or a moral prophylaxis, and which of these two was the original way. Next stage was the world revolution, dreamt of already in the beginning, then coming more and more to the fore. The last stage was reached with Moral Re-Armament.<sup>204</sup> Four days later, H. O. Lange answered that the buzzword ‘Moral Re-Armament’ was not the last word, but the first, with God’s help to be followed by the word of the Gospel.<sup>205</sup> Christian Holt thanked Lange in private, stating that there was no time to discuss along old, theological lines, but to rearm in spiritual fellowship and power, and not fight for the Church in her present state, but for the Christianization of the people, and thus create a Church that was able to carry on the fight.<sup>206</sup> The Swedish writer Sven Stolpe declared that the politics

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<sup>201</sup> Vock 1989:202 f.

<sup>202</sup> ‘Nordens Kvinder i Samarbejde for Moralsk Oprustning.’

<sup>203</sup> Copy of S. Linton to G. Lean 1939, July 21 (DWC; including opinions of Andrew Strang and Johannes Dührkop).

<sup>204</sup> P. Helweg-Larsen: ‘Oxfordbevægelsens sidste Stadium’ (KD 1939, July 4).

<sup>205</sup> H. O. Lange: ‘Oxfordbevægelsens sidste Stadium. I anledning af Provst Helweg-Larsens Artikel’ (KD 1939, July 8). In a later, private answer to Lange 1939, Sept. 9 (Ny Kgl. Samling 3736-4<sup>o</sup>, KBK), Helweg-Larsen wrote that some of the Oxford Movement’s best men in Denmark had wished to prevent the development of the international movement. They had wished to keep it private, but now the situation had changed. Helweg-Larsen, who was grateful for Jørgen Nissen’s criticism, told Lange that even Fuglsang-Damgaard had thanked him for his articles.

<sup>206</sup> Chr. Holt to H. O. Lange 1939, July 29 (Ny Kgl. Samling 3736-4<sup>o</sup>, KBK).

and message of the Oxford Group had not been changed. From the beginning, Frank Buchman had aimed at Christian world politics. There had always been a consciousness of the need for a cadre of changed men in all countries, before it was possible to seriously go for the Christian world revolution. M.R.A. was nothing but this first step. Just like when dealing with individuals, this first step was not yet Christian.<sup>207</sup>

In an article in *Kristeligt Dagblad* in August 1939, the vicar Jørgen Nissen from Dalby wrote about the division of the Oxford Group in Denmark. According to Nissen, one party consisted of those who since their conversion or renewal had found their place in the Church and in the organic life of the congregation, while the other party had gone its own way, under the direction of the international Oxford Group, with an ever looser connection to the Church. The most fatal thing was their message, which was getting more and more social, finally ending in the appeal for a moral rearmament. It was hard to find a Christian message in official or private reports from America, and Nissen described the Oxford Movement in this form as a falsification of the Gospel, and as rationalism. He traced this new line back to the New Year party at Kolding, 1937.<sup>208</sup>

Nissen's description of the so-called other party that had gone its own way under the direction of the international Oxford Group, with an ever looser connection to the Church, is not totally adequate. First, some of the leaders of this other party held high ecclesiastical posts, for example Dean Brodersen.<sup>209</sup> Secondly, there are earlier examples of situations when, for example, the British full-timers acted in a personalistic, soul-curing way, while the Danes tried to force an identification with the Oxford Group.<sup>210</sup> Still, these facts do not contradict Nissen's observations of a division in the Danish Oxford Group, though they show that the situation was somewhat more complicated.

During summer and autumn 1939, clear signs of a disruption within the Danish Oxford Group may be observed in the correspondence. Above, we have noted Halfdan Høgsbro's strong reaction to the fact that his wide-spread *Oxford-noter* was not 'mentioned with a word in the Danish group-publications

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<sup>207</sup> S. Stolpe: 'Oxfordgruppen og moralsk Oprustning' (KD 1939, July 13).

<sup>208</sup> J. Nissen: 'Oxfordgruppen er delt' (KD 1939, Aug. 30). Nissen had already been among the inviters to the Nyborg Strand meeting on 'Oxford' in February 1934.

<sup>209</sup> In September, Dean Brodersen tried to clear the situation by means of informative articles in the province newspapers, on the work of the Oxford Group for spiritual and moral rearmament, while avoiding the isolated use of 'moral.'

<sup>210</sup> Ove Nauntofte to Høgsbro 1936, June 12 ('[...] Englændernes Praksis og deres forbløffende Tag paa at hjælpe Mennesker til "the next step" – altsaa netop en Støtte dér, hvor Svagheden er aktuel – maaske akut. Jeg har begravet det sidste, men jeg har knyttet Hjælpen til en vis Kapitulation overfor "Oxford" – eller i hvert Fald været interesseret i, at Oxford fik et Par Points derigennem.'). Further that, while Høgsbro's *Oxford-noter* were not propagated by the leading Danes, they were used by the foreigners on Fyn, 1936 (George M. Fraser to Høgsbro 1936, Jan. 30, Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

and announcements of group-literature'.<sup>211</sup> Høgsbro wrote some critical lines to Georg Bartholdy, who – despite the articles of Lange and Stolpe, agreed with Høgsbro. Bartholdy also emphasized the need of 1) a continuing work along the inner lines given by the Group: sharing, quietness, and the growing Biblical and spiritual fellowship, 2) a bigger fellowship to avoid isolation, pietism, narrow views, and clichés, all real dangers despite a full surrender. The future programme was conscious work along the Group lines, but founded on the congregations, and most positive to the Americans, but without waiting for their initiative or being hindered by their criticism of their own old religion.<sup>212</sup>

Writing from *M/S Oslofford*, on his return from the Scandinavian Oxford Group tour, Paul Brodersen urged Høgsbro to come to a training centre for all the Nordic countries September 15–25, most likely at Saltsjöbaden in Sweden (subsequently moved to Hurdalsverket in Norway). He emphasized the need of a common Nordic front, and regarded the expression 'Moral Re-Armament' as a response in a given situation, and as a connecting point. Høgsbro answered that social improvement and cultural renewal was made the main thing, with faith and personal renewal only as instruments, which was contrary to the Biblical teaching on the Kingdom of God, while Brodersen was enthusiastic about Frank Buchman's programme of 'Hundred millions listening to God,' and wrote that the work had to consist partly of giving people 'a working relationship with Christ' (Ken Twitchell), partly of working on the whole mentality of the peoples, towards a spiritual, new direction, and a national education on a broad scale to create a new atmosphere. Brodersen explained this work as an act in the spirit of John the Baptist, which prepared the way for the Lord to the peoples.<sup>213</sup> While Høgsbro wanted to continue along a Church Group line, in working fellowship with Scandinavians and Germans, Brodersen, now a convinced worker for a national moral rearmament, warned him of the risk of becoming one of those who were merely grateful for what the Group Movement had once given them, and Georg Bartholdy no longer so critical, found that almost all reaction against Moral Re-Armament led Group people to weaken inwardly in their dedication to full surrender.<sup>214</sup> Indirect support of the 'official' Oxford Group strategy also came from Theophil Spoerri, who spoke on Danish radio from the European Methodist conference in Copenhagen on a Church alive.<sup>215</sup>

An important factor in the planning and realization of the Danish work was

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<sup>211</sup> Copy of Høgsbro to Cuthbert Bardsley 1938, July 19 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>212</sup> Georg Bartholdy to Høgsbro 1939, July 13 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>213</sup> P. Brodersen to Høgsbro 1939, Aug. 30, Sept. 11, 16, also Georg Bartholdy to Høgsbro 1939, July 13 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK). Bartholdy mentioned Knud Hee Andersen, Paul Brodersen, and especially Christian Holt and Thorvald Sparring-Petersen as M.R.A. people.

<sup>214</sup> Brodersen to Høgsbro 1939, Sept. 16, G. Bartholdy to Høgsbro 1939, Oct. 9 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>215</sup> The speech became known in Sweden, too, see Spoerri 1939.

the home of Jens Tvede, which functioned as a centre for the Oxford Group. When plans were discussed for a centre in Gothenburg, it was modelled on the Copenhagen centre and its personalistic approach:

The room itself or rooms, I feel must be 'personal' – that is it must be marked with the stamp of someone's personality. It must give the impression of being a home – not an office. I feel strongly myself that at all costs we should avoid the use of the word 'kontor or Ekspedition' [sic] and substitute *arbetsrum* or *arbetshem*, – something to show that it is the family at home or at work. Flowers, pictures, carpets should make it as 'homey' as possible.

Noises should be concentrated in one room: typewriters, telephones, duplicators etc. The room where the team meets should be free from these, and it should be possible through the day for personal talks or team quiet times to be held there. Further small rooms are a great help for personal talks, and for writing and discussion. The Copenhagen centre is excellent in many of these respects. One feels it to be part of Jens Tvede's home. The telephone is outside in the entrance hall – difficult to answer, for the girl has to get up and go out, but good in that people can telephone without disturbing whatever is going on. The first room has all the typewriters and duplicator. The second room is a nice sitting room for the team to have quiet times. Further there are two bedrooms, where people can sit and talk, and sleep at nights. [...]

I feel the ideal centre would be attached to a home of a family, who by geographical and social position can receive into their home leading people, yet such a home that a worker would also be able to feel at ease there.<sup>216</sup>

## IV.4. The Isolation Phase

### *IV.4.1. Work for a National Renewal*

During the isolation phase, which in Denmark – as in Norway – meant German occupation, the Danish Oxford Group was very active, inspiring and active in national work, mostly on a semi-official level. This was made possible by a political situation which was different from the one in Norway. Until August 1943, the functions of the Danish King and government were only partly limited. During the first years of the war, smaller Group meetings were held, and leading Group men in different parts of the country even spoke of extended possibilities.<sup>217</sup> One of the foreign full-timers described the mental difference in

<sup>216</sup> Copy of S. Linton to E. Goulding 1939, Oct. 23 (DWC). The office was kept in Tvede's home until his death in July 1943.

<sup>217</sup> Aage Moltke to Hee Andersen 1940, Nov. 6: 'Det, Du skriver om de udvidede Berøringsflader og Arbejdsmuligheder, synes vi, at ogsaa vi har erfaret paa forskellig

the following way:

The Danes have taken the occupation very much more easily, and with their usual humour try to pass off as much as possible as a joke. They seem to succeed in this to a considerable extent, the Germans seem a little perplexed at their humor, the Danes keep their spirits up with it. The Norwegians see nothing to joke at in their difficulties, and find things very much harder.<sup>218</sup>

The Oxford Group work for spiritual preparedness began in 1939. A good example of the national direction of the work was the proclamation of the week of Danish homes, October 26–31, 1939. In the working committee were, among others, Paul Brodersen, Kai Hammerich, and Aage Falk Hansen, but also the minister for ecclesiastical affairs, V. Fibiger, and the education minister, Jørgen Jørgensen. On the board were also Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard and Christian Harhoff. At all the meetings during the week, the upbringing of children made up an important part of the programme.<sup>219</sup>

On November 3, a big meeting for world peace, based on the constant service of reconciliation, was held at Studenterforeningen, with Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard, Professor Bentzen, Kaj Munk, Fredrik Ramm (Norway), Harry Blomberg (Sweden), and Professor Gudmundur Kamban (Iceland) speaking. The Nordic view was further emphasized by Halvdan Helweg's book on the united Finland, which opened with a telegram from President Kallio (1939, Dec. 11).<sup>220</sup> In April 1940, Dean Brodersen published some articles on spiritual preparedness, emphasizing the need for preparedness through listening to God, renewal of the individual's responsibility, mutual concord, and faith. The second part of his first article was published on the very day of the German occupation, April 9, 1940.<sup>221</sup>

In August 1940, Thorvald S. Pedersen reported that eight persons were at present working full time for the Oxford Group, and two more were expected. In Landsforeningen til Arbejdsløshetens Bekæmpelse (L.A.B.; see Ch. IV.4.3.), five persons worked full time under the guidance of High Barrister Valdemar Hvidt. A third branch was Annelise Rubow's work to induce young girls from

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Maade.' The Haderslev team had initiated a preparatory team meeting in Tinglev to decide the lines for an attack in Sønderjylland (Pa. 5034, RAK). See also Andersen [1940], Helweg 1940, etc, which show the greater possibilities of active work in Denmark as compared to Norway or Germany.

<sup>218</sup> Copy of S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940, Dec. 13 (DWC).

<sup>219</sup> See, for example, BeT 1941, Oct. 3.

<sup>220</sup> Neutralitet betyder Ansvar for Fremtiden. Ingen Fremtid uden Fred. Vi maa forberede Freden. 26. Oktober 1939 [invitation], signed by Kjeld Abell, Bodil Begtrup, Aage Bentzen, Paul Brodersen, C. P. O. Christiansen, Dida Dederding, N. Høst, Thorv. Larsen, P. Marcussen, and Jens Rosenkjær. Helweg 1939.

<sup>221</sup> 'Vort aandelige Beredskab,' BeT 1940, Apr. 8, 9, after a radio speech on April 2. See also Brodersen 1940, 1940b.



the towns to work in the country during their holidays (Unge Pigers Landhjelp), building bridges between the town and the country. In 1939, 16 girls had worked in this way, but in 1940 the number rose to 138. A fourth activity started with Knud Hee Andersen's speech on the future of Denmark, at military schools in Næstved. Some officers got it published through all associations of soldiers in the country, and meetings were arranged for garrisons and associations together.<sup>222</sup>

In the autumn, Dean Brodersen and others led meetings in the Copenhagen Cathedral. Two other meetings followed, with 250 persons willing to go on and dividing up into four groups, which arranged further meetings, etc. In December, Krista Petersen reported about the new situation since April 9, which had, overnight, plunged the team into the job of being nation-builders, and described the aim of the Oxford Group work in Denmark as building a Christian structure in the country:

Paul [Brodersen] is becoming the leader we always hoped he would be. He spares no effort to convince the nation that our first national duty is to act as uncompromising Christians in national and political affairs. His own life shows that spirit, mind and action are one and cannot be separated. The government listens with deep interest to his message. Pray for him. He is rapidly becoming a prophet for his nation.

On April 15, fifteen leading men in government had met with the team at Chr. Harhoff's home, and began a close cooperation, the team getting confidential information, using it in quiet times, and passing their guidance on to their friends in the government. As a 'liaison officer' in the army, Hans Hansen was free to talk and act as he pleased in order to strengthen of the morale in the disillusioned army camps, and he involved V. Hvidt, Chr. Harhoff, D. Pappariopoulo, and R. Petersen in his work. Furthermore, Oxford Group people were said to be involved in all constructive work being done. An important condition for the work was said to be the lack of hatred in Denmark.<sup>223</sup>

Grethe Morthorst's *Slægten som kommer* (1940), on guided education, was

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<sup>222</sup> T. S. Pedersen to F. Buchman 1940, Aug. 22 in copy (appendix to S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940, Dec. 13, NLC). The full-timers were Krista Petersen, Richard Petersen, Sonja Elvardt, Else Hansen, Karen Holck, Grethe Morthorst, Christine Møller, and Dimitri Pappariopoulo; those expected Thorkild Clausen and Bonde Henriksen. Colonel H. A. V. Hansen was working in the same way among the soldiers. In the L.A.B.: Jens Tvede, Svend Aage Bruun, Ernst Schilling, Severin Christensen, Ruth Dahl. Andersen [1940].

<sup>223</sup> 'Kära vän!' (dupl., EPC). Translation of K. Petersen to G. Egebjerg 1940, Dec. 3 (appendix to G. Egebjerg to F. Buchman 1941, Feb. 8, NLC). An example of such constructive work was Valborg Hammerich's organisation of a nation-wide rag collection for the manufactures of cotton and layettes.

written before the occupation, in cooperation with Group people, and with special considerations for the needs among the teachers in the Swedish province of Värmland. Miss Morthorst travelled in Denmark too, inspiring parents and teachers.<sup>224</sup> In the anthology *Det danske og det kristne* (1941), edited by Paul Brodersen and the Grundtvigian high-school principal, C. P. O. Christiansen, several Oxford Group men presented their views on national and Christian life. Brodersen stressed that certain traits of the Danish mentality were parts of God's plan, and could be wasted, distorted, or realized – the latter through Christian faith.<sup>225</sup> After a long historical survey, starting with the Christianity in Denmark, Knud Hee Andersen emphasized honesty, purity, and love as the demands put on homes by the Christian religion.<sup>226</sup> Halvdan Helweg began with the Middle Ages, finally reaching the Oxford Group-inspired work for the unemployed, emphasizing guidance, presenting a new type of Christians, independent of the old religious parties and waiting for the changing power to manifest itself everywhere in the spiritual and material life of the people.<sup>227</sup> The anthology closed with an essay by a Member of Parliament, Erik Appel, on Christianity and Danishness in Sønderjylland. While Appel found it possible for Danes and Germans to share the fellowship of the sermon and Holy communion, it was impossible to share in congregational life, which implied confidence among the people, since congregational life was an intimate union of popular life and Christian life. While Halvdan Høgsbro had spoken in favor of the Common Church order ('fælleskirkelige'), Appel advocated the Separate Church order ('særkirkelige') with different priests for Danish and German-speaking congregations in the same parish. Appel openly polemized against Høgsbro's views that not justice, but injustice and forgiveness, were the common foundations for the congregation, like a mixture between God's relations with the individual and those with the nation. According to Appel, men could meet in personal confession and hunger for salvation, whether Danes or Germans, but only those living in the same national sin could meet in national confession and national hunger for salvation, to be raised in fellowship and entrusted with continued national life.<sup>228</sup> It is not known whether Appel's views were representative of the Oxford Group in Denmark at the time, neither if his own relation to the Group was limited to his article in *Det danske og det kristne*. His views are of interest as a Danish example of a mixed personalistic/nationalistic attitude, in a way earlier found in Germany, although here national identification seems to overcome personal identification.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> S. Linton to G. Morthorst 1940, Feb. 2 (M.R.A. Archives, NLC), 'Kära vän!' 1941, May 9 (dupl., EPC). On Morthorst 1940, see further Ch. II.3.3.

<sup>225</sup> Brodersen & Christiansen 1941:26.

<sup>226</sup> Brodersen & Christiansen 1941:68.

<sup>227</sup> Brodersen & Christiansen 1941:111 ff.

<sup>228</sup> Brodersen & Christiansen 1941:209 ff. Appel's views, published in outline already in Appel 1936, are not commented by Vock 1989.

<sup>229</sup> See especially Laun & Krumhaar 1935.

In 1943 four discourses given by Halvdan Helweg and Paul Brodersen on the Kingdom of God were published in October – December 1942. Here, Helweg exposed his personalistic view of history, defining it as men in activity, with three constant factors: God, men, and sin.<sup>230</sup>

In the same year, three Swiss discourses on national renewal were published in Denmark. The authors were the famous psychiatrist Dr. Paul Tournier, Philippe Mottu, who worked at the Swiss General Staff, became a diplomat and was related to Emil Brunner, and Charles F. Ducommun, who worked in the trade unions for cooperation with other social classes, and – like Mottu – a member of the board of the national Gotthard-Bund. The discourses emphasized the development of personalities, the edification of homes, the spiritual foundation for a national renewal, and the economic and social rebuilding of Switzerland, through cooperation and fellowship.<sup>231</sup> In the same year, a translation of the psychiatrist Dr. Theo Bovet's *Credo Helvetique* was published in Copenhagen. Bovet, too, was a member of the Gotthard-Bund, and his small book aimed at a better quality of personal and social life. In his preface, Hans Wenck wrote that the presupposition of this was the realization of the Christian faith in everyday life, under personal responsibility to God. For the building of the post-war future, there was a need to illuminate how to solve the economic, social, and political problems on a democratic basis, and how to create a confident cooperation in the homes, the work-place, and society.<sup>232</sup>

The Swiss Gotthard-Bund was built on a Christian view of man, but open also to non-Christians. As Bovet – on behalf of the Gotthard-Bund – at the same time emphasized the need for strength through personal faith and decision, the consequence was that faith was interpreted as a totally personal thing focusing on fidelity, while its doctrinal contents were neglected or privatized.<sup>233</sup>

Still, traditional life-changing work was continued, for example at the Easter conference at Sorø, 1942, with 435 reported participants, and several additional ones at a public meeting.<sup>234</sup> On August 7, 1943, Vald. Hvidt wrote in *Berlingske Tidende*, emphasizing Christendom as a life in freedom, subject to inner discipline, the responsibilities of the laymen, and a dynamic Christian fellowship not in matters of opinions, but in actions. Perhaps the Danish Christians were called upon to demonstrate a creative fellowship between all Christians.<sup>235</sup> Inspired by Hvidt, a conference for Christian laymen from different denominations was held at Mariaforbundet in Copenhagen, only one week before the German occupation forces took over all the administrative powers.

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<sup>230</sup> Helweg & Brodersen 1943:3 f.

<sup>231</sup> Tournier & Mottu & Ducommun 1943.

<sup>232</sup> Bovet 1943:5 f.

<sup>233</sup> Bovet 1943:7. See further Ch. II.3.6.

<sup>234</sup> 'Kära vän!' 1942, Apr. 27 (dupl., EPC).

<sup>235</sup> Hvidt 1943 (BeT 1943, Aug. 7).

The theme was how to counteract the destructive forces of the wartime, and how to prepare for the post-war rebuilding in the moral and spiritual field. Taking part were people from different parties in the Church of Denmark, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, and some Baptists and Quakers, all participating as persons, not as representatives.<sup>236</sup>

Further conferences followed in November 1943, and May 1944. The aim was to infuse all sections of social life with the reconstructive powers of Christianity. The conferences were described not as theological or ecumenical, but as aiming at a working fellowship.<sup>237</sup> They removed many misunderstandings between Christians of different opinion, and promoted through committees a continuing work with articles, public discourses, and revision of school-books presenting distorted views of several denominations, as well as with planning for the reception of Danish workers returning from Germany after war – all aiming at building a new Denmark through love.<sup>238</sup>

#### *IV.4.2. Occupation and Resistance*

The day after the invasion of Denmark by German troops on April 9, 1940, one of the British full-time workers, Andrew Strang, was arrested but released, arrested again a month later, interned, and sent to Germany. The Danish team sent him weekly parcels, and communicated through German friends.<sup>239</sup> Through the mediation of Mrs. Märta Wetterlind in the Oxford Group in Sweden, Strang was visited in Germany by her uncle, Dr. Sven Hedin and his sister, Miss Alma Hedin. Through Dr. Hedin's German publisher, Brockhaus,

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<sup>236</sup> Samarbejde mellem kristne 1943:3 ff. Invitors were C. P. O. Christiansen, V. Fibiger, G. Garth-Grüner, Kai Hammerich, Aage Falk Hansen, Chr. Harhoff, Chr. Larsen, Gerda Müller, Inger Gautier-Schmit, Blom Salmonsens.

<sup>237</sup> Morthorst 1944:76 – 'Det var et Arbejdsfælleskab, ikke et Dogmefællesskab, man tilstræbte.'

<sup>238</sup> Samarbejde mellem kristne 1943:11 f., Morthorst 1944:78 f., also Morthorst 1968:124 f. For the November meeting, 1943, committees had worked with education, publication and press, radio, and film, and several new committees were formed; 'Det er gennem Kærlighed, at det nye Danmark skal bygges op' (Samarbejde mellem kristne 1943:12). After the war, Valdemar Hvidt was reported to have developed and thought out 'the conception of a Christian national life [...] It is in connection with this that he feels Christian unity is a first objective, and has been gathering lay representatives [...] uniting them on the common task of making a Christian nation' (S. Linton to F. Buchman 1945, June 15; NLC).

<sup>239</sup> Edward Goulding and David Grimshaw were both in Norway at the same date, but escaped to England and Sweden, respectively; copies of S. Linton to E. Goulding 1940, May 31, to H. Blake 1940, Sept. 26 (DWC). Thorvald S. Pedersen 1940, Aug. 22 (in copy as appendix to S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940, Dec. 13, NLC). From February to April 1944, Strang received 24 letters from members of the Danish team (Strang to Pedersen 1944, May 14, printed in Pedersen 1944:[2]).

they sent him money regularly until 1943. In September 1944, Andrew Strang was exchanged against other civilian prisoners, returning to Britain by way of Sweden.<sup>240</sup>

The occupation did not mean total isolation from the international team, although all communication was made slow and difficult. A letter to Frank Buchman, written in Copenhagen August 22, 1940, arrived in Sweden in November to be read there, and to be forwarded by way of Petsamo. As there was no mail going that way, it was copied onto air-mail paper in Sweden, and sent on December 13 to the U.S.A.<sup>241</sup> A translation of a letter mailed to California by Krista Petersen when visiting Sweden in December 1940, was forwarded to Frank Buchman in February 1941. Here the Danish isolation is described in the following words:

We don't know what rumors you hear about us; we have no contact with the world. You cannot imagine how it feels to be shut off from what is happening outside your own borders. There would be a danger that we become selfcentered were God not showing us all the time that he is now permitting us to create in our own nation something to be used later in changing other nations.<sup>242</sup>

Even since the Germans had taken over the administration in 1943, it was possible for Danish Group men to visit neutral Sweden for business purposes. Christian Harhoff, for example, spent three weeks in Sweden on business in November–December 1943, visiting the Arbin family.<sup>243</sup>

The constant flying of the Danish flag at the house of Jens Carl Just at Strandvejen in Copenhagen was meant and interpreted as a demonstration, as the neighbouring house was used as the headquarters of a high S.S.-officer. King Christian X used to salute the flag on his daily ride. In the Danish Nazi journal, *National-Socialisten*, J. C. Just and the Oxford Group were attacked, and the question was asked whether it was possible to combine this so-called provocation with the demand of absolute love.<sup>244</sup>

It is notable that the life-changing work of the Oxford Group was not

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<sup>240</sup> Hedin 1949:168 ff., A. Strang to A. Hedin 1940, Nov. 9, several letters from S. Linton to S. Hedin, especially 1944, Dec. 13, and G. Jansson to S. Hedin 1942, Feb. 4 (RA). Miss Hedin's description of the conditions of imprisonment is included in copy of Linton to P. Blake 1941, Jan. 18 (DWC). Sven Stolpe asked Hedin to help Fredrik Ramm as well. It is not known whether this was realized (Stolpe to A. Hedin 1942, July 26, RA). Pedersen 1944; Till Andrew Strangs vänner i Sverige. Gothenburg 1944, Sept. 10 (dupl., Alnäs).

<sup>241</sup> T. S. Pedersen to F. Buchman 1940, Aug. 22 in copy (appendix to S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940, Dec. 13, NLC).

<sup>242</sup> Translation of K. Petersen to G. Egebjerg 1940, Dec. 3 (appendix to G. Egebjerg to F. Buchman 1941, Feb. 8, NLC).

<sup>243</sup> Chr. Harhoff to A. Lehtonen 1943, Dec. 18 (RAH).

<sup>244</sup> Morthorst 1968:39 f.

mentioned in contemporary sources as a reason for the massive Danish reaction against the persecution of the Danish Jews in the autumn 1943, but it may be taken as significant that the importance of the Oxford Group to the Danish Church remained on the private level, especially with previously estranged people.<sup>245</sup>

Of great importance for creating new and different post-war conditions were the war emigrants, for example C. J. Hambro, or the Danes Gudrun Egebjerg and Willy Rentzmann, who had kept close contact with Frank Buchman while isolated from Group work in their home-countries. A conference on these matters was arranged at Fredericia, October 15–20, 1945, at which inspiration from abroad, problems in agriculture, city work, education, etc, were emphasized. An evening with the significant heading *The Inner Enemies of Democracy* was also arranged.<sup>246</sup>

#### *IV.4.3. National Cooperation on Social Problems*

In Denmark, even independent Group work before the Oxford Group campaign included an initiative to reach the business world. In 1934 a group of businessmen met regularly in the Messiah Church in Charlottenlund for Bible reading and discussions about how the Christian faith was to be realized in their daily life, and they testified at meetings as well.<sup>247</sup> In August 1936, Børge Hjerl-Hansen wrote in *Berlingske Aftenavis* about the Oxford Revolution in modern industrial life, and the introduction of a new spirit in business and industry, and referred to the Oxford house-party, July 1936, to Lean & Martin's booklet on *New leadership*, and to the international publication *Drums of Peace*.<sup>248</sup> When the appeals for a moral rearmament reached the Group in Denmark, principles already applied to business life by for example, Thorvald S. Pedersen, such as selling at the same prices to all customers, and only to merchants who observed the set prices, the levelling of prices between different firms, and abolishing bad quality goods and secret deals, were simply renamed *Moral Re-Armament*.<sup>249</sup>

The Church of Denmark had been acting to improve the situation of the

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<sup>245</sup> See further Jarlert 1993b. Sommer 1948:145.

<sup>246</sup> Konferencen i Fredericia [1945]:[3], signed by Paul Brodersen, Helene Moltke, and ten other persons.

<sup>247</sup> Heft & Hjerl-Hansen 1934:7.

<sup>248</sup> Hjerl-Hansen 1936:5 f. ('En Verden efterlyser ny Revolution', 1:0 in BA 1936, July 23), 12 ('Oxford-Revolutionen i moderne Industriliv', 1:0 in BA 1936, Aug. 20, 21), 29 ('Krisen og Kirken', Speech in K.F.U.M.'s Centralforening, Copenhagen 1936, Nov. 3). See further, for example, Carrard 1939 (first held at the Efficiency-Club in Zurich).

<sup>249</sup> 'Vad är moralisk upprustning i affärlivet?' by Thorvald S. Pedersen, 1939, Apr. 9 (dupl., EPC). See 'Changed business by Thorvald S. Pedersen and Staff,' including a testimony from Oxford, 1936 (ms., Tirley). Inspiration came from the house-party for businessmen in Oslo, February 11–12, 1939.

unemployed through the extensive work of pastor Aage Falk Hansen in Copenhagen since 1927.<sup>250</sup> In Norway, too, the Church tried to help unemployed young people, and on the initiative of Egil Brekke, a youth help organization (Ungdomshjelpen) was founded in 1931, raising money for 600 job slots, and helping some of the 3,000 young people registered as unemployed.<sup>251</sup> The new thing with the Oxford Group was not the work among the unemployed as such, but the emphasis on fellowship. When this work began in the mid 1930s, it was still directed towards unemployed Group people, but subsequently it got a broader, national direction in all of Scandinavia, from work with workers to work for workers.<sup>252</sup> In Denmark, it was especially concentrated and successful through Landsforeningen til Arbejdsløshedens Bekæmpelse (L.A.B.), founded in August 1939. Since the organization and work of L.A.B. has been described in detail by Axel Kjær Sørensen, we will concentrate on the relation of the work to the Oxford Group.<sup>253</sup> In the Oxford Group, the planning work was done despite the danger of

switching all the energies of that team off onto unemployment solving in instead of lifechanging, and letting the Oxford Group slide into being an association for employing people. But this would be avoided, if all the time M.R.A. is kept in the foreground, and it is made clear that dealing with unemployment is a part of the M.R.A. of Denmark. [...] The root of unemployment is an inactive quality of life in the nation, = sin = selfishness. The only permanent cure is a dynamic unselfishness in the nation.<sup>254</sup>

In an official report on the Scandinavian work, Howard Blake stated that

Danes in many centres have been awakened to new civic responsibility after meeting the Oxford Group. Changed lives have produced a wave of voluntary

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<sup>250</sup> Falk Hansen 1937<sup>2</sup>:9 ff., 37 ff., 156 ff. et passim.

<sup>251</sup> Montgomery 1982b:232.

<sup>252</sup> See, for example, Fr. Ramm to 'Kjære venn' 1936, Dec. 16 (Okat.saml. H.Blomberg, UUB): '[...] nu når sesongarbeidsledigheten setter inn, og en hel del av våre venner i fellesskapet mister sine stillinger. [...] Og da trenger de mere fellesskap. I et par tilfelle har det vist sig å være en effektiv hjelp for dem, at de får fatt i et rum hvor de kan møtes til en kopp kaffe som de kan lage sig selv. Så kan de lese et kapitel av bibelen og dele hvad de får ut av det. [...] Slikt samvær vil grunnfeste fellesskapet og det er en selvfølge at de gruppefolk som har jobb, stikker innom og tar sig en kaffeskvett med de ledige. Den samhörighet slikt skaper vil formodentlig også ryktes slik at nye kommer til for å høre om det som foregår.' Important stations were the Swedish Hindås party in November 1938, and the Oslo party for business-men in February 1939, which dealt with the employment problem, see Dagen 1939, Feb. 14 'Forretningmenn går inn for moralisk oprustning.'

<sup>253</sup> See Kjær Sørensen 1971, also Landsforeningen til Arbejdsløshedens Bekæmpelse...1966, Morthorst 1968:75-80.

<sup>254</sup> Copy of Sydney Linton & Thorkild Clausen to Andrew Strang 1939, May 8 (DWC).

sacrifice and service and spurred individual initiative to attack the problem of Denmark's 150,000 unemployed. So successful have these scattered efforts been that they have been correlated by the formation of an Association for combating unemployment, known as 'Denmark at work'. At the head of this is a board of fifteen representing the chief Danish interests, capitalist, co-operative, labour, agriculture, whose collaboration was called a major miracle by a statesman who had worked to get them together for years.

This board is to meet editors and journalists on October 28th to outline the programme of the Association. Mr. Stauning, the Prime Minister, expects to be present.<sup>255</sup>

When Halvdan Helweg presented L.A.B. to the Scandinavian churches, he focused on its background in the Group Movement, its emphasis on a way of life instead of an organization, its undenominational character, and the confidence between the workers and those who located the jobs and delivered them. National collections of tree stumps and windfelled trees, etc. were arranged. The unemployed were regarded as a valuable resource.<sup>256</sup>

In 1938, the number of unemployed in Denmark were 97,000. The German occupation in April 1940, meant a loss of about 50 % of the import, and in the winter 1940–1941, the unemployed were 180,000. L.A.B. worked on two levels, partly appealing to employers for jobs, and to ordinary people to employ the unemployed for small jobs, partly creating new jobs. Among its founders were representatives of the four old political parties, the Conservatives, the Liberals (Venstre), the Radical Liberals, and the Social Democrats. Neither the Communists nor the National Socialists were involved.<sup>257</sup> The initiator was Valdemar Hvidt, who made an appeal in an article in *Politiken*, August 14, 1938. The idea that the Oxford Group in Denmark should work on the unemployment problem had come to Frank Buchman during a quiet time at the Visby meeting, together with Hvidt, Alfred Nielsen (Silkeborg), and Jens Tvede (Copenhagen), though the matter had been current with the Oxford Group in Denmark since March 1937. On August 28, 1938, Buchman spoke about this task before the Group at Hotel Phønix in Copenhagen.<sup>258</sup> An obstacle to the work was Hvidt's idealism, which had a strain of political naïvety, like when he, in the summer 1940, in two articles compared the work of L.A.B. to the moral renewal brought about by the dictators Salazar in Portugal and Chiang Kai-Shek in China. The minister for education, Jørgen Jørgensen, criticized the Oxford Group in private because of its insufficient wariness of events in Germany and Italy.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> 'Moral Re-armament in Scandinavia since the outbreak of war' (dupl., Caux Archives).

<sup>256</sup> Helweg 1940b:188 ff.

<sup>257</sup> Kjær Sørensen 1971:148, 146 f.

<sup>258</sup> Kjær Sørensen 1971:153, 155. 'Arbejdsløsheden – En ny mentalitet' (Nyt Liv, March 1937).

<sup>259</sup> Kjær Sørensen 1971:152 f.



In a report from Andreas Øster, unemployment was regarded mainly as an ethical problem, with negative consequences for the human character. This explained the need for a new mentality, a mentality that could not be created by the government, but by persons outside or above the political parties. The invitation to an Oxford Group conference in Fredericia, April 1939, stated that the creation of living material to illustrate the new mentality, and the following of the public debate on unemployment, were two important tasks. These matters were treated as well at further Group meetings at Nyborg Strand and in Copenhagen.<sup>260</sup> As Axel Kjær Sørensen has noted, the result was a concentration on the tasks of the Group, without direct recommendations or plans for the state or the unions. He finds this noteworthy, and explains it as a consequence of the ethical view, and of realistic considerations. In this, he has not observed the importance of practical personalism in the Oxford Group. At this time, at least, plans were by no means made for what 'the state' or any institution should do, but the visions regarding nations were transformed into plans for making contacts with and changing individuals in the administration and institutions. This was made clear by the invitation to the planning of the founding of L.A.B. in May 1939, which was signed by thirteen persons, of whom only Vald. Hvidt and Paula Nissen came from the Oxford Group. Some were suggested by the political parties, others by Rotary clubs. As early as in December 1938, Hvidt and Chr. Harhoff had visited Prime Minister Stauning, who was positive as long as the new association was not regarded as an attack on the unions. Christmas Møller emphasized that the association had to be neutral not only from a political viewpoint, but from a religious one as well, i.e. that the Oxford Group was not to direct the work.<sup>261</sup>

When L.A.B. was founded, August 1, 1939, the aims of the Oxford Group were accepted: private initiative, a change of mentality, and national union. Of the fifteen signers, the Oxford Group was represented by Hvidt, Paula Nissen, together with H. A. V. Hansen and Alfred Nielsen.<sup>262</sup> In 1941, a reaction against the aim of mentality change was expressed, while the defenders of this aim explained it as a change of the common view of unemployment to one of responsibility for the unemployed. The discussion was renewed in 1943, when Vald. Hvidt closed by stating the combination of business and change of mentality in L.A.B. meant doing business in the service of society. On April 22, 1942, Hvidt had explained his views in *Politiken*, and claimed that private initiatives regarding the needs of society were the best way to solve social problems.<sup>263</sup> In 1944, a campaign for national preparedness was initiated. During the war, the national situation and needs made cooperation possible

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<sup>260</sup> Kjær Sørensen 1971:157 f.

<sup>261</sup> Kjær Sørensen 1971:159 f.

<sup>262</sup> Kjær Sørensen 1971:169 f. Kjær Sørensen misuses M.R.A. as a designation of the Oxford Group from the summer 1938 (p.227).

<sup>263</sup> Kjær Sørensen 1971:230.

between differing principles of work. The Oxford Group men did not emphasize their special direction, but were content with the common work for a new mentality. The fact that this mentality was not well defined was rather a necessary prerequisite for cooperation. After the war, the different interests clashed on a matter of mostly symbolic importance: whether the 10 years anniversary report should mention Frank Buchman, M.R.A., and the democratic ideology as a foundation for L.A.B.<sup>264</sup>

Although L.A.B. never was a popular movement in the widest sense, it was well ramified. Reaching its peak in 1943, it counted 124 local associations, of which less than 50 % were active ones, almost all of them in the cities. In counties where no local association was founded, L.A.B. had contacts, so-called 'tillidsmænd.' The number of members rose to 12,525 (1945) and 13,871 (1946), while the number of employed workers rose during the war, from 866 (1941), 844 (1942), 1,135 (1943), 1,740 (1944), to 1,760 (1945), then quickly dropping to 1,037 (1946), and 819 (1947).<sup>265</sup>

While L.A.B. was in many ways something of a success, another enterprise for social cooperation inspired by the Oxford Group was – as far as Group interests went – less successful. The national youth work, Dansk Ungdomssamvirke, was initiated by the Oxford Group. As early as March 15, 1940, i.e. before the occupation, a new, co-operative attitude was announced by the many youth organisations taking part in a youth meeting at Holstebro. Two young Group men in Copenhagen, Richard Møller Petersen and Troels Oldenburg, initiated such a cooperation on a wider scale. The German occupation opened new doors to their efforts, as the need for national fellowship was widely felt. In the planning work, difficulties arose when it came to reaching the political youth organisations, but personal invitations were sent to leaders of non-political associations, who represented only personal interests. At a meeting in Copenhagen on May 9, the conservative politician Aksel Møller emphasized the Christian foundation of the cooperation, which was rejected by the meeting.<sup>266</sup>

In April 1940, the Oxford Group invited leading persons in politics, business, and administration, i.e. key persons, to meetings at the home of Chr. Harhoff in Copenhagen. One branch of the work begun here was the efforts to create better understanding between the military forces and the civilian population, subsequently named Folk og Værn. The key person in this work was Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. V. Hansen. In January 1941, at a conference of some officers, union men, and social democrats the plans of the officers were accepted, and subsequently, the Folk og Værn movement was established.<sup>267</sup> After the German take-over of the administration in 1943, Hansen was imprisoned and

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<sup>264</sup> Kjær Sørensen 1971:235.

<sup>265</sup> Kjær Sørensen 1971:209, 213, 219.

<sup>266</sup> Nissen & Poulsen 1963:40, 42 ff. On H. A. V. Hansen, see Morthorst 1968 Ch. 6.

<sup>267</sup> Nissen & Poulsen 1963:54 f., 193 f.

twice brought before the Gestapo, but continued his work of trying to unite the military forces and the people in maintaining positive values together.<sup>268</sup>

Another branch discussed at Harhoff's was the youth work, with plans for a travelling team in the provinces, to establish contact between youth leaders in different organizations, as well as with leading persons on different levels. According to Krista Petersen, the task was to create a living relation between the government and the province, as well as inside the province, but the minister for education, Jørgen Jørgensen, was sceptical towards Group methods and the plans to base the work on the network of the Oxford Group. Instead, the minister wanted to base the work on the Danish folk high school ideas. This led to the invitation to De Ældres råd in June 1940, which was based on Grundtvigianism.<sup>269</sup> In the summer 1940, local associations of Dansk Ungdomssamvirke were established by the political youth organizations all over the country, largely as a reaction against the Oxford Group. In September, when a formal association was made between De Ældres råd and Dansk Ungdomssamvirke, the influence of the Oxford Group was heavily reduced.<sup>270</sup> Home Mission men like Gunner Engberg and Christian Bartholdy, both typical of Danish Group revivalism, were sceptical to the mixture in Dansk Ungdomssamvirke, and declared that for the K.F.U.M. it was impossible to put the revivalistic Christian aim in the background for the sake of national cooperation.<sup>271</sup>

Examples of youth work partly inspired by the Oxford Group, independent of Dansk Ungdomssamvirke, and aiming at understanding and better relations between the cities and the provinces, were presented by Hans Wenck in *Dansk Ungdom ta'r fat*, a collection of 50 short testimonies on life in youth camps (1941). Another branch of Oxford Group-inspired work was the co-ordination of female social services, Danske Kvinders Samfundstjeneste af 1940, on the initiative of the Member of Parliament, Gerda Mundt and Mrs. Rigmor Harhoff. As early as in spring 1941, 130,000 kilograms of marmelade, and 4,500 litres of juice had been made from windfall and wild berries only, and distributed to poor families in the cities. Enormous amounts of clothes were collected and remade.<sup>272</sup>

In Denmark, the end of the war led – as in other countries – to new and renewed relations with the international Oxford Group fellowship, but circumstances were different from those in Norway. In Denmark the Oxford Group had much less cultural importance, while there was a continuity in social work (especially L.A.B.) during and after the war. Still, the Oxford Group did not inspire such a wide Church Group revivalism as it did in Norway. This was

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<sup>268</sup> S. Linton to F. Buchman 1945, June 15 (NLC).

<sup>269</sup> Nissen & Poulsen 1963:54 ff.

<sup>270</sup> Nissen & Poulsen 1963:80 f., 109

<sup>271</sup> Nissen & Poulsen 1963:121 ff.

<sup>272</sup> 'Kära vän!' 1941, May 9 (dupl., EPC), Morthorst 1968:121 ff.

due to a different theological and spiritual climate, to the impressions made by independent, pre-Oxford Group revivalism on the Danish Church, and to the reactions against this revivalism from the Oxford Group, which resulted in a dismantling of this work and a more forceful thrust in the social direction, as well as a stronger launch of the programme for a moral rearmament than in Norway. The Danish development had gone from an independent Group revivalism by way of a short Oxford Group revival to a national rearmament on a broader scale than in the other Scandinavian countries, but with strong tensions between Church Group revivalism and Moral Re-Armament.

# V. SWEDEN: FROM GROUP REVIVALISM TO NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS

## V.1. The Information Phase

### *V.1.1. Introduction*

The Great Depression reached Sweden in 1931, followed by the suicide of the industrial magnate Ivar Kreuger in 1932, and unemployment reaching a peak in 1933. The political situation was affected by the riots in Ådalen, 1931, when five demonstrators were killed by the police. In 1932, the not very Marxist Social Democratic Party began its long period in government. Compared to the other Scandinavian countries, the religious situation in Sweden was much more divided, with several stronger Free Churches working independently of the Church of Sweden. In the latter, a national Church vision, the idea of the *Volkskirche* ('folkkyrka'), had been emphasized since about 1910 by the Young Church movement. In the early 1930s, this movement had grown into a pupal stage. Through the Catechism reform in 1919, the Sermon on the Mount instead of Luther's Small catechism, or ethics instead of dogma, were emphasized in the religious education in schools. This was criticized by orthodox Lutherans, and created in parts of the Church negative conditions for the teaching of the absolute standards of the Oxford Group. A positive condition was the Swedish 19th century philosophy of personality ('personlighetsfilosofi') of E. G. Geijer, which became relevant to the liberal theology of the early 20th century. During the 1930s, the vision of God's plan was popular in apocalyptic religious circles influenced by millennialist concepts.<sup>1</sup> Compared to the other Scandinavian countries, the Oxford Group and Group revivalism in Sweden has been much less documented and analyzed.

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<sup>1</sup> Hadenius & Molin & Wieslander 1981<sup>12</sup>:112 ff., Tegborg 1982:87 f., Rengmyr 1982:114, 176 ('The Sacrament of Personality'). The Swedish-American C. A. Chader (Tjader) published an apocalyptic book on God's plan, printed in six editions 1934–1944, translated into English in 1938 (*God's Plan through the Ages*).

### V.1.2. *The Information*

One of the very first Swedish presentations of Group revivalism was given at Hjo, July 10, 1924, when the resident chaplain Oscar Krook, at a Christian summer meeting for seminarists, related parts of Begbie's *Life Changers*. Among the listeners was the resident chaplain Bengt Jonzon, future Bishop of Luleå, who gave a discourse on the same book at a parish meeting in Gävle, December 14, 1924.<sup>2</sup>

In August 1926, Frank Buchman wrote to Archbishop Nathan Söderblom, telling him the life-changing story of 'a young Etonian.'<sup>3</sup> Buchman and Söderblom exchanged further information on the Oxford Group and Life and Work. In October 1930, the Archbishop thanked Dr. Buchman for the kindness of sending him 'several copies of the letter 7, an important document, a real witness of the constant divine activity in our humanity. I thank God that He has chosen you as an instrument for such things, and I have tried to use the copies of your letter in a good and fruitful way.'<sup>4</sup> In the following year, Buchman told Söderblom of the life-change in Bishop Roots' family, and the Archbishop assured Buchman that the work God had chosen him to do 'cannot be too highly appreciated.' Söderblom himself did not want 'to build only on human arrangements and fellowship in thoughts and plans. There must be, as you write, and as you act, a deeper unity.'<sup>5</sup>

In September 1930, Rev. Erik Arbin, resident chaplain in Stockholm, met a lady who – during a study trip to England – had been converted through the Oxford Group. In the summer 1931, while deputizing for the pastor of the Swedish Legation in London, he attended a house-party. Before this visit, he

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2 Bror Jonzon to author 1988, March 17. Jonzon 1988:71. Begbie's book was first published 1923.

3 F. Buchman to N. Söderblom 1926, Aug. 10. (Okat.saml.Söderblom, UUB). Lean mentions that Buchman had lunch with the Archbishop at Brown's Hotel in London in the summer 1926, as well as in Geneva in September 1926, together with J. Nehru (Lean 1985:121, 416).

<sup>4</sup> Söderblom to Buchman 1930, Oct. 8 (copy) (Okat.saml.Söderblom, UUB).

<sup>5</sup> Söderblom to Buchman 1931, Feb. 10 (copy) (Okat.saml.Söderblom, UUB), quoted in Lean 1985:179. Söderblom mentioned 'the scholar and mystic' Dr. Hugo Odeberg, future Professor of New Testament Exegetics at the University of Lund, as an example of 'absolute sincerity in the communion with God and our Saviour.' Lean quotes a telegram from Söderblom to Buchman 1931, May 20, less than two months before the Archbishop's death, often referred to in the Oxford Group historiography: 'You are concerned with the only thing that matters in religion and life: Christ's absolute ruling in our hearts and words and deeds. A changed life is more eloquent than lots of sermons.' The copy of this telegram in Söderblom's papers does not seem to be an original one. Shortly after Söderblom's death, August 27, 1931, J. E. Lundahl published a short presentation of the Oxford Movement in the evangelical journal *Sanningswittnet*, quoting Söderblom's opinion of the movement as extraordinarily remarkable ('synnerligen märklig'), at least on the surface.

had read Begbie's book. Having returned to Sweden, Arbin told of his experience both privately and at a parish meeting. During the following two years, he tried to practise in his youth work what he had learnt in England, by giving a more personal touch to Bible hours and discourses. During the winter 1933–1934, he was often asked to give discourses on the Group Movement, and through these speeches, he became convinced of his own need of a new surrender to God. Through sharing and restitution, Arbin experienced a change in his pastoral work resulting in a new and personal soul-care. At a well attended clerical conference, he testified about his earlier temptations to sin against the Sixth Commandment, and of his recent victories. Arbin was later to take an active and leading part in Swedish Group work. Through his friendship with Aleksi Lehtonen, from 1934 Bishop of Tampere, and through several speeches, Arbin influenced the development in Finland, too. In July 1933, Lehtonen sent him the Norwegian version of Emil Brunner's reflections on the Group Movement – which accorded with Arbin's own. Through the mediation of Lehtonen, Arbin seems to have come in contact with the independent *Groups* magazine as well. Together they went to the Oxford Group campaign in Denmark in the spring 1935.<sup>6</sup>

In October 1932, Greta Forssberg published an informative article in *Vår Lösen*, the journal of the Young Church Movement. Her rather remote acquaintance with the movement dated from a visit to Germany in 1931, where she read Laun's *Unter Gottes Führung*. In 1932, the Methodist pastor August Strömstedt met some leading Oxford Group men in the U.S.A., and in England, where he attended a couple of house-parties, and spent a week as guest with Sam. Shoemaker in Calvary House in New York. His impressions were published by the publishing company of the Church of Sweden (SKDB) in 1933.<sup>7</sup> *Den nya Oxfordrörelsen* was the first Swedish book on the movement. After a thorough report on the history, the principles, and the methods of the Oxford Group, Strömstedt referred to the modern Cambridge Movement as a Wesleyan parallel to the Oxford Group Movement. His book was built on personal impressions, and referred to the ubiquitous books by Allen, Begbie, and Russell, as well as to six titles by Shoemaker and seven titles in German. Strömstedt stresses the need for a spiritual movement of life along the Wes-

<sup>6</sup> Arbin in Janus 1934:107 f., Arbin 1939:48 ff., Hassler 1964:69 f. See also Arbin's reviews of the books by Begbie, Hambro, Allen, and Kitchen in *Församlingsbladet* 1934:375, 384, 807, 810, and his Norborg- and Brunner-inspired reservations to American advertising style, in Arbin 1934:125 f. On the relations Arbin–Lehtonen, see Rev. and Mrs. Arbin's many letters to Lehtonen, especially concept of Lehtonen to Arbin 1933, July 28, and Arbinen to Lehtonen Aug. 3 (RAH); further Ekstrand 1993:42 f., 46, 55, 65 f.

<sup>7</sup> Strömstedt's first encounter with the Oxford Group was in the U.S.A., as he – while attending the 1932 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church – received an invitation from Frank Buchman to a hotel dinner followed by conversation (see Halls Berättelser 1935 Nr. 4:6).

leyan lines. He was entirely positive to the life and evangelizing work of the Oxford Group, especially when implemented as a youth movement, while he did not show any understanding for its structure of an internationally working fellowship.<sup>8</sup> Another positive Methodist report was a series of articles by David Sandberg in *Svenska Sändebudet*, June 1933. He had visited the meetings in Copenhagen in April, when Howard Rose and Basil Hodgson testified and introduced the Oxford Group.<sup>9</sup>

During the following years, several discourses on the Oxford Group were given by Swedish clergymen, Free-Church pastors, and laymen. Such presentations were given during the 1930s, and the information phase might be said to have continued in parallel with the revival groups phase in additional parts of the country, but since new groups often were founded immediately after these informative activities, we are no longer able to speak about an exclusive information phase.

## V.2. The Revival Groups Phase

### V.2.1. *Groups in Upsala and Stockholm*

The ten day visit of Hans Cnattingius, a young scholar of theology, at the house-party in Oxford in July 1933, was of great importance for shaping Swedish Group revivalism. Returning to his studies of Church history at Upsala, Cnattingius told his friends about his decision.<sup>10</sup> In October, he presented his translation of Sverre Norborg's *Oxford Groups*. To Cnattingius, the main point in Group revivalism was the decision or conversion, culminating with the advice to surrender completely to God, to seek God's guidance from day to day, to win one's neighbour's heart for God, and to start a group. He emphasized the dictatorship of the Holy Spirit, and Communism as the enemy.<sup>11</sup> During

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<sup>8</sup> See also Strömstedt 1933b:149, in which he compares the Oxford Movement to the Wesleyan, which he sees as having been both wider and deeper.

<sup>9</sup> Sandberg 1933. Four Swedes had been present in Copenhagen, April 23–24, among them a young vicar from the Church of Sweden. In an editorial in the Swedish Methodist weekly, *Svenska Sändebudet* 1934:65 f., John Hurtig emphasized the presence of certain Methodist insights and forms in the Oxford Group Movement.

<sup>10</sup> Cnattingius 1933, Cnattingius in Norborg 1933Sw:7, B. Sundkler to the author 1988, June 2 (the matter was current to Sundkler from September 1933), Krook 1973:146, Fraenki 1979:17 f.

<sup>11</sup> Norborg 1933Sw:11f. The book was published by De Ungas Förlag, the publishing company of the Youth Movement of the E.F.S. On November 1, Cnattingius spoke at a closed meeting on the Oxford Group Movement, in Malmö, together with Ester Lutteman, Magda Wollter, Bror Tiliander, and Em. Diehl.



this early period of independent groups, Swedish Group revivalism recruited its members mostly from academic circles. The influence of the Oxford Group among students at Upsala was noted – without evaluation – in newspapers, Church journals and in the Year-book of the Church of Sweden.<sup>12</sup> Still, the foreign literature, mostly in English, with further texts in German and Norwegian, dominated heavily.<sup>13</sup> Public interest was stimulated by a review of Russell's *For Sinners only* in October 1933, by the well-known pseudonym Quel qu'une (Märta Lindqvist), in which attention was paid to the specific English character of the movement, being so strange to the Swedish mentality in its style that it might ruin the book and give a distorted view of its subject.<sup>14</sup>

In January 1934, Bishop Roots of Hankow and his son, John McCook Roots, arrived in Stockholm. In Upsala, they met Archbishop Eidem, Professor K. B. Westman and the young theologian Bengt Sundkler, and in Stockholm, a small Group meeting was held with the family Du Rietz at its home. The foreign party, characterized by Hans Cnattingius as a reconnaissance party, soon left for Oslo.<sup>15</sup> Cnattingius' message from the Roots' party to Professor Arvid Runestam was to see Frank Buchman at Brown's Hotel while visiting England.<sup>16</sup> Runestam responded to the challenge of the Oxford Group in an article pub-

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<sup>12</sup> Norborg's and Strömstedt's books were even reviewed under the headline The Academic Pentecostals ('Akademiska pingströrelsen,' StTD 1933, Dec. 9). 'En utmaning mot nominell kristendom' (DN 1933, Nov. 5, with an interview from London General Press with Frank Buchman), 'Apostolisk kristendom. Något om den s. k. Oxfordgrupp-rörelsen' (Kyrka och Folk 1933, Bilaga Nr 3:IX, Oct.), Ysander 1933:73. The presence of a few Swedes at the house-party in Oxford 1933 was noted in the Year-book's review of the Anglican Church as well, together with Bishop Henson's criticism, and the Oxford Group campaign in London in October 1933 (Brilioth 1933:134).

<sup>13</sup> Lundequistska Bokhandeln, the leading bookshop in Upsala, advertised in VL, Dec. 1933, the following books: Russell: *For Sinners Only*, Allen: *He that Cometh*, Begbie: *Life-changers*, Laun: *Unter Gottes Führung*, Shoemaker: *The Conversion of the Church*, Walter: *Soul-Surgery*, 'Layman': *What is the Oxford Group?*, Norborg: *Oxford Groups, En märklig världsväckelse*, Strömstedt: *Oxfordrörelsen*. See further, for example, Hartman 1977:112.

<sup>14</sup> 'En vind från väster' (SvD 1933, Oct. 29). Among other, more critical commentaries, was an article by Bror Olsson, December 1933, which mentions Emil Brunner's interest in the movement, though it relies mostly on Bishop Henson's hostile report, 'Den nya Oxfordrörelsen' (NDA 1933, Dec. 9). In 1934, translations of the critical pamphlets by Gaebelein and Talbot were also published.

<sup>15</sup> Cnattingius to Runestam [1934], Jan. 16 (Runestam Coll. I; the letter is wrongly dated 1933. Cf. Archbishop Eidem's journal 1934, Jan. 17 with a note on a dinner party at Professor Westman's for Bishop Roots, Hankow, and son; EEA B I a:1, ULA). Since Cnattingius had apologized – probably in the manner of the Group – to Professor Emanuel Linderholm for speaking disparagingly about him, he was no more welcome to study Church history at Upsala (Jarlert 1987:148).

<sup>16</sup> Cnattingius to Runestam [1934], Jan. 16 (Runestam Coll. I). Runestam was in contact with Geoffrey Allen, too, who promised to introduce him to Group leaders in Oxford, and to show 'the Groups at work' (see Allen to Runestam, undated, Runestam Coll. I).

lished in *Vår Lösen*, September 1933. On the current mood of resignation in theology, he let Allen's *He that Cometh* raise the unpleasant question: Does it work?<sup>17</sup> Runestam did not describe his personal experience as a change, but as a living certainty of the relevance and victorious possibilities of the life and demands of Christ.<sup>18</sup> In February 1934, after his visit to England, Runestam wrote what was intended to be a life-changing letter to the Swedish Archbishop, Dr. Erling Eidem. He related his own bitterness as a consequence of personal injury, and how he – during the liturgy – had realized how a strong love on his own part would have taken away not only his own bitterness, but also the cause of it in the other person's soul. Now he rejoiced in the certainty that the entire guilt was his own when bitterness attacked him, and always would be. It was his own guilt that his love did not change everything around him and burned away everything that would hurt him. The thoughts he wanted to put before the Archbishop were that God had unlimited possibilities for a radical solution of Eidem's strained situation, and that He wanted to fill him with the consuming fire of love.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, Roland Wilson from the Oxford Group in London wrote to Runestam about their guidance to

take a team a hundred strong out to Canada this spring [...] The guidance came to several of us to suggest your coming with us. I feel your contribution on the team would be invaluable and at the same time it would mean much for Sweden if you had the experience of a peripatetic school, not only in Life changing, but in bringing a message of spiritual reconstruction to a whole nation.<sup>20</sup>

This letter is a good example of an early attempt to convince an independent, Oxford-inspired revivalist that the Oxford Group way of working had a wider aim than personal life-changing. The problems to be dealt with were on a national level as well. These two contemporary letters clearly show the difference

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<sup>17</sup> Runestam 1933:184. On Runestam's way, see further Ch. II.2.3.3.

<sup>18</sup> Runestam & Mowinckel 1935:6. Runestam later recalled a break in his former vacillation between faith and doubt taking place on a Sunday morning in September 1933 (Runestam 1956:25). See further Sundkler 1975:140, 148. In a letter to Gustaf Aulén, Bishop of Strängnäs and former professor of systematic theology at the University of Lund, Runestam emphasized his need for rebuking himself, and confessing his transgressions. While planning a letter to Aulén, in which he confessed all his bitterness and asked forgiveness, a letter from Aulén reached him, with a serious admonition which renewed the long-standing grudge Runestam held. Through this reaction, he experienced his deep corruption (Runestam to G. Aulén 1933, Nov. 24; LUB).

<sup>19</sup> Runestam to Eidem 1934, Feb. 18 (EEA C I:14, ULA). A long article, Runestam 1934, described changed men as sinners only, gathered on the basis of sin and for givenness, and distinguished, not by their new life, but by their status as unmasked sinners. Runestam had visited the Archbishop on January 15 because of a voyage to England (Eidem's journal, EEA B Ia:1, ULA).

<sup>20</sup> R. Wilson to Runestam 1934, Feb. 12 (also 1934, Feb. 28 and 1935, Sep. 9; Coll.Runestam I).

between the undenominational and broad character of the Oxford Group and early Group revivalism in the Church of Sweden.

Arvid Runestam's spiritual development became of decisive importance to the rector Bengt Jonzon in Gävle, future Bishop of Luleå. Shaken by Runestam's personal testimony at the quiet days for priests at Sandviken, February 5–8, 1934, Jonzon shared with Runestam, feeling as if sunshine and the birdsong had poured into his soul.<sup>21</sup> In March, he gave a discourse at the University in Upsala on education and decision in faith and preaching, noting that the experience of Geoffrey Allen, as told in *He that Cometh*, was not a sudden breakthrough after a violent spiritual struggle, but a sacramental triviality, a simple act of obedience in what seemed to be an earthly trifle. By humbling himself and obeying, the doors opened to the world of life and miracles.<sup>22</sup>

On February 22, a well-known Finno-Swedish vicar from Ostrobothnia, Tor Krook, met Bengt Sundkler, who was now regarded as the leading man in the Upsala Group, visited Professor Runestam, and attended a Group meeting with a quiet time and sharing.<sup>23</sup> Taking part was also a student of theology named Olof (Olle) Meurling. Influenced by his Marxist older brother, Meurling in the autumn of 1934 left the Upsala Group for Marxism, and died in 1936 as a volunteer in the Spanish Civil War.<sup>24</sup> At this stage, no radical criticism of Group revivalism seems to have been made in public in the university towns. Obviously, there was a fight between the new revivalism and Marxism, though on a personal level, as Group revivalism was regarded as a third, Christian, alternative to Fascism and Marxism. Only the Swedish translations of Group literature and the Norwegian Oxford Group campaign seem to have brought about any public reaction. In the Lundensian student journal, *Ateneum*, the well-known Marxist Per Meurling, brother of Olle Meurling, quoted critical thoughts in the matter of sexuality from the Norwegian *Mot Dag*, and criticized the books of Hambro and Norborg as well. His image of the Oxford Group was that it was an Anglo-American upper-class movement.<sup>25</sup> After that, Henrik Sandblad, in the Uppsaliensian *Fönstret*, described Group revivalism as the religiosity of trumpet blasts, and criticized, among others, Sundkler's review of sixteen Group books in *Vår Lösen*.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Jonzon 1938:31, Bror Jonzon 1988:71 f.

<sup>22</sup> Jonzon 1934:20 f. On Jonzon's early interest in the Oxford Group, as early as 1924, see above, Ch. V.1.2. In January 1935, Jonzon attended a private house-party in Finland, with Mrs. Ester Ståhlberg (Bror Jonzon 1988:73).

<sup>23</sup> Krook 1973:146.

<sup>24</sup> Krook 1973:156. Meurling was the son of the vicar of Kristdala (Diocese of Linköping), where the vicarage had been inherited in the family for 350 years. In a letter in the summer 1935, Meurling urged Erland von Hofsten to save Henrik [Sandblad] from the hymn singing of the Oxfordians; von Hofsten 1962:7 f.

<sup>25</sup> Meurling 1935:29 f. et passim. Meurling returned to the subject in two articles in *Ny Dag* 1938, Aug. 18, 30 (under the pen-name John Garter).

<sup>26</sup> Sandblad 1935. Cf. Sundkler 1935, 1935b, Ekblom 1935. The critical opinions on

Early Church Group revivalism was described by Bo Giertz, at the time travelling secretary of the Christian Pre-Varsity Student Movement, in a letter to the director of the Sigtuna Foundation, Manfred Björkquist, written in consultation with Hans Cnattingius and Anders Frostenson. Neither a sect nor a party called to replace former movements, they only wanted to challenge to total decision, and help men to become the light and the salt of their respective denominations. The Group movement would never become a ‘movement,’ just cells and nuclei of committed Christians in different parts of the Church. Giertz expressed his gratitude to the Young Church movement, deploring the announcement of a new, un-confessional journal, *Kristen Ungdom*, which claimed to be an organ of the Oxford Group Movement or to deal mostly with it, and even suggesting that this movement had come to supersede the Young Church Movement.<sup>27</sup> The monthly *Kristen Ungdom*, appearing from February 1934, to October 1935, was an independent youth magazine, lacking the clear Group revivalistic aim of the British *Groups*, and publishing only short reports about Swedish Group revivalism. Articles about Stanley Jones and John Mott or by Hugh Redwood were published along with extracts from Norborg’s *En märklig världsväckelse*. It emphasized the importance of Group revivalism to Christian youth work in general. Articles on Group literature and on the necessary transformation of the Oxford Group to Swedish circumstances were written by Ester Lutteman and Erik Arbin.<sup>28</sup>

The influence of Group principles during this period was not limited to local groups. Group members acted in the activist manner especially in the Pre-Varsity Student Movement, where the Oxford Group way of life corresponded to ideas already present, and responded to an explicit need. In *Gymnasisten*, an obvious voluntaristic strain is noticeable in several issues during the early 1930s. In January 1934, Bo Giertz reported to Olov Hartman about the uncommonly profound character of the South Swedish Winter Meeting for Pre-Varsity Students in Växjö: Oxford had electrified them all. There was more serious talk

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Group revivalism were discussed by Theodor Arvidson in a series of four articles in *Svenska Sändebudet* (Arvidson 1934b). The idealistic culture journal *Janus*, published in Upsala 1934–1937, showed a positive interest in Group revivalism, and published interviews with well-known persons explaining their attitudes to the new movement. As the editor, Harald Källström, was very critical of Sven Stolpe, the latter’s subsequent commitment to the Oxford Group diminished his enthusiasm (see especially ‘Oxfordrörelsen från svensk horisont,’ *Janus* 1934, Nr. 7, 1935, Nr. 1, Källström 1935 in Nr. 8).

<sup>27</sup> Giertz to Björkquist 1934, Jan. 30 (SIB). An example of regarding the Oxford Group method as an alternative to traditional revivalism is given by Keijjer 1934:47 (Free Church), who defines the new method as a group of friends willing to help each other. The importance of the Cnattingius group for Frostenson’s spiritual breakthrough is emphasized in Olofsson 1981:74 f.

<sup>28</sup> Jäder 1934 (in the Test issue) contains the views criticized by Giertz. Nr. 1 has an article on the importance of the Group Movement for the Youth work.

about conversion and sin than before. As traveling secretary until 1935, Giertz's knowledge of Group revivalism, preaching in the spirit of it.<sup>29</sup> A noteworthy feature was the growing public interest in private confession as a way to change and strength.<sup>30</sup> In February 1934, Bengt Sundkler presented the Oxford Group Movement in *Gymnasisten*, and feared that the Group movement had become merely an interesting phenomenon. More important than all the books was that its message was personally directed at the present. Sundkler stressed the full and total decision for God, and its consequences: to become soul-warmers for Christ, and instruments of the building of a Christian fellowship, the fellowship of the group.<sup>31</sup>

During the Sigtuna summer courses, 1934, Mrs. Ester Lutteman spoke in a Church Group revivalistic way of her divided impressions of the Oxford house-party, and in October, Professor Runestam introduced the message of the Group at the 7th Church Fellow Meeting ['Kyrkliga Kamratmötet'] in Sigtuna. The director of the Sigtuna Foundation, Manfred Björkquist, had visited England in April 1934, interviewed leading Church men on the Oxford Group, and met Geoffrey Allen at Oxford. When Allen pointed out that the central message of the new revival was the forgiving love of Christ, Björkquist felt the affinity between his message and the heart of the Church views of the Young Church Movement, and their fellowship was deeply felt. However, his impressions of a subsequent house-party were mixed.<sup>32</sup> In an essay on Moscow-Golgotha-Oxford, John Melander presented his views on Communism and Christianity, relying on Stanley Jones and Emil Brunner, with a positive presentation of the Oxford Group. Its importance was due less to the essay in itself, but more to its publication in a volume dedicated to Manfred Björkquist

<sup>29</sup> As early as in June 1932, Giertz had written about the simple, but *absolutely* reliable honesty (Giertz 1932:85). Hartman 1977:112: 'Jag är nu på hemväg från Växjö, där vi haft sydsvenskt vintermöte. Ovanligt djupt. Oxford har gett oss alla en elektrisk stöt. Det börjar talas om omvändelse och synd med annat allvar än förut. – *Sejer över synden*. Det är just vad vi behöva...' See also Harry Arvidson's report in *Gymnasisten* 8:1 (1934, Feb.) on the revolutionary spirit at the Växjö meeting (p.13). On Giertz and Group revivalism, see Fraenki 1979:17 f., Giertz 1986:77 ff., Mattsson 1991:74 ff. Significant of this stage of Group revivalism was the cultural crusade, with its criticism of sexual naturalism in literature, which was carried through in the Swedish debate 1934–1935 as part of an ecclesiastical offensive against the tendencies of moral dissolution in society. Among the active cultural crusaders were Bo Giertz and Olov Hartman (see Kulturkris 1935). As early as March 13, 1934, a petition against the printed filthy propaganda, with 127,000 signatures of young men and women from all national, religious associations, was presented to the Crown Prince.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, 'Bikten har förändrat mitt liv' (Husmodern 1934:4).

<sup>31</sup> Sundkler 1934b:10 f.

<sup>32</sup> Redell 1984:49, 51 f., 55 f. See also Janus 1934:98, where Björkquist interprets the Oxford Group Movement as an offer to Swedish Christianity by emphasizing the need for a Swedish form. Lindqvist 1935:564 emphasized the crusading method of the Oxford Group, comparing it to the Young Church Movement.

on his 50th anniversary.<sup>33</sup>

Another example of practical work shows a form of Group business in which the Oxford label was used for an activity that does not seem to have been ‘Oxford’ at all, but rather traditionally Methodist work. The Methodist pastor August Strömstedt rented Lågaröhemmet on Rådmanölandet, North of Stockholm (Norrtäljeviken), naming it the youth home of the Oxford Movement. This youth home was kept open during the summer season for about 30 participants in youth camps. The programme consisted of discourses, discussions, and Bible talks. No significant Oxford activity seems to have taken place.<sup>34</sup>

### V.2.2. *A Literary Group Revival*

In March 1934, ‘we groupers here, prof. Runestam, Mr. Sundkler, Mr. Giertz, Rev. Frostensson [sic]’, and Cnattingius discussed the Swedish version of Kitchen’s *I Was a Pagan* with the Oxford Group headquarters in London. Both parties agreed that the book ought to be published by a secular, and not by a religious publisher.<sup>35</sup> In 1934, several Oxford books were published in Swedish: Allen’s *He that Cometh*,<sup>36</sup> Begbie’s *Life Changers*, Russell’s *For Sinners Only*, the German *Ermätiger Tagebuch* [Sw: *Omvändelser genom Oxfordrörelsen*], as well as Laun’s *Unter Gottes Führung*, and Hambro’s *Kristen fornyelse*, all by religious publishers. Even Kitchen’s *I was a Pagan* and Hugh Redwood’s *God in the Shadows* – one of the less profiled Group revivalistic books of its time – were published by a religious publisher. Hambro’s book was translated by Frostenson, and the translation of Russell’s book was examined – on behalf of the author and the Swedish Groups – by Cnattingius. These books were often given positive reviews together with other books of a more off-Oxford character by Russell, Shoemaker, and even by Sangster and Leslie Weatherhead, as well as collections like *The Meaning of the Groups* or *Oxford and the Groups*.<sup>37</sup>

The publication of the many books in Swedish in 1934 led to a widespread, literarily inspired Group revival. Up to this time, Group inspiration and experience had been primarily personal, through individuals who had visited Oxford,

<sup>33</sup> Melander 1934:235 further wrote that in Communism, the fight of Judaism against Jesus and the Kingdom of his Father continued (!). As travelling secretary of the Christian Pre-Varsity Student Movement, Ivar Hylander, in 1938, spoke of the three dictatorships: Berlin, Moscow, and Oxford (see Bror Jonzon 1988:88).

<sup>34</sup> StTD 1934, July 10.

<sup>35</sup> Cnattingius to The Oxford Group (copy to Runestam) 1934, March 11, 17; J. McCook Roots to Runestam 1934, March 21 (Runestam Coll.I).

<sup>36</sup> Ch. I, ‘The Guest’ was also published in NDA 1934, Dec. 23.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Arbin 1935, Sundkler 1935. Weatherhead and Sangster did not work in fellowship with the Oxford Group, but in the mostly Methodist circles around the Cambridge Group Movement and *Groups*. Lutteman 1934 concentrates on the Swedish editions of the books by Russell, Begbie, and Hambro.

and then started to practise the personalistic strategy at home. Some of the literature had been of great importance, but most of the inspiration had come from personal, practical experiences. With the sudden flood of Group literature in Swedish, this situation changed. An Oxford experience solely brought about by literature began to make deep impressions on individuals who lacked personal contacts with others practising the Oxford Group way of life. This led to the founding of several groups which discussed Oxford standards and their possible use in Church life, and often were serious in practise, as well as to the founding of some radical revival groups, which lacked not only an actual link to the Oxford Group or to Church Group revivalism, but often were without practical experience of any Christian fellowship or traditional congregational life.<sup>38</sup> Several of the translated books from or on the Oxford Group were read also by many Finno-Swedes, and articles written in Sweden appeared in Finland – for example, Otto Centerwall's *Oxford-grupprörelsen och dess budskap till oss*, first published in *Församlingsbladet* 1933, in *Ad Lucem* 1934.<sup>39</sup>

An illustrating example of Group activities is a series of so-called Oxford Group meetings in Halmstad in September 1934, arranged by the Free congregations, and with Dr. Laura Petri – a former Salvationist, author of books on Wesley and, subsequently, Loyola – as its promotor. As leader of the meetings, a twenty-five year old diplomaed opera singer, Gösta Carlberg, spoke to audiences of up to 900 people. Every morning began with a joint quiet time at 7, followed by a group meeting at 11 or in the afternoon, at 4 or 5, and closing with evening meetings in different Free churches.<sup>40</sup> Three years later, Carlberg published his great apostatical roman à clef in three volumes, *Bären varandras bördor*, prized by the Swedish Academy. Even in its attitude of hatred against his former acquaintances, it bears witness of the fact that Carlberg's Group activities as deeply inspired by the Oxford Group, including a visit to Oxford at the 1934 house-party, although they were far from the working fellowship of the teams of the Oxford Group.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> An adequate description of this revival is given in Svenska Dagbladets årsbok 1934:148 – 'den väckelserörelse, som tänd av Oxford-Grupprörelsen, under särskilt senare hälften av år 1934 spred sig mer och mer i Sverige [...] den arbetar i grupper i privatlivets helgd [...]'

<sup>39</sup> Centerwall's article was written from the perspective of the Church of Sweden, and was partly critical of some of the Group practices, but also demonstrated an interest, as he saw the Group Movement as helpful and evangelizing. A clear example of the inspiring effect of even such a partly critical article is given in Fraenki 1979:12.

<sup>40</sup> Laura Petri: 'Operasångaren, som blev teolog, till Halmstad,' Hallandsposten 1934, Sept. 1, Sept. 4 ('Oxfordgrupprörelsen och vi'), Sept. 8 ('Oxfordgrupprörelsens sångare. En intervju med operasångare Gösta Carlberg'); SvM 1934, Sept. 14. On Dr. Petri and the Oxford Group, see Janus 1934:98 f. Significant of this kind of Group revivalism are Carl Dymling's articles on the Oxford Movement, Hallandsposten 1934, Sept. 8, 10, in which it was even stated that *Groups* was the main organ of the movement.

<sup>41</sup> Carlberg 1937. S. Stolpe, 'Prisromanen och grupprörelsen' (SvM 1937, Nov. 23, also

In the same way that the emphasis on immediate change into activity was lacking in the Swedish title of Begbie's *Life Changers* (*Förvandlade liv*), members of the early groups in Sweden interpreted the Oxford Group in the framework of either traditional revivalism or the Young Church Movement. Especially the latter had a strong, activist strain.<sup>42</sup> We will also call attention to the translator's foreword to the Swedish edition of Russell's book. Written by the methodist Theodor Arvidson, it gives a short glossary of Group words. 'Group' is explained as the free association of changed men for the sake of sharing and guidance, while a 'team' consists of a number of persons cooperating in certain missionary tasks.<sup>43</sup> These distinctions show that the author tries to combine revivalistic group work with the Oxford Group strategy of life-changing work for certain purposes through changed teams, all within the dominating framework of traditional Methodism. The un-Oxfordian approach is revealed in the distinction between 'group' and 'team,' with the 'team' being a special, higher form of 'group.' Arvidson had knowledge of the Cambridge Group Movement and the Methodist Fellowship Movement,<sup>44</sup> and he translated Kagawa's greetings to 'Groupers the World Over,' published in *Groups* in September 1934, for the Swedish Methodist *Vår Julbok* 1934. The local methodist pastors were often positive to Group revivalism, arranging meetings and propagating its methods. Though having a restricted aim, these activities were of great importance to the Methodist Episcopal Church. The pastors Gustaf Bengtson (Trollhättan) and David Sandberg (Upsala) wrote a plan for Bible studies with directions for keeping quiet time, published in seven editions 1935–1939, and in 1938 the Swedish District superintendents reported a renaissance of the Methodist class meetings.<sup>45</sup> Further, we may conclude that the Group practice of keeping quiet time was an important inspiration for the Retreat movement in Sweden.<sup>46</sup> Through Göte Bergsten, personal impulses came from the Cambridge Group Movement as well.<sup>47</sup> These impulses were of constructive importance for the

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in LTV 1937, Nrs. 48, 49).

<sup>42</sup> The important issue of translations as exposers of shiftings and nuances in mentality has been dealt with in Ch. II.3.8.

<sup>43</sup> Russell 1934:8. In Swedish: 'den fria sammanslutningen mellan omdanade människor för delgivning och ledning' and 'några som samarbeter för bestämda missionsuppgifter,' respectively.

<sup>44</sup> Arvidson 1934:598.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Olén 1962:72 on Group meetings in Karlskrona, arranged by the Methodist pastor Gustaf Bengtson. Bengtson & Sandberg 1939<sup>7</sup>. Subsequently, Thorsten Nunstedt [1940] published a plan of Bible reading, and Sydney Linton wrote instructions for Bible studies, 'Ett sätt att läsa Bibeln' (dupl., EPC), and Linton 1944–45. Methodist-episkopal-kyrkans i Sverige årsbok 1938:47. Bengtson had read Russell's *For Sinners Only* in 1932, and was moved by it, see Bengtson 1935:251.

<sup>46</sup> Helge Backman in Ahlstedt & Backman & Sjögren 1972:11.

<sup>47</sup> Bergsten in Svenska Sändebudet 1937:481 f. (Nr. 31, Aug. 5), LTV 1937 Nr. 35, Aug. 28, 'Ett bordssamtal,' which refers to personal impressions of Oxford and a visit, together



later founding of the Christian therapeutical institution, St. Lukasstiftelsen.<sup>48</sup>

During the winter 1934–1935, the literary Group revival was completed and influenced by the Norwegian Oxford Group campaign, and subsequently by the Danish campaign. The public debate on Ronald Fangen's *En kristen verdensrevolusjon* did not deal with Fangen and his conversion as much as with the topical matter of Christian morals and the four absolute standards.<sup>49</sup> As the presence of the Oxford Group in the neighbouring countries of Sweden made it much easier to get into personal contact with it, the literary Group revival lost its exclusive literary nature, while the Group literature continued to grow, especially with translations from Norwegian and Danish.

### V.2.3. Group Revivalism in the Diocese of Karlstad

In October 1933, the editor of the diocese journal for youth and parish work in the diocese of Karlstad, Jacob Stake, published a short, Oxford-inspired article on listening, God's plan, guidance, etc. In the November issue, an article by Erik Palin on the Oxford Group Movement appeared, along with recommendations of books by Laun, Allen, and Russell. Through Group revivalism, Stake was inspired to work for a renewal of private, priestly confession as well.<sup>50</sup> In September, the working committee of the diocese youth association had decided to arrange a party to penetrate the message of the Group Movement, and at the conference for youth leaders and Sunday school teachers at Karlstad, October 8–12, John Melander spoke about the new movement. On February 14, 1934, some fifty clergymen and their wives met at Gunnerud (Alster), on a Christian renewal of the secret rooms of the heart, led by Arvid Runestam in the spirit of Allen's *He that Cometh*, and with an emphasis on the fact that the renewal was not a methodical, but a spiritual one.<sup>51</sup>

To Runestam, Erik Palin testified that a period of renewal had begun in his life through his encounter with the spirit of the Group Movement, brought

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with David Sandberg, at the home of Peter Fletcher – one of the editors of *Groups* – and his wife.

<sup>48</sup> A conference on Borgen in Danderyd, June 1938, at which the plans were drawn up, was attended by Bergsten, Sandberg, Th. Arvidson, and several others with experiences of Group revivalism, for example K. H. Giertz, Bo Giertz, and Gerda Kjellberg; see Lindén 1954:98 f.

<sup>49</sup> See DN 1934, Nov. 18, Dec. 27 (Olle Holmberg), Nov. 28 (Jörgen Block), Dec. 13 (Ronald Fangen), SvM 1934, Nov. 19 (E. Hj. Linder).

<sup>50</sup> See Stake 1937.

<sup>51</sup> The party was planned for January 17, but was postponed because of Runestam's visit to England. Nyberg 1985:60 f., 224, Palin 1933:118, Karlstads stiftsblad 1933:119. E. Palin to Runestam 1933, Dec. 28, 1934, Jan. 4, March 6 (Coll.Runestam I). Karlstads stiftsblad 1933:135, 1934:3, 33 f. (editorial: 'Gunnerud. Ett nytt nådens år').

about by his study of its publications.<sup>52</sup> In this, he is typical of many of the early Group men, who had not come into personal contact with the Oxford Group. To these pioneers, the close association of the Oxford Group way of life with the informal, but strong organization of the Oxford Group appeared strange, if it was at all noticed. After the Gunnerud party in February 1934, Palin wanted the participants to invite other brethren in different parts of the diocese to socials and conversations in the parsonages. The purpose was to win the whole clergy, not for the Group Movement, but for the spiritual life-renewal it had brought about.<sup>53</sup> Soon after Easter, Palin travelled through southern Dalecarlia, in the diocese of Västerås. He found several of his colleagues longing for a living contact with the Group Movement, and looking forward to Professor Runestam's planned visit to their study days in Västerås. During nocturnal talks, many of them showed a crying need for renewal and spiritual power. Palin suggested that they should send out invitations to a group-day. In the winter 1935, Group days were arranged at Kopparberg and Falun, in the revivalistic manner.<sup>54</sup>

On April 17, some clergymen's wives met for a quiet day at Gunnerud, and on the following day some friends met in Karlstad. They decided to get together with some invited persons – not more than thirty – at Gunnerud, in June. The purpose was not to talk *about* the Group Movement, but to talk among themselves about spiritual life, in the spirit of the Movement. The aim was a 'koinonia' based on total spiritual openness and undissembled love. They planned a bigger meeting in the autumn, with Runestam and Sverre Norborg.<sup>55</sup> At the diocesan youth course at Åmål, June 28–July 1, Palin, having delivered the opening discourse as well, together with Miss Gerd du Rietz testified before more than 230 participants, as part of an afternoon programme in what was named the renewing spirit brought about by the Oxford Group Movement. Miss du Rietz was influenced by German Group revivalism, as she had taken part in the Bad Homburg party in 1933. The leaders kept quiet times every morning.<sup>56</sup> At the Youth Leader's Course in Karlstad, October 10–14, the whole programme was built on vocation, dedication, etc, John Melander

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<sup>52</sup> Palin to Runestam 1934, Jan. 4. Palin reviewed Shoemaker 1933 in *Församlingsbladet* 1934:224. Palin's letters to Runestam 1934–1938 form a rich source for the knowledge of Group revivalism in the provinces of Sweden.

<sup>53</sup> Palin to Runestam 1934, March 6.

<sup>54</sup> *Bergslags-Posten* 1935, Feb. 18. At the Youth meeting closing the Group days at Kopparberg, Feb. 14–17, testimony was delivered by Thorsten Nunstedt, Öyvind Sjöholm, Maj Ekman, Einar Ihrmark, Göran Widmark, Gerd Du Rietz, and Lennart Melin. Group days were arranged in Falun March 30–Apr. 1, preceded by a 'house-party' (Scrap-book of T. Nunstedt, Skövde).

<sup>55</sup> Palin to Runestam 1934, Apr. 27.

<sup>56</sup> *Karlstads stiftsblad* 1934:94 f. ('Stiftets ungdomskurs i Åmål 28 juni–1 juli'), Palin 1936:150, Nyberg 1985:67. On Gerd du Rietz' German visit, see Rikard Friis to J. F. Laun 1934, Apr. 18 (NLS, LKAS).

speaking on the fundamentals of the Group Movement in youth work.<sup>57</sup>

In the summer 1934, fifteen to twenty Swedes attended the house-party at St. Hugh's College in Oxford. According to Professor K. B. Westman, most of them kept a distance to both the Oxford Group methods and its way of life. They reacted against the American style: the publicity, the revivalistic methods, the revolutionary jargon, and the uniformity. While feeling the need for changed lives in Church and Missions, and agreeing with the personalistic thought of a world changed only by an inner renewal of individuals, they rejected the Group Movement as the only solution.<sup>58</sup> Since Runestam had told Erik Palin that it was desirable that someone went abroad to get into contact with the head quarters of the movement, and since Palin himself had planned to go to England for two months from August 1, the contact was made. To Palin it meant a new, activistic mentality. The groups should overcome their temptation to isolate themselves, and engage in direct, revivalistic work. He feared that some groups in Sweden met only to discuss the principles of the Group movement. They ought to read less Group literature, and put more of it into practice. In the Rev. Howard Rose's parish, Christ Church, Penge, in Southern London, Palin encountered an established Church Group revivalism. He went to Oxford too, met some life changers, heard of the international character, a new life quality, etc, and visited Geoffrey Allen.<sup>59</sup>

The Group days at Svartå, January 8–10, 1935 got a new character. Out of thirty participants, only five were priests, but there were several teachers. An Oxford student, the South African Hugh Murcott, arriving from Norway to spend Christmas with Ruben Melin and participate in Group days at Vargön (Diocese of Skara), January 4–6, made an appreciated contribution. The new year's first issue of the diocese journal, contained a report from the campaign in Norway. On January 28, Palin presented his impressions of Oxford to the bishop and the clergy in Karlstad. On the following day, a Group meeting was held for invited citizens. Several other parties were given in the diocese, with ordinary laymen taking an active part.<sup>60</sup> The purpose was still a spiritual re-

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<sup>57</sup> Karlstads stiftsblad 1934:148 ('Ungdomsledarekurs i Karlstad').

<sup>58</sup> Westman 1934:37, 39 f., also Westman 1934b. Cf. Fraenki 1979:18 f., who sur-rendered at this party. On Westman and the Oxford Group, see Sundkler 1975:134. See also the critical views of Mrs. Ester Lutteman (VL 1934:198) and the objective report by David Hedegård 1934, which criticizes individual participants for their liberal Christology, while the leaders seemed to keep to the old faith, without making an important thing of it. See also Brilioth 1934:138 on the Oxford 1934 house-party as a crisis in the history of the movement, with a reaction against the American-style propaganda for the movement itself, at the expense of the evangelizing and soul-curing task.

<sup>59</sup> Palin to Runestam 1934, Apr. 27, Dec. 15, Palin 1935, 1935b.

<sup>60</sup> Palin to Runestam 1935, Jan. 12, Feb. 12. Karlstads stiftsblad 1935:6 ff. ('Märkliga tidender från Norge'). Typed invitation 'Härmed hava vi glädjen inbjuda Eder till Grupp dagar i Wargön' (Nunstedt's scrap-book, Skövde).

newal within the Church of Sweden, but the mentality had definitely changed into the activistic one of the Oxford Group. During the following Group days in Svartå, April 27–28, about forty permanent participants and more than twenty occasional participants were gathered: high school teachers, three school principals, teachers, factory workers, clerks, farmers, an engineer, etc. Further ‘days’ were arranged at Lundsberg, June 25–26, with the youth course following June 27–30, Mrs. Ester Lutteman leading Bible hours on the Guidance of God, and with Palin and Miss Rangel Ekblom among the speakers to the 250 participants.<sup>61</sup> In October and November, Miss Ekblom visited the youth circles in the diocese. She wrote several articles on Quietness and listening, Our Plans and God’s Plan, Soul-Winners or Not?, and The Leaders – the Leader.<sup>62</sup> At the diocese clergy meeting in August 1935, the old Bishop J. A. Eklund publicly noted that Bible circles had become more lively due to the influence of the Group movement.<sup>63</sup>

In the first 1936 issue of the diocese journal, the vicar Elis Malmeström told of his encounter with the Oxford Group in Oxford in the autumn 1935.<sup>64</sup> In the following issues, Palin and others showed how seriously they had been inspired by Group revivalism. At the youth course in Säffle, June 1–5, 1936, with about 300 participants, from the neighbouring dioceses as well (Falun, Vargön, etc.), the Question Box was replaced by group talks, and the discourses were Oxford-inspired.<sup>65</sup> At the meeting of the Diocese Clerical Society in September 1937, the Dean of Trondheim, Arne Fjellbu, spoke on the Group movement and the Church, declaring his support for the movement. Outside of the official programme was a Group meeting led by Sven Stolpe, with workers from Sandviken, a couple of Norwegians (Sten Bugge, and the president of the Oslo Inner Mission, Ragnar Forbech), and Palin and Elis Malmeström among the active participants.<sup>66</sup>

During this period a couple of newly appointed clerical assistants to the Bishop, Harald Ernevi (1935) and Gunnar Malmeström (1937), were inspired by Group revivalism, and when Arvid Runestam, December 30, 1937, was elected Bishop of Karlstad, this was of decisive importance to the spreading of

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<sup>61</sup> Palin to Runestam 1935, May 3, 16, Karlstads stiftsblad 1935:108 ff. (‘Ungdomskursen på Lundsberg 27–30 juni’). Cf. Nyberg 1985:67, who states that the Lundsberg course was not so Oxford-inspired as the previous and the subsequent ones.

<sup>62</sup> Karlstads stiftsblad 1935:160, 198, 2 f., 6, 18 f., 53 ff., 190 ff. Miss Ekblom was Diocesan Youth secretary 1941–1945.

<sup>63</sup> Biskopens ämbetsberättelse (Handlingar rörande prästmötet i Karlstad...1935:83). Nyberg 1985:63. On Bishop Eklund and the Group movement, see Malmeström 1947:169.

<sup>64</sup> Malmeström 1936:5 f.

<sup>65</sup> Karlstads stiftsblad 1936:142 ff., Karlstads stifts julbok 1936 (‘Sommarens kurs och läger’).

<sup>66</sup> Karlstads stiftsblad 1937:201 f. (‘Ett märkligt möte. Intryck från prästmötet i Karlstad 7–8 september 1937’), Gustafsson 1937, see also Cullberg 1937:70.

Group revivalism in the parishes, especially as Runestam decided that his clerical assistants should visit the parishes together, acting as a working team, staying two to four days, and beginning each day with a quiet time.<sup>67</sup>

#### *V.2.4. A Swedish Group Movement?*

The first joint meeting of Swedish Group leaders from different parts of the country took place at Samariterhemmet in Upsala, September 13–14, 1934. Some seventy participants included Runestam, K. B. Westman, Dr. Torsten Ysander, Theodor Arvidson (director of the office of the Methodist Church in Stockholm), and the Methodist school principal, Jonathan Julén.<sup>68</sup> The Group Movement was reported to have been of life-renewing importance to clergymen, to students in Lund, Stockholm, and Upsala, as well as to co-operating groups of leaders and members of the Church of Sweden and the Free churches in various parts of the country. Several persons testified about personal revivals through Group literature. On the agenda were discussions on the creation of guiding principles adjusted to Swedish circumstances, and on the relations of the movement to congregational life. In his discourse, Dr. Runestam deplored some of the tendencies he had seen in the Anglo-American movement. Social salvation had been too heavily stressed, with a risk of the movement becoming a purpose in itself instead of an instrument for the central mission: the salvation of individuals. In emphasizing the Swedish character of the Group Movement, Runestam criticized its foreign strains. The essential thing was realism regarding salvation.<sup>69</sup> The subsequent discussion showed that while a Swedish adjustment would be made in some peripheral matters, the fundamental principles should not be altered or weakened. Runestam's emphasis on the Lutheran character of the movement was supplemented by a wish to combine the heritages of Luther and Wesley.<sup>70</sup> The conference and its relinquishment of a special

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<sup>67</sup> Malmeström 1968:178 f., Nyberg 1985:66 f. Runestam got the most votes, appearing for the first time on an episcopal election list, see Imberg 1991:147.

<sup>68</sup> Among the other participants were Johannes Norrby, Otto Centerwall, Göte Bergsten, Hans Cnatingius, Bengt Sundkler, Gösta Carlberg, Laura Petri, Ruben Melin, Em. Diehl, Otto Ehde, and S.-Å. Rosenberg (see Rosenberg 1992:172).

<sup>69</sup> 'Oxfordrörelsen i Sverige bör gå svensk väg' (SvM 1934, Sept. 14, interview with Runestam), also Upsala 1934, Sept. 14; Upsala Nya Tidning 1934, Sept. 14. Julén 1934:114, Arvidson 1934:597. On the need of a Swedish form of the movement, see further Hartman 1977:112, and Runestam to M. Björkquist 1934, June 1 (SIB), which refer to a clarifying talk with Emil Brunner during the ecumenical study conference in Paris. On the Sverre Norborg-inspired reservations against the American advertising style, see also Arbin 1934:125 f. Cf. the Swedish emphasis of the 1940s, for example in Ernst Neuman: 'Svensk grupprörelse' (NL 1941 Nr. 4), on national tasks, and the connection with the international Group.

<sup>70</sup> SvM 1934, Sept. 14, 15 (interview with Th. Arvidson; K. B. Westman, too,

Swedish form of Group revivalism meant a strengthening of the Methodist influence and mentality.<sup>71</sup>

In his review of Swedish Church life in the year-book of the Church of Sweden 1935, Torsten Ysander in positive words described the new revival as originally 'brought about' by the English so-called Oxford Group Movement. Its connection with the international, especially the English and the American, movements was somehow a danger overcome. At an early stage, the Swedish leaders of this personal revival had understood that the Anglo-Saxon forms and methods did not fit together with Swedish Lutheran piety.<sup>72</sup>

The early groups in Upsala and Stockholm were based on authentic Oxford experiences, with some personal contacts with the team around Frank Buchman. They consisted, without doubt, of several people moved by the Oxford Group message, and trying to live the Oxford Group way of life. But they were revivalistic groups, not working teams, and lacking the aim of a national change. Their wider purpose was Group revivalism in the framework of the Church of Sweden or the Free churches. It has been emphasized by some of their members, that this original form of the movement was a personal revival of consciences.<sup>73</sup> This road was recommended by a positively inclined, objective

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emphasized the dangers of a special Swedish line). See further Rosenberg 1992:169 f. To Eidem 1935, July 1 (EEA C I:20, ULA), Runestam admitted that he had given discourses on the Swedish line of the Group Movement, although he had now understood that the best answer was not a specific Swedish form of the Group Movement, but to receive the spirit of the Group Movement, while remaining free, evangelic Christians. Julén found that the Group Movement was no longer just an interesting, foreign phenomenon, but a living force among the Christian people of Sweden, corresponding to long felt needs, and clothed in Swedish dress. He agreed with Runestam in stating that the solution of social problems was only a Christian by-product of the personal work of salvation (Julén 1934:114 f; cf. the earlier hesitant, albeit admiring report by Johansson 1933). Sundkler stated that they had not committed themselves to any movement, especially not in its too Anglo-American form. They were concerned about the Group Movement only as an inspiration, a message, a call for penance from God, and as a word from God – unmasking them, letting them see something of God (Sundkler 1934:115 f.). Th. Arvidson regarded neither Group leaders nor Group confession, or the legalistic keeping of quiet time in the mornings as essential to Group revivalism, but he still disliked the talk of a special Swedish way of the Group Movement, since behind that expression might hide Swedish pride, phariseism and self-righteousness, and then the Swedish way must be abandoned (Arvidson 1934:597 f.).

<sup>71</sup> In connection with the conference, public testimony was delivered as well. SvM 1934, Sept. 15, Nilsson 1965:39, Rosenberg 1992:169 ff. The knowledge of other Group movements was spread at this time, see SvM 1934, Sept. 19 'Protestantismen ser räddningen i Skandinavien,' interview with Pastor Alexander McLeish, London, who speaks of six or seven new Group movements in England working on the basis of the Oxford movement, but avoiding its errors.

<sup>72</sup> Ysander 1934:75.

<sup>73</sup> Sundkler 1975:148. The question whether this form of groups was the very original

commentator like Karl-Gustaf Hildebrand, who found that the Oxford Group answered the longing for something apart from the altogether intellectual, and the need for fellowship, transformed sharing from the comradely life in student circles to the life of every man, and satisfied modern man's demands for serenity. But many statements on world problems were naïve, and all the difficulties of the world were not difficulties of private morals. The Oxford Group and its Christian realism had its place as a personal revival movement.<sup>74</sup>

#### *V.2.5. Plans for a Norwegian/Swiss Campaign in Sweden*

In 1935, the groups in Upsala and Stockholm looked for Norwegian help for a big party planned at Sigtuna. The Norwegians were unsure whether this party was meant to reach as far as possible in a first attack, or to bring and weld together the half, three quarters or fully won people into a big team to carry on the work. Sigmund Mowinckel was willing to help the Swedish leaders together with a Norwegian team, but if the Swedes wanted the Norwegians to take the lead, it was doubtful whether they were able to add such a big, new task to all those they had previously taken on, new and distressed as many of them were. The Norwegians further questioned the choice of Sigtuna for the start of a Swedish campaign, as it could easily give it a certain direction and cause it to be misjudged by other parties. Perhaps the best would be if a politician or cultural person outside all Church parties, a so-called half heathen, took the initiative to a house-party, and brought a Norwegian-Swedish team.<sup>75</sup> These plans form the context of *Oxfordgrupprörelsen*, which contains discourses by Arvid Runestam and Sigmund Mowinckel on The Message from the West and The Oxford Movement and the Church, respectively.<sup>76</sup> Both emphasized the importance of practical experience: to meet God without asking if he exists. Runestam stated that none of the forms or methods of the Group movement were compulsory. The groups had their *raison d'être* only in the service of living life. Confession

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one or not, is not included in our task. It must be stated that it was, at the time, not the actual one in the Oxford Group work in either Britain or other countries. The fact that it was the original form in Sweden, remains.

<sup>74</sup> Hildebrand 1935:216, 218, 221, 225.

<sup>75</sup> Mowinckel to Runestam 1935, Feb. 22 (Runestam Coll. I). Mowinckel had heard of the plans in a letter from H. Cnattingius and orally from the vicar Joh. Lindgren from Stockholm. It had already been discussed and prayed for in a circle at Erling Wikborg's in Oslo. The project was to be discussed and guidance sought for it, also with the foreign team, and with the friends in northern Norway, during the immediately following campaign in Trondheim.

<sup>76</sup> Runestam & Mowinckel 1935 (2nd edition 1940). Runestam's discourse was broadcast 1935, Jan. 3, printed in *Församlingsbladet* 1935:49 ff., and in *Svenska Sändebudet* (Runestam 1935d):65 ff., while Mowinckel's was printed originally in *Aften posten* 1935, Jan. 22. See further Ch. II.2.3.3. Mowinckel and Runestam, respectively.

was not demanded, but offered as a means of grace.<sup>77</sup>

The planned Sigtuna party was given on a smaller scale in March 1935, by the Upsala team. A few hundred people, mostly from Upsala, took part in the Group evenings during the last weekend of the month.<sup>78</sup> Simultaneously, days for revival and deepening of the spiritual life were arranged in Gävle, with Group revivalistic speakers from Upsala and Gothenburg. These days worked as a Church revivalistic alternative to the many independent revival meetings in the town.<sup>79</sup> In May 1935, the resident chaplain Knut Ericson from Gothenburg spoke at the General Assembly of the Church of Sweden, in Stockholm, on *The Message of the Group Movement and Us*. It is notable that Group revivalism had attracted the attention of this semi-official Church assembly as early as in 1935, and that it was planned as an information.<sup>80</sup> In July, Frank Buchman's message was spread through an interview in the weekly magazine *Vecko-Journalen*.<sup>81</sup>

In January 1936, Sigmund Mowinckel voiced his positive reaction to the news of a planned visit by Emil Brunner in the autumn. He wrote that it might be combined with a visit by the international team, though the Norwegians did not know anything about the plans of the team. Perhaps the visit of Brunner was the awaited condition necessary to give the team clear guidance for coming to Sweden. Mowinckel was to tell Frank Buchman.<sup>82</sup> Emil Brunner's mixed attitude of surrender to God while criticizing the Anglo-Saxon mentality of the Oxford Group had influenced Swedish Group revivalism since 1933.<sup>83</sup> During 1936–1937, the idea of bringing a completely or partly Swiss team to Sweden was a constant theme in the letters of Arvid Runestam to Brunner. Through

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<sup>77</sup> Runestam & Mowinckel 1935:7 f., 13.

<sup>78</sup> SvM 1935, March 26 ('På house-party i Sigtuna. Ett "lag" oxfordare från Uppsala i förpostfäktning'), Kristen Ungdom 1935:65.

<sup>79</sup> Speakers were Bengt Sundkler on Fellowship (March 23), Torsten Ysander, Confession and Forgiveness (March 24), and Knut Ericson, Surrender and the Guidance of God (March 25). Several testimonies were presented on March 24, like *From God's Work in Our Days*, and Knut Ericson preached at the Morning service in the Trinity Church on March 24 (*Gefle Dagblad* 1935, March 23). The event was hardly given any publicity. At the same time, C. A. Chader concluded an apocalyptic series, speaking of the eternal new world in one of the Free church congregations. An editorial on spiritual diseases in *Arbetarbladet*, 1935, March 27, dealt with the Korpela movement, Laestadianism, National socialism, Bolshevism etc, without mentioning the Oxford Group.

<sup>80</sup> Lenhammar 1977:126 f.

<sup>81</sup> 'Vårt liv måste läggas om' (VJ 1935 Nr. 29).

<sup>82</sup> Mowinckel to Runestam 1936, Jan. 9, March 14 (Runestam Coll.I). Sten Bugge and Fredrik Ramm, at the time taking part in an English campaign, took up the plans with some of the leaders, among them Loudon Hamilton, without getting an immediate answer, while Erling Wikborg wrote to America in order to reach Buchman.

<sup>83</sup> E. Arbin to A. Lehtonen 1933, Aug. 3 (RAH), in which he shares Brunner's views (Brunner 1934, printed as an article in 1932).



Swiss participation, Runestam hoped to lead Swedish Group work along the right paths, i.e. away from the Anglo-Saxon, propagandistic methods. Runestam wanted the Swiss to work in Sweden from September until December 1936. The international team was expected to arrive in September, and as Runestam did not want any schism, the formal invitation to the Swiss participants had to come from the international team, not from Sweden. Brunner was invited to lecture at Upsala. To Frank Buchman, Runestam suggested the participation of Brunner, Theophil Spoerri, and Wilhelm Oehler. Brunner was most understanding, criticized some Oxford Group printed matter as 'allerübelste Art von weltlicher Christentums-Propagandistik,' and exposed a certain 'Geist des Amerikanismus,' though he was not able to come to Sweden when visiting Finland in the autumn. His lectures at Upsala were postponed until the autumn 1937, when he spoke at the annual meeting of the Swedish Ecumenical Association in Linköping as well.<sup>84</sup>

In September 1936, Sven Stolpe regarded the work in Upsala as given up, since the two leaders had more or less clearly distanced themselves from it or strongly criticized the Oxford Group. Stolpe ironically described their former Group practice as The Royal Swedish Oxford Committee in session each Thursday, with the only result that some people became sad, while others relieved themselves of their anger. His description is typical of the clash and lack of understanding between early, independent, academic Church Group revivalism, and the subsequent Oxford Group work with strong bonds to the international team.<sup>85</sup>

September 30–October 2, 1936, a Nordic ecumenical meeting took place at Sigtuna. A contingent from the Norwegian Oxford Group – strong in number – took part. This was probably the first occasion when a national Oxford Group team was engaged in an ordinary ecumenical conference. During the subsequent Swedish ecumenical days in Stockholm, October 3–4, Ronald Fangen – probably as a replacement for Brunner – gave a discourse on The Ecumenical Message of the Group Movement.<sup>86</sup> Several of the Swedish participants were representative of a Lutheran or Methodist Church Group revivalism.<sup>87</sup> Later in

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<sup>84</sup> Runestam to Brunner 1936, July 16, 23, 29, 1937, Feb. 24. (ZZ). Brunner to Runestam 1936, July 28, 1937, Dec. 6 (Runestam Coll.II). On Brunner's visit to Finland, see Franzén 1987:195. On the Swiss form of Group revivalism, see Ch. III.3.5.

<sup>85</sup> Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1936, Sept. 14 (UUB). According to Runestam, there was hardly any group left in Upsala after the summer 1937 (Runestam to E. Brunner 1937, Sept. 9; ZZ). An example of a revivalistic understanding of sharing ('då vi fingo åter uppleva "umgängelsens sakrament," – stunder av "sharing" till förnyad kraft och uppmuntran på "vägen") is given by Öllgård Arbin to M. and A. Lehtonen 1934, March 5 (RAH),

<sup>86</sup> See Jarlert 1989:141 f., Rosenqvist 1936:188, Bosson-Alin 1936:191. See further Ch. III.3.4. The discourse was later published, and translated into German, see Fangen 1937c.

<sup>87</sup> See 'Deltagare i nordiskt ekumeniskt möte i Sigtuna 1936' (dupl. in Okat.samling

the same month, W. J. Oehler arrived in Stockholm from Nyborg Strand and Copenhagen, and spoke in the German Church and the Oscar's Church on the fundamental thoughts of the Group movement, i.e. 'Fruchtbare Stillesein,' 'Gott und Götzer', and 'Führung.' In an interview, he stressed both his loyalty to Frank Buchman and the growing interest in more international activities in Switzerland, but his own speeches seem to have been significantly Church Group revivalistic, dealing mostly with the growth of the inner life of individuals in the Church.<sup>88</sup> Oehler's emphasis was super-denominational, and in one of his books, he even wrote that 'Orthodoxie ist Sünde, weil sie die Festlegung ist auf eine kirchliche Lehre oder Meinung, und es gibt keine unfehlbare kirchliche Meinung. Es ist, wie Paulus sagt, alles Stückwerk.'<sup>89</sup> Still, his position in Old Lutheran and Pietistic circles in Sweden is notable from a short quotation in *Kyrka och Folk* in 1938 – Word of Oehler – as other authors thus presented in the same volume were Luther, Schartau, and Bogatzky.<sup>90</sup>

When Arvid Runestam subsequently changed his reserved attitude towards a campaign led by the international team under the direction of Frank Buchman, other Church leaders did not. The director of the Sigtuna Foundation, Manfred Björkquist, found that there were at least two kinds of 'Oxford.' He wished to have a movement with a strong Nordic character, without too much direct leadership by Buchman, but becoming rooted in the churches as quickly and as deeply as possible. The Norwegian model seemed to be worthy of imitation. As it was not possible to live on testimony in the end, there was a need for more sense of the importance of objectivity: the Word of God in all its forms. The until then greatest importance of this movement in Sweden was perhaps with those who had not directly associated themselves with it. Björkquist regarded the teachings of the Oxford Group as a perhaps necessary simplification of the message, a Christian A-B-C, though he found its social views suffering from the lack of objectivity, and impossible to enforce in short time. In this field, the advertising was directly dangerous, leading to disappointments, and thus haunting the faith of many. Personally, Björkquist wished to continue on his road, without association, but in gratitude for the impulses and the judgment given him through Oxford.<sup>91</sup>

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O.Nystedt, GUB), for example, Arbin, Runestam, Th. Arvidson, and Aug. Strömstedt. According to Elis Gulin, both Runestam and Manfred Björkquist spoke of the ecumenical merits of the Group Movement (Ekstrand 1993:90).

<sup>88</sup> 'En "orkestermedlem" spelar solo – men inte med sordin' (SvM 1936, Oct. 26, also Oct. 27). Oehler went on to Gothenburg, see Jarlert 1994.

<sup>89</sup> Oehler 1933:29.

<sup>90</sup> *Kyrka och Folk* 1938:91. In *Nytt Liv* 1939 Nr. 12, Thorsten Nunstedt reviewed the Swedish edition of Oehler 1935c as more related to the Swedes, and as 'something of Martin Luther in a modern form.'

<sup>91</sup> Björkquist to J. Hemmer 1938, Feb. 9 (J. Hemmers brevsamling, ÅAB). Hemmer admitted that 'Oxford' was a prep-school, a Kindergarten of religion, because its simplicity reached so many lonely and despairing persons (Hemmer to Björkquist 1939,

## V.2.6. Group Revivalism in Stockholm

Group revivalism in Stockholm was inspired from Upsala. In November 1933, Hans Cnattingius visited the Arbins, and Mrs. Arbin reported to the Lehtonens in Finland about the Swedish everyday translations of some Oxford terms, showing that the matter was topical at the time.<sup>92</sup> The women in the Stockholm Group suggested that Group days be arranged in the spring 1934, but Cnattingius and Anders Frostenson thought at least one Group evening before that was necessary to bring along some people from outside the Church circles. However, a Group meeting with about 200 participants was arranged during Whitsuntide. In the autumn 1934, three Oxford Group meetings were arranged in Stockholm: at Årstaklubben, at the holiday home Borgen, and at the Margareta domestic school.<sup>93</sup> Introductory dinner parties with conversation for some hundred prominent people were given at Högloftet at Skansen, dealing with the problems and victories of the participants.<sup>94</sup> Group literature was recommended and sold. As a consequence of such a recommendation at a party at Skansen in February 1936, Gustav Blomberg, who taught German at the Mission School at Lidingö (The Swedish Mission Covenant Church) let his pupils translate Spoerri's *Der Herr des Alltags*.<sup>95</sup> A big meeting at Hotel Excelsior at the turn of the month November–December 1936, with Harry Blomberg, failed, largely due to the lack of a plan and a leading team.<sup>96</sup>

Until January 1937, when the first joint attack was made in Stockholm, many small groups had worked without being aware of each other. The Group day on January 17 began with a Holy Communion service in the Finnish Church, with the Rev. Torsten Folke officiating. Erik Arbin preached in the broadcast main Sunday service in the Engelbrekt Church, on the crisis and the

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Jan. 8, SIB). In his views on the Oxford Group as a Christian A-B-C, Björkquist is an early exponent of thoughts later realized from a Roman Catholic viewpoint, by Sven Stolpe and Karl Adam.

<sup>92</sup> Ö. Arbin to M. and A. Lehtonen 1933, Nov. 15 (RAH).

<sup>93</sup> Cnattingius to Runestam 1934, March 11. Kristen Ungdom 1934:69. SvM 1934, Dec. 11.

<sup>94</sup> See Kjellberg 1970:100 ff., who gives some critical snapshots. See also invitation cards with, for example, the following text: 'Några män samlas å Skansens nyloft torsdagen den 10 oktober 1935 kl. 18.30 till en enkel middag med åtföljande samtal om personliga livsfrågor, närmast med utgångspunkt från Oxfordgrupprörelsens budskap. Ni inbjudes härmed hjärtligen att närvara. [...] Helmer Eneborg Förste aktuarie; K. H. Giertz Överläkare; C. A. Laurell Kapten; Ivar Norberg Redaktör; Gunnar Åstrand Banktjänsteman.' Arbin sent the quoted invitation card even to the Finnish bishop Max von Bonsdorff (M. von Bonsdorffs brevsamling, ÅAB).

<sup>95</sup> Spoerri 1936:8.

<sup>96</sup> V. Löferantz to H. Blomberg 1936, Dec. 3 ('den besynnerliga sammankomsten på Excelsior, som helt gick på en slump. Inga av oss visste riktigt vad det var fråga om'; UUB).

renewal of the home. Then teamwork followed at home with the Arbins, the day closing with an Oxford devotional hour ('Oxford-andakt') in the Ersta Church. This was described as the first real Oxford service in Stockholm, without liturgy, sermon, reading or prayer, but with testimonies by the Rev. Paul Sandegren, Mrs. Adlercreutz, the writer Olof Seger, Miss Gunlög Mosesson, the Methodist pastor Gösta Bergsten, the bank accountant Karl E. Welin-Berger, and William Reed, an English musician. The speeches aimed at world change through individual change. There was solo singing as well. Guests had arrived from Finland, as well as from groups in Västervik, Upsala, and Nyköping. The service closed with a silent devotion and the joint saying of the Lord's prayer.<sup>97</sup> On February 14, the Rev. Anders Frostenson invited those attending the evening service in the Gustav Vasa Church who wished to come in contact with the Oxford Group and acquaint themselves with its message to a Group meeting in the Parish House immediately after the service. Some fifty persons, most of them newcomers, attended the meeting. Several testimonies were given before the closing prayers. No quiet time is reported.<sup>98</sup> March 19–20, Group training days were arranged in Stockholm under the management of the Rev. Torsten Folke. Non-groupers, too, took an active part in this arrangement.<sup>99</sup> Public meetings were held in the Engelbrekt Church, at Engelbrektstunet, and in the Winter Palace (on the treatment of prostitutes), while the local teams held their ordinary meetings.<sup>100</sup> A central figure in these activities was the resident chaplain Erik Arbin, who introduced Group revivalism also in Finland in the spring 1934, gave discourses in Helsinki and Turku, and returned in May 1936, to conduct Group meetings in Helsinki.<sup>101</sup>

In the summer 1937, a house-party was arranged by the Norrköping group, at Mauritzberg. The development from team to house-party and further on to

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<sup>97</sup> Report by Gunvor Bexelius in LTV 1937 Nr. 8, Feb. 20. Kjellberg 1970:100 f. wrongly dates this service to 1935. In Norway, special 'Oxford services' were arranged after the international campaign too, though they seem to have been special house-party services, and less alternative forms of Church service, often in the open air. See the report by S. Stolpe from the house-party at Larvik, Aug. 18–23 (StTD 1936, Sept. 2). In Denmark, so-called Oxford services were arranged only for a short period after the international campaign.

<sup>98</sup> LTV 1937 Nr. 8, Feb. 20.

<sup>99</sup> LTV 1937 Nr. 18, May 1.

<sup>100</sup> Kjellberg 1970:104 f. is most critical of a group of ladies in the Engelbrekt parish. A similar picture is given in Elisabeth Högström-Löfberg's novel *Murarna falla*, 1937:329 ff.

<sup>101</sup> Arbin arranged testimonial meetings in the parish hall in the winter 1938 – probably in a revivalistic style – and wrote to Lehtonen about the good results, though such meetings should not be repeated to often (Arbin to Lehtonen 1938, Feb. 23, RAH). Lehtonen 1934:111, 1936:115. See Arbin to Lehtonen 1934, March 5, 1935, May 19 (RAH), and Ekstrand 1993:55, 65 f., 98, 103 f.

new teams was especially noted. In a report, Laila Persson raised the question: Am I satisfied with piety, or am I a revolutionary Christian?<sup>102</sup>

### *V.2.7. Group Revivalism in the Diocese of Skara*

In the Diocese of Skara in western Sweden, an independent, ecumenical form of Group revivalism was growing. For some years, quiet days for clergymen were arranged in the diocese, for example in Varnhem, September 5–7, 1934, pastor Ruben Melin speaking on Our Need, Penance and Confession, and New life, respectively.<sup>103</sup> Melin had visited the Oxford house-party at the turn of the month between June and July, and brought with him a personal experience of its message. Since he had visited a Group meeting in Wurttembergia in the spring 1934, with a joint Communion as its climax, his work from the very beginning followed a Church revivalistic road. In the summer, he led Bible hours at the youth course in Mariestad, in the form of personal testimony, and on one of the days for students of theology at Västra Tunhem, he gave some impressions from the house-party. In the year-book of the diocese youth work (*Västgöta-ungdomens julbok*), he painted a vivid picture of the Oxford Group work for the reconstruction of the world, and of its understanding of national and international problems as dependent on personal problems, and its emphasis on personal surrender to Christ, victory over sin through Christ, and leading other human beings to Christ.<sup>104</sup> Obviously, Melin had grasped the vision and the message of the house-party, though his strategy was a traditional revivalistic one. His group in Vargön and Vänersborg soon became the centre of the work in the diocese of Skara, and during Epiphany 1935, the first Group days with forty participants (including the South African Hugh Murcott from Oxford) were arranged at Vargön on the theme: New Life to the World. A five-years plan was presented for conquering the University of Upsala.<sup>105</sup>

On May 18 and 19, 1935, a house-party was arranged in Alingsås, with about twenty men and forty women participating, ages varying from 17 to 60. The team consisted of two clergymen from the Church of Sweden and two Methodist ministers.<sup>106</sup> During the meeting of the diocesan clerical association in 1935, June 25–26 in Skara, the vicar Adolf Kloo in a discourse raised the

<sup>102</sup> 'Fromhet – Revolution. Från house-partyt på Mauritzberg' (LTV 1937, June 26).

<sup>103</sup> Rudberg 1935:165. Melin's discourse on Penance and Confession was in parts printed in *Kyrka och Folk* 1934 Bilaga N:r 5 (November).

<sup>104</sup> *Västgöta-ungdomens julbok* 1934:67, Melin 1934:22 f., 25 f., 1939:42. Cf. Tegborg 1978:124, who places the first influence as late as 1937.

<sup>105</sup> Nunstedt 1987:103 f., type-written invitation 'Härmed hava vi glädjen inbjuda Eder till Gruppdagar i Wargön,' signed by Karl Eriksson, Ruben Melin, and Thorsten Nunstedt, in a Group revivalistic scheme. A special note declared that even visitors for a day or less were welcome (Nunstedt's scrap-book, Skövde). StTD 1935, Jan. 8.

<sup>106</sup> Groups vol. III:75.

question: What may we learn for our work from the Oxford Group Movement?<sup>107</sup> June 3–16, 1935, two clergymen and five students bicycled on an evangelizing tour, with meetings in Lidköping, Lyrestad, Finnerödja, Degerfors, Kristinehamn, Nora, Ramsberg, Kopparberg, Ludvika, and Falun. During the final days, Gerd du Rietz and Anders Frostenson from Stockholm joined the party. After the tour the summer cottage of Ruben Melin, at Sörgraven in Bohuslän, functioned as a permanent ‘camp,’ serving as a preparation for the youth course at Hönsäter, August 7–11, with 250 participants from different parts of Sweden.<sup>108</sup> So-called Oxford Groups from the diocese assisted, and the discourses were changed into short personal addresses. The personal talk in private was intense. Additional Group days were arranged at Mösseberg, September 6–8 (about 100 participants).<sup>109</sup> During the youth leader conference in Falköping, April 13–14, 1936, a discourse was given on the question of what the Oxford Group Movement could give the Church Youth Movement, and at other meetings a new method of group talks discourses afterwards was introduced. In the yearly report of the diocese church youth association (Skara stifts kyrkliga ungdomsförbund), thanks were expressed for what the Group Movement had given. Also the diocesan convent of the Church layman’s association (Kyrkobrodererna) discussed their relation to the Oxford Group Movement.<sup>110</sup> In 1936, important meetings were held at Vänersborg (at Epiphany), Floby, and Mullsjö. In the first four days in June, some thirty to forty clergymen met at Nolhaga. The meeting was attended by Bishop Ljunggren, and among the speakers were Erik Arbin from Stockholm, Knut Ericson from Gothenburg, Em. Diehl from Skåne, and two Danish guests (the lawyer Harald Høgsbro, and the Rev. Eilschott-Holm).<sup>111</sup>

To the unifying of Swedish Group revivalism and the preparation of the independent Swedish groups for the work in the fellowship of the Oxford Group, a weekly journal, edited by Ruben Melin and Thorsten Nunstedt, was of the greatest importance. It was started in January 1937 as a supplement to a Vänersborg newspaper, from 1938 continuing as the independent *Nytt Liv*. As early as in March 1937, the new journal propagated typical Oxford Group issues like the God-controlled state, or the rebuilding of the world.<sup>112</sup> Dates and addresses of notification for Danish and Norwegian house-parties were published continually. In the late 1930s, the relations between the leading Oxford Group men and the editors of *Nytt Liv* were obviously good.

In March 1937, the groups of western Sweden arranged a training meeting

<sup>107</sup> Rudberg 1935:166.

<sup>108</sup> Nunstedt 1987:104, Scrap-book of T. Nunstedt (Skövde). In the team were Gerd Du Rietz, Olle Helander, Sigfrid Johansson, Sven Kvistberg, Ruben Melin, Thorsten Nunstedt, Inge Nylander, Per Olof Sjöling, and Karl Erik Tengroth.

<sup>109</sup> Rudberg 1935:167, Västgöta-ungdomens julbok 1935:62 f., Nunstedt 1987:104 f.

<sup>110</sup> Västgöta-ungdomens julbok 1936:58, 1937:53 f., Lindstedt 1937:161.

<sup>111</sup> Nunstedt 1987:105, scrap-book of T. Nunstedt (Skövde).

<sup>112</sup> LTV 1937 Nr. 13, March 25.

in Ljungkile, with ninety participants from groups in Gothenburg, Vargön-Vänern, Lidköping and other places in the dioceses of western Sweden. They noticed that even the reserved Swedish attitude obviously had been changed. A new view of the Group was presented, which defined the Group as the natural company of God's children, a living fellowship in organic growth, not created or organized by men. The focus was of winning people instead of getting them just 'interested.'<sup>113</sup> Another group meeting was arranged in Götene, April 25.<sup>114</sup>

At the conference of representatives of the Group movement and the Church of Sweden at Sigtuna in February 1939, it was emphasized that in western Sweden, the Group movement had led the newly won people directly into the Church, while the leaders there had a thoroughly ecclesiastical attitude as a natural part of their spiritual direction.<sup>115</sup>

### *V.2.8. Early Reactions, Group Revivalism, and the Influence of the Danish Oxford Group Campaign in the Diocese of Lund*

As early as September 9, 1933, the so-called Oxford Group Movement was mentioned at the Church association in Malmö (Kyrkliga förbundet i Malmö), and on November 1, Hans Cnattingius and Ester Lutteman introduced the movement at a closed meeting, together with Magda Wollter, Bror Tiliander, and Em. Diehl from the region.<sup>116</sup> In May 1934, Dr. Gunnar Rosendal, rector of Osby in the Northern part of the diocese of Lund, reviewed the books by Strömstedt and Norborg, finding American optimism rather than Lutheran contrition and humility in the new movement, and a religion for pre-varsity students rather than peasants. Apart from its churchless and subjective teaching, Rosendal – soon to become a leader of the Swedish High Church Movement – found that the movement had its merits as well.<sup>117</sup> In July, Dr. Rosendal, in a review of the books by Russell, Begbie, and Hambro, noted that at most youth meetings arranged by the Church or the Free churches, as well as at diocese meetings or convents, there was much talk about the Group Movement. Rosendal agreed with the movement on many points, such as its clear, distinct

<sup>113</sup> LTV 1937 Nr. 11, March 13.

<sup>114</sup> LTV 1937 Nr. 15, April 10.

<sup>115</sup> Editorial 'Grupprörelsen och kyrkan. Läget och dess krav' (VL 1939:52). See further Jarlert 1994.

<sup>116</sup> Forkman 1944:127. Kyrkliga förbundet i Malmö aimed at a revival of congregational life in different directions, and must be distinguished from the conservative Kyrkliga förbundet för evangelisk-luthersk tro. Cf. Eckerdal 1992:31, n. 52. Subsequently, Kyrkliga förbundet i Malmö arranged more public discourses on adjacent subjects, for example S. Stolpe on Christian realism 1938, Nov. 30, or Bertil Malmberg on the possibilities of Christian writing in our time 1939, Apr. 24.

<sup>117</sup> 'Den nya oxfordrörelsen' (SDS 1934, May 2).

instructions for a Christian life, and its restoration of private confession, but he was still in opposition, finding Russell's characters more interesting before than after their change, and their happiness superficial, more reminiscent of Douglas Fairbanks than of Luther or Schartau. Instead of Luther's *simul justus et peccator*, they were sinners only before. Changed, they were filled with a strange, American happiness and satisfaction, with its roots in a superficial understanding of sin.<sup>118</sup> In a succeeding review of Redwood's and Kitchen's books, the rector Gunnar Herrlin recommended a liberation from the rather strong American taste of the Oxford Group literature, and a search for a Swedish form corresponding to Swedish mentality.<sup>119</sup>

At the summer meeting of the Lundensian volunteer Church corps for students, at Vittsjö, 1934, four of the six afternoons were filled with talks about what to learn from the Oxford Group Movement, starting with the missionary Bror Tiliander speaking on Confession and Testimony. While some – many critical of the Anglo-Saxon mentality – had feared an apology for the new movement, Tiliander stated that the acts of God should neither be discussed nor defended, and delivered a testimony about how the Group movement had forced him to a full conversion.<sup>120</sup> From April 26 to 28, 1935, a small house-party with about thirty participants was arranged at Bjärred, outside of Lund, with Bible talks and mutual edification, led by Dr. Dick Helander, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology at the University, the rector A. Em. Diehl, and the student Thorsten Nunstedt from Upsala, with Count Otto Wachtmeister of Kulla Gunnarstorp, a few merchants, directors, students, and employees taking part. The party was obviously a revivalistic one.<sup>121</sup>

The first great public presentation was made on September 10, 1935. In a most ecclesiastical framework – at the diocese conference in Lund – Dr. Helander introduced the Oxford Group Movement in the All Saints' Church to an audience of 2,500 people, including Crown Prince Gustav Adolf and Crown Princess Louise. His rather objective discourse was built on a sincere, revivalistic understanding of the movement, and concluded with the prayer: Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Then four clergymen and two laymen from the diocese spoke. Two of the clergymen, the rectors A. E. Diehl and Otto Ehde, testified of the deep personal consequences the encounter with the new movement had had for them, Diehl confessing his change into the Oxford Group way of life, and Ehde blessing the movement. One of the best-known priests in the diocese, the rural dean Albert Lysander, a moderate High Church man, was favourably guarded, and the young pastor Sven-Åke Rosenberg deeply moved.

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<sup>118</sup> Russell's and Begbie's attitude of sportsmanship in religious matters was embarrassing, while the Norwegian Hambro was calm, reliable, and unbiased. 'Kringgrupprörelsen' (SDS 1934, July 12).

<sup>119</sup> SDS 1934 Oct. 24.

<sup>120</sup> Frostin 1936:44. On Tiliander's 'Oxford' experience, see also Tiliander 1955:37.

<sup>121</sup> 'Oxfordgruppmöte i Bjärred', SvM 1935, Apr. 29.



Count Wachtmeister emphasized the importance of the visit by Frank Buchman and his team to Helsingør (Helsingore), and Captain U. Dunér from Kristianstad, too, spoke in favor of the movement. The whole afternoon was reviewed in the leading regional paper as the first appearance of the Oxford Movement in Lund.<sup>122</sup>

It is noteworthy that so much space was provided for a presentation of the Oxford Group, or rather the Oxford Group way of life, at an established diocese conference in Sweden as early as 1935. Secondly, the public rush in a rather unprepared area – even if some rushed only to get a glimpse of the royalty – was surprising, and shows that the movement was widely known, mostly through the Danish campaign.<sup>123</sup> The character of the meeting – contrary to the description in the newspaper headline – was certainly not an appearance of the Oxford Group, but a combination of objective information or reflexion, and more or less personal testimony, significant for this phase. Thus, the Oxford Group campaign in Denmark had given Swedish Group revivalism a positive feed-back, without bringing the message of a national revolution or the strategy of the international fellowship.<sup>124</sup>

At a house-party in Copenhagen February 4–7, 1937, this message was obviously brought to the Oxford Group in Lund, and accepted. On the evening of February 7, the Swedish groups present brought their Danish friends the following joint message:

We Swedes have today surrendered our negative attitude against working for life change in the service of national change; we are completely positive to you, and we have today identified ourselves with Denmark and its youth. Under the guidance of God we are entirely willing to work for the rising of the nation and the nation under God's control. We ourselves have received increased fellowship and increased responsibility. We have been requested to be positive, and we have placed ourselves under the demand to solve the problems under God's guidance.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> 'Oxfordrörelsens första framträdande i Lund,' D. Helander: 'Oxfordrörelsen. Inledningsanförande vid stiftsmötet i Lund' (SDS 1935, Sept. 11), SvM 1935, Apr. 29. Rosenberg 1992:121 ff. recalls that active Group people had prepared the meeting as a manifestation, with personal testimony following Dr. Helander's objective discourse, while Bishop E. M. Rodhe had asked the Rev. Lysander to speak between the testimonies.

<sup>123</sup> The press reports had been extensive. See, for example, Lundgren 1935:84 ff. (printed 1:0 in Sydposten 1935, Apr. 12).

<sup>124</sup> Such a positive feedback was experienced in Swedish Methodist circles as well, through reports in *Svenska Sändebudet* (the enthusiastic Bengtson 1935 and the somewhat more critical Hjalmar 1935). A speech by S. Mowinckel on The Victorious Christ, for students in Oslo, was printed in *Svenska Sändebudet* 1935:501.

<sup>125</sup> 'Vi svenskar har i dag överlätit vår negativitet mot att gå in för livsförvandling i landsförvandlingens tjänst; vi är helt positiva mot Er och har i dag identifierat oss med

This message as well as the whole report shows the great influence of the Oxford Group work in Denmark, which resulted in a local Swedish teamwork for personal and national change, in fellowship with the Danish and the international Oxford Group. The work in Lund is furthermore an example of local group work, and in a qualitative sense entering the Oxford Group phase already before the arrival of the international team. A month later, a joint Group meeting was arranged at Helsingborg for teams from Lund, Kristianstad, Landskrona, and Danish Helsingør, led by the Rev. Herman Schlyter. A translation of Hallen Viney's *How Do I Begin* was presented.<sup>126</sup> Other contemporary examples from the same publisher, still within the confines of traditional Group revivalism, are two short flyers with questions about conscience, based on the four absolute standards, instructions about private quietness before God, morning prayer, and advice for the broken self.<sup>127</sup> In July 1937, the Nordic Student Meeting was held at Lund, with the special aim of personal soul-care of a reviving and directing kind. The two last morning discourses aimed at opening up for the wider responsibilities of Christian man. The Saturday evening meeting with free speeches was planned to be in the style of the Group movement. Out of ninety Norwegian students, fifty were in teams, compared to only two out of sixty Danes, and one single Swedish team member.<sup>128</sup> This meeting was of great importance for spreading Group revivalism among Scandinavian students, while only few Finnish students took part.<sup>129</sup>

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Danmark och dess ungdom. Under Guds ledning är vi fullt villiga att gå in för landets uppresning och landet under Guds kontroll. Själva ha vi fått ökad gemenskap och ökat ansvar. Vi ha uppfodrats att vara positiva, och vi ha ställt oss in under det kravet att under Guds ledning lösa problemen' (Erik Öberg: Från Oxfordgruppen i Lund. Danmarks ungdom går in för livsförvandling i landsförvandlingens tjänst. LTV 1937 Nr. 9). Öberg adds that the work would continue in Lund – in many ways helped by the experiences from Denmark – aiming at a national change, and the positive solution of the imminent problems.

<sup>126</sup> LTV 1937 Nr. 12 (March 19). The meeting took place on March 16. Joint Training days followed on November 12–14 (LTV 1937 Nr. 48, Nov. 27). Viney 1939 is an altered edition built on the vision of Moral Re-Armament as well. The original British edition was published in 1936, a revised, Norwegian one (probably) in the same year, the American and Danish ones in 1937, and the French ('Par où commencer?') without year of publication.

<sup>127</sup> [Falk-Faulkner] 1937 (published first in LTV 1936, July 31) and [1939]. The flyers do not mention either team-work, work for life-change, or national change. Editor was the so-called Oxford Group in Helsingborg.

<sup>128</sup> P. M. rörande programmet för Nordiska Studentnötet i Lund den 6–11 juli 1937 (M. Björkquists arkiv, SIB). Halfdan Høgsbro to Ronald Fangen 1937, July 22 (UBO 488a).

<sup>129</sup> Franzén 1987:190 f. Other Group revivalist initiatives continued, for example, in Karlskrona, where the Methodist pastor Gustaf Bengtson arranged a sort of Group meetings. Sven Stolpe criticized a scandalous so-called house-party at Karlskrona, March 1938, since none of the leaders was changed or had any idea of the Group (Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1938, March 18, UUB). The revivalistic, so-called Olénian meetings were still

### V.2.9. *Why Does Not Buchman Come? – Efforts for an International Campaign*

For several years, Frank Buchman tried to attach the Swedish Group revivalists closer to the views and work of the international Oxford Group. In November 1934, he wanted Arvid Runestam and a few students to come to the Geilo house-party in Norway. In February 1935, he wrote Runestam that there was 'no immediate prospect' of the international team coming to Sweden: 'It is very good of you to want us to come before the end of March, but it does not seem that that is the guided move.' He appreciated Runestam's 'interest,' but added, with reference to the present Norwegian situation, a few words on the 'distinctive character' of the work, in that 'every Christian really accepts the challenge of being a life-changer' and of the 'danger that people depend upon meetings rather than Christ's way, in challenging individuals to propagate life.'<sup>130</sup> In a subsequent letter from Copenhagen in May 1935, Buchman sent Runestam a letter by B. H. Streeter for the Swedish newspapers. Buchman thought that Runestam could 'best serve the interests of the Group, by putting before the country the national consequences of the work.'<sup>131</sup> Ten days later, Buchman urged Runestam to take part in the mass-service at the Kronborg Castle in Helsingør in June, and make his conviction that the Oxford Group ought to come to Sweden 'national for Sweden, and to re-echo that message through all of Scandinavia' through the national broadcasts. The service was planned and directed towards Scandinavia, and the aim was 'a national resurrection influencing the international family.' In a subsequent letter, Buchman emphasized the influence Runestam's message surely would have on 'Princess Ingrid and the Royal family.' He believed that Runestam was 'the God-appointed man for the task.'<sup>132</sup>

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continued in March 1945. These were not Group revivalistic, but Mrs. Nelly Olén sometimes invited people to Oxford Group meetings. See, for example, Olén 1962:72 on Group meetings in Karlskrona, arranged by Gustaf Bengtson, Bengtson & Sandberg 1939<sup>7</sup>. Erik Lönnerholm to E. Petré 1945, March 17, EPC.

<sup>130</sup> Buchman to Runestam 1934, Nov. 23, 1935, Feb. 2 (Runestam Coll.II). See also Runestam's report about Buchman's letter to M. Björkquist 1935, Feb. 5 (SIB), with the possible plans of an edifying meeting at Sigtuna with Fangen, Mowinckel, Ramm, and others, in parallel with the one planned by Bengt Jonzon for Gävle, in March. In a subsequent letter, Runestam deplores Björkquist's judgment regarding the Group movement (to Björkquist 1935, March 27, SIB). Speculations on the possible visit by Buchman were printed in the papers ('Buchman trots allt till Sverige?', SvM 1935, Feb. 8).

<sup>131</sup> Buchman to Runestam 1935, May 10 (Runestam Coll.II). The letter might have been Streeter 1935, appearing in Swedish in NDA 1935, Oct. 26 as 'Luther, Erasmus och Oxfordgruppen.'

<sup>132</sup> Buchman to Runestam 1935, May 20 (Runestam Coll.II), May 29 (Runestam Coll.I). On the complete motives of the Kronborg service, see Ch. IV.3.2. Crown Princess Ingrid was born a Swedish Princess. On other examples of Buchman's naïve faith in queens and princesses, see Lean 1985:112 f.; on women and the Oxford Group, see

In June, Buchman wrote from Aarhus in Denmark that he would suggest to the Metropolitan of India, Foss Westcott, to go to Sweden early in August, to meet the Archbishop and the other bishops. He suggested that the leaders meet in August, with the meetings in Stockholm beginning in the middle of October. Still better was a house-party in August, as 'it might bring leaderships that would not be available at a later date, and might bring your statesmen who go later to Geneva, so that they would be prepared to help us there.'<sup>133</sup> Professor Runestam appealed to the Swedish Archbishop, Dr. Eidem, to bid the Group men welcome to Sweden, and to receive the message as an appeal to personal revival and life renewal, at the same time adopting a wait-and-see policy. He tried to convince Eidem that neither a special Swedish form of Group Movement, nor any test of the movement as regarded its Swedish or genuine Christian character, guaranteed that nothing in the Swedish Christian tradition would be lost. The foreign team must be allowed to come with its own form and spirit, while the Swedes had to realize that they were liberated by the Spirit, even when it meant a liberation from the Group Movement itself, if it worked in a legalistic way. The goal was to receive the spirit of the Group Movement, while remaining free, evangelical Christians. The more leading Church men opened themselves to the message of the Group Movement, the greater was the guarantee that it would not hurt, but serve Lutheranism.<sup>134</sup> Though still open to reconsideration, Dr. Eidem could not find it in accordance with his calling to introduce this kind of Oxford Group. As Runestam had imagined, the archbishop did not consider that a visit of the Metropolitan of India would have any positive importance, but could easily have the opposite effect. Eidem was also doubtful whether the National Ecumenical Council (Svenska Ekumeniska Nämnden) could introduce the team.<sup>135</sup> In July, Runestam wrote to the Finno-Swedish bishop Max von Bonsdorff, reporting on Buchman's plans to come to Sweden at the end of September or in early October. Buchman's plan was to start somewhere distant from Stockholm, probably in Rättvik (Dalecarlia). These plans were published in the Danish *Præsteforeningens Blad*.<sup>136</sup>

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Jarlert 1993.

<sup>133</sup> Buchman to Runestam 1935, June 18 (Runestam Coll.I). See also S. Stolpe to M. Björkquist 1935, June 18 (SIB; 'Teamet kommer i höst. Sedan är det bara att sätta i gång').

<sup>134</sup> Runestam to Eidem 1935, July 1 (EEA C I:20, ULA). Runestam suggested connecting the arrival of the Oxford Group team with the Swedish Ecumenical movement as well.

<sup>135</sup> Eidem to Runestam 1935, July 2 (Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB). Dr. Eidem had had other information on Buchman and the Oxford Group, especially on Buchman's support for the leader of the Deutsche Christen, Bishop Hossenfelder, at the time of his visit to Britain in November 1933 (Jens Nørregaard's account through Birger Forell to Eidem 1933, Nov. 12). Eidem found Nørregaard's account of Hossenfelder and the Oxford Group interesting, though melancholy (Copy of Eidem to Forell 1933, Nov. 21; C I:4, EEA, ULA).

<sup>136</sup> A. Runestam to M. v. Bonsdorff 1935, July 20 (ÅAB), PrB 1935:478 (July 26; 'I

Instead of the arrangements proposed earlier, the month of August brought a private meeting of Buchman and the Archbishop, arranged by Arvid Runestam as an interlude during the diocesan clergy meeting in Karlstad, which was attended by Dr. Eidem as a guest. On August 20, Frank Buchman arrived in Karlstad, together with B. H. Streeter. He was welcomed not only by the team from Värmland (the young clergymen Palin, Fredell, and Malmström), but also by Arbin and the lawyer Sven Malmstedt from Stockholm, who presented Buchman with a memorandum in English with a copy of an invitation which had been sent earlier, but which had failed to reach him. Because of his brother's illness, Runestam was absent. Buchman had expected to see the archbishop and other prominent persons among the inviters. He was annoyed by some of these, who did not want their names to be published. Remembering his relations to Norwegian and Danish bishops, he emphasized that he would not come to Sweden if the leading Church men did not wish him to do so.

After lunch, the archbishop arrived in the City Hotel for a short conversation with the Swedes. They got the impression that he was tired and nervous, and he did not want to appear in public as involved in any way. He felt a pressure from the bishops Roots and Fuglsang-Damgaard, who gave him the impression of a perfect organization. Then Buchman and Streeter talked with Dr. Eidem for about an hour and a half. Leaving the room, Buchman seemed very serious, saying nothing of the archbishop's attitude, and did not seem prepared to make any decision. Ken Twitchell, who served as his chauffeur, said that they had no decided guidance how to act.<sup>137</sup> The archbishop had obviously not been asked to give his permission for the members of the Stockholm team to be present, or been informed that they would be present, and two days afterwards, Buchman wrote to Runestam from Esbjerg, eager to let Dr. Eidem know that they had not been invited by him and Streeter,

so that he does not get a mis-impression that we were urging an invitation. I had not known that they were writing and the initiative that Mr. Malmsted [sic!] had taken about arranging an interview with his Grace. I simply wanted to talk with his Grace about his conception of the work of the Oxford Group in Sweden and what responsibility he was willing to undertake.<sup>138</sup>

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September vil Gruppen rejse til Sverige og senere til Genève).

<sup>137</sup> E. Palin to Runestam 1935, Aug. 26 (Runestam Coll.I). See also L. H. Roots to Eidem 1935, Aug. 17, ardently wishing his experience with the international team in Denmark 'for every bishop' (EEA C II:7, ULA). Streeter did not catch Eidem's impression of pressure from the foreign bishops. On the day after the meeting, he sent Eidem his thanks together with an interview with Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard, in which he announced his joining the fellowship of the Oxford Group (Streeter to Eidem 1935, Aug. 21, EEA C II:7, ULA). During the Life and Work conference in Oxford, 1937, where Eidem on July 17 received his honorary doctorate in the Sheldonian Theatre, he also, later in the afternoon, had tea with Mrs. Streeter at Queen's College (Eidem's journal, 1937, July 17; EEA B I a:1, ULA).

<sup>138</sup> Buchman to Runestam 1935, Aug. 22 (Runestam Coll.II).

At the same time, Buchman wrote to Eidem, explaining ‘that we had no knowledge whatever of the Group coming on from Stockholm to meet us at Karlstad,’ focusing on Carl Hambro’s speech about ‘the new spirit of understanding that has come to the different political parties through the work of the Oxford Group,’ and concluding that he knew the Archbishop was not ‘over-looking this side of it in the important decisions’ he constantly would be called upon to make.<sup>139</sup> In a letter to Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard, Eidem reported that he had expressed his sincere joy at the revival work the Oxford Group had been given the grace to carry on in different countries, including Sweden, but he found it most natural that the Group was invited by those in the Swedish Church who had received a life-deciding influence from the movement, and thus were able to testify personally.<sup>140</sup>

These reactions of Dr. Eidem were almost totally predictable. His work, often most effective, was on many levels – unlike his predecessor Nathan Söderblom’s – a confidential work in private, often using personal channels instead of the official ones. We may well conclude that Eidem’s very personalistic method of working was much too confidential for the leading Oxford Group men. In the following years, Dr. Eidem was now and then contacted by representatives of the Oxford Group asking him to sign international messages, etc. The archbishop always declined, as he did with several corresponding actions in other contexts.<sup>141</sup>

Frank Buchman obviously drew the conclusion that Swedish Group revivalists were not ready for an Oxford Group campaign. He advised Runestam to spend ‘a longer time with the team,’ and suggested his coming to Geneva, as the work ‘must be conceived on broader lines so that the same happy results will eventuate in Sweden that one sees constantly in Norway.’ In the same letter he

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<sup>139</sup> Buchman to E. Eidem 1935, Aug. 22 (EEA C II:7, ULA). Buchman commented the situation in a subsequent letter to R. Fangen (1935, Sept. 28; UBO 488 a): ‘Make it quite clear that my visit to Karlstad was only to find out his Grace’s views about the Oxford Group and not in any sense a bid for an invitation. I can readily see how he might have misunderstood, because the men from Stockholm came without my knowledge. My object was simply a private visit with Canon Streeter, and I hope you will make it clear when the matter comes up.’

<sup>140</sup> Copy of E. Eidem to H. Fuglsang-Damgaard 1935, Aug. 24 (EEA C II:7, ULA).

<sup>141</sup> Despite the fact that Runestam asked Eidem to publish his answer to Buchman, Eidem did not do so, though Runestam thought it would have removed some misunderstandings ‘in this country’ (Runestam to Eidem 1935, Oct. 30. EEA C I:20, ULA). The meeting as such was reported in the newspapers, see StTD 1935, Aug. 23. On further contacts, see, for example, John M. Morrison to Eidem 1938, Dec. 27 (EEA C II:13, ULA), and David Grimshaw to Eidem 1939, July 13 (EEA C II:16, ULA), on the signing of a message on Moral Re-Armament to the Assembly in Hollywood, which stated that Manfred Björkquist would sign it if the archbishop did. We may note that if Björkquist ever made such a promise, he was well aware of Eidem’s attitude to such public statements. On Dr. Eidem and messages or protests against the persecution of the Jews, see Jarlert 1993b.

described the Norwegian Oxford Group work as resulting in 'a whole new spirit to all the parties.' Finally he expressly asked whether the Swedes were clear in their own minds just what they aimed to accomplish in Sweden, and seriously questioned whether it was wise to proceed. As long as the sponsors were 'beset by fears and misimpressions of its true character,' and there was a 'lack of that emboldened leadership, guided by God's Holy Spirit, which is civilization's only salvation,' the team would be hindered from 'doing the maximum for Christ in Sweden.'<sup>142</sup> In September Frank Buchman wrote on Sweden, that he felt that 'we want to free the work there from the peril of misunderstanding that we suffered from all through Denmark through unguided advance work.' Personally, he felt that it was better to wait 'until we can have the strategy of united action.'<sup>143</sup> Ten days later, Runestam wrote to Bishop von Bonsdorff in Finland that an invitation was going to be sent to Buchman from about a hundred clergymen in Stockholm. The Pastor Primarius, Nils Widner, had declared himself willing to preside at the first meeting the foreign team would arrange in Stockholm.<sup>144</sup> Another ten days later, Frank Buchman wrote to Runestam that 'it is sin not to be able to inaugurate a revival.' He could not comprehend 'the mentality of ecclesiastical authorities who will not identify themselves with that spiritual force that has the power to make men and nations anew.' Buchman obviously interpreted the archbishop's attitude as fear, and stamped it as 'sin.' These 'days of waiting,' he hoped would force the Swedes to their knees. His conception for Sweden was 'not only for Revolution but Renaissance.'<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Buchman to Runestam 1935, Aug. 22 (Runestam Coll.II). Buchman enclosed 'a picture of the demonstration at Oxford' from the *Illustrated London News*, feeling that 'if the Archbishop sees the possibilities of a Service like this eventuating as a result of a possible visit of the Oxford Group, he will take that part which a Christian statesman ought to take in a time of world crisis.'

<sup>143</sup> Buchman to R. Fangen 1935, Sept. 20 (UBO 488 a).

<sup>144</sup> Runestam to von Bonsdorff 1935, Sept. 30 (ÅAB). The Pastor Primarius of Stockholm was at the time in reality acting and working as an assistant bishop, while Stockholm still was under the see of Upsala. In 1942, when the Diocese of Stockholm was established, Pastor Primarius became the (nowadays abolished) title of the Dean of Stockholm.

<sup>145</sup> Buchman to Runestam 1935, Oct. 9 (Runestam Coll.I). Switzerland had been 'a striking example of how the leaders of the country were driven by necessity to God. We were received twice by the President [...] The luncheon given by the President of the League for the Delegates of the Assembly to meet the Oxford Group had extraordinary effect on the life and spirit in Geneva, as well as the countries that were represented. Six countries have opened to the message of the Oxford Group as a result of that lunch.' Buchman wrote to Cuthbert Bardsley (1937, Feb. 21): 'What I fear so much about Sweden is that what they want is something that will just be a "pick-me-up" for the Church [...] rather than the rebirth of everything in the Church. Men like these Archbishops and bishops and clergy are not willing to go through the pain of rebirth' (Morris Martin Manuscripts III:111, Tirley), quoted by Lean 1985:264, where the archbishop has been omitted.

After the Norwegian campaign, Frank Buchman received several private invitations to Sweden. In September 1935, Ingrid Wermcrantz wrote from Ersta in Stockholm on the behalf of a 'group meeting here in Stockholm, when 180 women from 15 different groups were gathered to share our experiences. [...] We wonder very much if you have not got guidance to come here.'<sup>146</sup> During the winter 1936, plans were made for an international campaign in Sweden, starting April 14, and continued through May and June,<sup>147</sup> but in April, Frank Buchman suggested to Runestam that the Swedes should send their 'strongest team of real leaders' to the Oxford house-party, July 3–13. 'In addition to the clergy there ought to be important business men and leaders like Count Wachmeister [sic!]' Buchman inclined 'strongly towards business men and coming political leaders.' He wanted Runestam to bring the minister of education or the minister of ecclesiastical affairs. This house-party would be different in that it would be taking up 'the philosophy of the work,' lifting it up 'beyond a revival.' Otherwise, they would 'never capture a Socialist Cabinet.' Unchanged Swedes would not be overlooked in Oxford, but have 'that opportunity outside the meetings.'<sup>148</sup>

The Swedish participants at the international house-party for 200 team leaders were Arbin, Stolpe, Paul Sandegren, Sven Malmstedt, Captain C. A. Laurell, the school principal Elof Tengblad, and a few more. Arvid Runestam was in England for three and a half days only, attending a gigantic Oxford Group meeting in London's Albert Hall, and seeing Frank Buchman.<sup>149</sup> He had tried hard to get invitations from leading churchmen. In two letters in June to Bishop Aulén of Strängnäs, he reported from a house-party in Norway, May 21–25, with a completely Norwegian leadership, which had eliminated some disturbing procedures, and made the Swedes feel totally at home. The ecumenical spirit had been more obvious, with Runestam both speaking and leading a quiet time with an international group on 'Ecumenics and Group Movement.' Now Runestam wanted Aulén, together with the Finnish bishop Lehtonen, to take the initiative to a quick, joint Swedish-Finnish invitation to Frank Buchman. This would be an ecumenical act of the best kind. Runestam wrote to the new Swedish minister for ecclesiastical affairs, Bishop Tor Andræ of Linköping, that Bishop Aulén was ready to invite Frank Buchman and his team to the diocese of Strängnäs. In his second letter to Aulén, Runestam wrote about his plans for a short visit to England in order to propose that Buchman bring his team over to

<sup>146</sup> I. Wermcrantz to Buchman 1935, Sept. 17 (UBO 488 a).

<sup>147</sup> Cuthbert Bardsley to H. Høgsbro 1936, Feb. 6: 'Apr. 14–May, June, Sweden???? These plans have not yet been made public [...] what about reserving a fortnight in case of a *possible* visit to Sweden?' (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).

<sup>148</sup> Buchman to Runestam 1936, Apr. 29 (Runestam Coll.II).

<sup>149</sup> StTD 1936, Aug. 15 'Svensk afton hos Buchman i Oxford,' July 10 'England vakna! Oxfordgrupprörelsen håller jättemöte i Albert Hall.' Scandinavian participants were Fr. Ramm, Sten Bugge (Norway), Runestam, Welin-Berger (Sweden), P. Brodersen and Thorvald Pedersen (Denmark).



Sweden. Runestam asked permission from Aulén – as he had done from Bishop Andræ – to bring Buchman and his team an oral invitation to Sweden. He asked Aulén to take this responsibility and thus clear Buchman’s misunderstanding of the attitude of the Swedish Church leaders towards Oxford: – You Swedish bishops cannot escape the responsibility. Aulén had already declared himself prepared to take the risk. In his letter to Andræ, Runestam further wrote on the need to clear up a misunderstanding since the meeting of Archbishop Eidem and Buchman in Karlstad in 1935.<sup>150</sup> Runestam emphasized that the whole thing probably was just a misunderstanding, but his suggestion that the minister should correct the archbishop is remarkable, especially as Dr. Andræ had been placed in the second place on the nomination list for the see of Upsala in 1932, while Dr. Eidem, who occupied only the third place, was elected by the government. The remarkable way of inviting Buchman through the minister, and not through the archbishop, was noted by the conservative clerical journal *Svensk Kyrkotidning*.<sup>151</sup> Runestam is reported to have brought an ‘invitation’ from Bishop Andræ to Buchman, with the prospect of an Oxford Group campaign in Sweden in the autumn. Sven Stolpe wrote from Oxford that a big attack on Sweden probably would start December 15 in Rättvik, and after his return to Sweden, Runestam stated publicly that Frank Buchman and the international team would come to Sweden in September.<sup>152</sup> But unfortunately for the Oxford enthusiasts, Bishop Andræ stated the next day that he welcomed the Oxford Group only with certain reservations, and that it would have to adapt to the Swedish style.<sup>153</sup> The Norwegian Erling Wikborg wrote that identification, not

<sup>150</sup> Runestam to G. Aulén 1936, June 2, 27 (LUB), Runestam to T. Andræ 1936, June 27 (UUB T3aa:18; ‘Det föreligger också i detta avseende ett missförstånd att undanröja, alltsedan mötet mellan Eidem och Buchman i Karlstad förra sommaren. Det torde vara endast ett missförstånd, men det bör från svenskt ledande kyrkligt håll göras klart, att så var, och jag skulle finna det mycket lyckligt, om det kunde ske i den av mig föreslagna formen’).

<sup>151</sup> ‘Oxfordgrupprörelsens ledare till Sverige?’ (*Svensk Kyrkotidning* 1936:513 f; July 23).

<sup>152</sup> F. Ramm to R. Fangen 1936, July 16 (UBO 488 a). S. Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1936, July 10, also Sept. 1 (UUB). StTD 1936, July 14 ‘Buchman med Oxford till Sverige i september.’

<sup>153</sup> StTD 1936, July 15 ‘Oxford välkomnas. Men rörelsen får anpassa sig efter svenska förhållanden.’ Andræ wished that all the leaders of the Church of Sweden would show their interest in an international Oxford Group campaign. Before his journey to England, Runestam had asked Andræ if he was agreeable to an invitation to Buchman – i.e. whether Andræ regarded it as desirable that the Swedes should get to know the Oxford Movement. Now Andræ stated that the Oxford Movement was not the one and only method to be used by everyone in order to reach a religious revival. Much depended on whether the movement had the ability to adjust to Swedish circumstances, and Andræ stated that Runestam was of the same opinion. Particularly the jargon with its Anglo-Saxon humour was strange to the Swedish temperament. The positive effect would be a strengthening of the experience of fellowship. Since Andræ had spoken ‘som ledare i svenska kyrkan’ [as leader of the Church of Sweden], *Svensk Kyrkotidning*

sympathy, was needed in Sweden. As Bishop Andræ left the government as early as on September 28, nothing came out of this effort.<sup>154</sup>

Instead, the newly surrendered Sven Stolpe started to work for an international Oxford Group campaign in the autumn 1936. Buchman's conditions, while expressing some irritation, were that four or five Swedes come to the planning meeting at Oxford, July 28–August 3 – if not, another country would be the chosen one.<sup>155</sup> A couple of British full-time workers went to Sweden and Finland 'looking at things and seeing important people.' Group members in Finland hoped for the news that Frank Buchman and a team would come to Sweden and then go on to Finland, and, in December 1936, Bishop Lehtonen sent an invitation, reminding Buchman of his visit to Finland in 1921.<sup>156</sup> The matter was used even in advertising for Group literature, for example: – Will the international team of the Oxford Group Movement come to Sweden? Its best books have already arrived.<sup>157</sup> The next move was planning a Swedish house-party for the first or second week of 1937, together with the Norwegians, probably at one of the folk high-schools in Sigtuna or Fornby (Borlänge), or in Ludvika.<sup>158</sup> Harry Blomberg asked for help from Finland, probably for the same period, but the Finlanders feared a campaign without cooperation with the

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(‘Oxfordgrupprörelsens ledare till Sverige?’, 1936:514; July 23) noted that the archbishop was the leader of the Church of Sweden.

<sup>154</sup> E. Wikborg to A. Runestam 1936, July 20 (Runestam Coll. I). Andræ had also been contacted by local Oxford Group enthusiasts, see, for example, Anna Schartau (Lund) to Andræ 1936 Aug. 2, Sept. 14 (T 3aa:19, UUB). She had heard that Buchman did not want to come without an invitation from those who were at the head of the work and life of the Church. See further Widengren 1947:227. For Andræ's partly critical views on the Oxford Group, see Andræ 1940:139 ff.

<sup>155</sup> S. Stolpe to A. Runestam 1936, July 23 (Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB).

<sup>156</sup> Agnes Dawson to E. Brunner 1936, Oct. 15 (ZZ). The full-time workers visiting Helsinki were Howard Blake and Francis Goulding. Ekstrand 1993:105 f. Copy of A. Lehtonen to Buchman 1936, Dec. 15 (RAH). Lehtonen emphasized the positive attitude of most bishops at the nordic bishops' conference, Sept. 1936, as well as the deep impression made by 'the conversion of two eminent writers, Stolpe and Blomberg.' See also Lehtonen to Buchman 1935, Sept. 4 (RAH), which corrects some information on Finland in *The Oxford Group. The March of Events*.

<sup>157</sup> StTD 1936, Nov. 10. In a most critical review of Sven Stolpe's confessional book, Torsten Fogelqvist asked why Buchman did not come to Sweden, and assumed that he was afraid that his American style would not go together with the Swedish style, adding that such questions were not asked by the apostles going to Greece or Rome without hired impressarios (T. Fogelqvist: 'Litterär omvändelse,' DN 1936, Nov. 19).

<sup>158</sup> Both Fornby and Ludvika were significant Labour centres. Copy of Blomberg to E. Tengblad 1936, Nov. 30 (UUB), Stolpe to Runestam 1936, Dec. 4 (Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB), Stolpe to M. Björkquist 1936, Nov. 21 (SIB), V. Löfcrantz to H. Blomberg 1936, Dec. 3 (UUB; Elinor Melin, Karin Laurell, Karl Welin-Berger, and Löfcrantz were elected from Stockholm to keep in contact with Blomberg and the others responsible for the planned house-party).

international team, especially as the world fellowship had been the strong force of the Group movement. During a visit to Stockholm, Kaisu Snellman still found what she called national selfishness in Swedish team-work, and the Stockholm team a lump in the throat of the Oxford Group in Sweden. Fellowship between Stockholm and the provinces was lacking.<sup>159</sup> Eventually, the plans had to be revised, and at a meeting at Karlstad with the Norwegians (Wikborg and others) in December 1936, it was decided to postpone the planned bigger attack, due to the lack of surrender, inner freedom, experience, etc., and because of the earlier dilettantish efforts.<sup>160</sup>

In November 1936, Erling Wikborg sent Frank Buchman a letter about Sweden, asking him to come, or send someone, and emphasizing the importance of the new leadership: Sven Stolpe, Elov Tengblad, and Harry Blomberg: 'These three are absolutely identified with the group. Then of course there are the old leaders.' In Sweden, the Labour people had got 'a much deeper cultural outlook.' Wikborg stated that they were quite open to the Christian message. He knew of Buchman's distrust of the Swedish clergy, and declared that neither the clergy nor the nobility or the upper classes meant much, not being 'the vital forces in the people today.'<sup>161</sup> An additional letter was probably sent by Tengblad, Blomberg, or Stolpe, emphasizing the possibilities of reaching Europe through Sweden, and the risk of a present degeneration of the Swedish 'groups' into conventicles.<sup>162</sup> In December 1936, Howard Blake sent Erik Arbin the following message from Frank Buchman: 'I am giving the matter of Sweden my sympathetic consideration, and can assure you I am only awaiting for the God-guided time to come. You can help by forestalling any amateurish attempts in advance, of the sort of thing which made things difficult in the beginning in Denmark.'<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Kaisu Snellman to H. Blomberg 1936, Nov. 12, Dec. 5, 1937, Feb. 1 (UUB). S. Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1937, Feb. 11 (UUB) criticized Kaisu Snellman for over-emphasizing the difference between the work in the provinces and 'the arbinian sect' in Stockholm. The tension between the provinces and Stockholm was removed when the foreign full-time workers set up their headquarters in Stockholm in the spring 1938, but a tension between the Church revivalism of Arbin and the Oxford Group workers in Stockholm was at times obvious: 'Returning to Stockholm I found a rather alarming situation. Erik Arbin who had led the team meeting to my delight the Monday before I found very negative saying that Karin and Pip did not trust him. They were in a middle of a team meeting clearing the whole matter up. By the end of the evening apologies were duly made and I spent two days living with them consolidating the new confidence' (Copy of S. Linton to E. Goulding, A. Strang, H. Blake 1939, Oct. 19, DWC).

<sup>160</sup> Copy of H. Blomberg to E. Tengblad 1936, Nov. 30; Tengblad to Blomberg 1936, Dec. 1; Fr. Ramm to Blomberg 1936, Dec. 21 (UUB), Till Oxford-kamraterna i Sverige 'Kära vänner!' Karlstad 1936, Dec. 10 (dupl., Alnäs).

<sup>161</sup> Copy of E. Wikborg to F. Buchman 1936, Nov. 17 (Okat.saml.Blomberg, UUB).

<sup>162</sup> Tengblad to Blomberg 1936, Dec. 1 (UUB).

<sup>163</sup> Copy of H. Blake to E. Arbin 1936, Dec. 11 (Okat.saml.Blomberg, UUB).

In his review in the Year-Book of the Church of Sweden, Torsten Ysander noted that the Oxford Movement had hardly made any notable advance in 1936, but waited for the big battle, when Dr. Buchman would come. The movement had gained ground more among the Free churches and Low church circles than among the clergy of the Church of Sweden, but occasional clergymen and laymen affected by the Oxford revival had worked silently for a revival within the Church.<sup>164</sup> In 1937, the activity was reported to be increasing only in a sporadic way.<sup>165</sup>

In January 1937, the journalist Herbert Grevenius publicly asked why Frank Buchman still delayed, and stated that the Oxford Movement in Sweden still was only a club matter for a few people. The work consisted mostly of waiting and preparing, and of dinner parties with conversation for some hundred persons a few times a year. The groups were locked up in inner circles. In the autumn, Buchman had sent a couple of scouts, who went away shaking their heads. The planned house-party in Dalecarlia had been postponed, and nothing happened. Buchman's delay created unwillingness and a disbelief in the movement and its leader, who wanted guarantees of ideal circumstances before he decided to put out his message. Neither Jesus nor St. Paul nor William Booth had acted in this way.<sup>166</sup> An answer often repeated was that Buchman did not want to come until the Oxford Group work was firmly established among the working class. The independent groups had reached mostly clergymen and secularized intellectuals. In Norway the workers had not been reached either, and only to a limited extent in Denmark,<sup>167</sup> and in Switzerland, there had been difficulties in the efforts to reach the working class as well as in dealing with the problems of unemployment.<sup>168</sup>

#### *V.2.10. The Direct Oxford Group Influence through Sven Stolpe's Changing Experience and Commitment*

Earlier Group contacts between Norway and Sweden were not limited to the kind of Group revivalism preached by Sverre Norborg in the early 1930s. The

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<sup>164</sup> Ysander 1936:71.

<sup>165</sup> Cullberg 1937:69 f.

<sup>166</sup> H. Grevenius: 'Varför dröjer Buchman?' (StTD 1937, Jan. 14).

<sup>167</sup> Ysander 1935:64, Hestvold 1987:143 f. relies on an interview from 1938 with the Dean of Copenhagen, Paul Brodersen.

<sup>168</sup> See the discussion on the Oxford Movement in *Neue Wege*, the journal of the religious socialists, which criticizes the private character, the disclaiming of political activities, and the change of several people from anti-militarism to defence support through the Oxford Movement (L. Ragaz 1935:122). Three Oxford evenings in the Volkshaus of Zurich, 1935, addressing the socialist workers, were severely criticized, especially for the attitude towards unemployment, i.e. keeping the unemployed busy with life-changing (C. Ragaz 1935:492 ff.; see also the discussion between Adolf Isenschmid and Christel Ragaz in *Neue Wege* 1935:552 ff).

theologians Sigmund Mowinckel and Arvid Runestam were acquainted, and their names appeared together publicly. In June 1936, a Norwegian team arranged a house-party at Riksgränsen, on the Swedish side of the northern border,<sup>169</sup> but an established Norwegian-Swedish interchange was not realized until the writer and literary critic Sven Stolpe identified himself with the Oxford Group. The commitment of Stolpe to Group work was to become of decisive importance for the preparations and realization of the Oxford Group phase in Sweden. As an Oxford Group man, Stolpe was significant in the following ways:

- 1) After his Norwegian Oxford experience, he rejected early, independent Swedish Group revivalism, even omitting his own earlier influences by it;
- 2) of great importance was the fact that the Anglo-Saxon influence, mediated through Norwegian Oxford Group people, had been prepared already through Stolpe's work on the translation of Fangen's *En kristen verdensrevolusjon* (1935);<sup>170</sup>
- 3) Stolpe's own development became the prototype for what he called an 'authentic Oxford experience.' This was made the determining factor in the judgement whether or not a book or an arrangement was 'authentic Oxford,' i.e. representative of the Oxford Group, and accepted by it;
- 4) A direct, continuous contact with the international team around Frank Buchman became desirable – not for the creation of a Swedish revival, but for the incorporation of the Swedish Group work in the international fellowship of the Oxford Group.<sup>171</sup>

Unlike what Stolpe has stated publicly,<sup>172</sup> he obviously had had positive relations to Group revivalism for some time before his experience at the Modum Bad party in May 1936. As early as in June 1935, he declared in a letter to Manfred Björkquist that he actively belonged to the Group movement. He had been exceedingly sceptical, even after translating Fangen's book, but after the

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<sup>169</sup> See, for example, H. Blake to Halfdan Høgsbro 1936, June 16 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK). Blake took an active part in the preparations for this Swedish party. In 1938, another party was arranged by the Norwegians in the same place (Oxfordgruppen Mandag 8. –Søndag 14. August 1938. House-party på Riksgränsen. 1938).

<sup>170</sup> This influence is at least to some extent recognised in Stolpe 1936:18, 1975:38 f., 52 f.

<sup>171</sup> Present at the parties at Modum Bad and Sund was also Howard Blake (Blake to Halfdan Høgsbro 1936, June 16; Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK), at Modum also A. Runestam (Runestam to T. Andræ 1936, June 27; UUB T3aa:18).

<sup>172</sup> In Stolpe 1936, the silence on the subject is almost total (except on p.20, where Stolpe recalls that he had met Group people in Stockholm and was moved by the pertinence and honesty in some of them, but in no means changed), while Stolpe 1975:41 ff. gives an almost ghostly reflection of his contact with an independent, revivalistic Group priest, to whom he had no positive relations. While the affective value of Stolpe's memoirs is uncommonly high, the cognitive value is particularly low, as his later evaluation of his experiences has been totally decisive in his selection of relations, views and events. Cf. Åkerberg 1985:294, who states, without noting the difference between affective and cognitive value, that Stolpe's memoirs have a higher source value as sources than usual in the genre.

personal acquaintance with Fangen himself and with a group led by Arbin, he was rapidly overcome. A consequence was that for the first time he got a clear view of his personal sin. Together with Fangen, he had a great plan for the following year.<sup>173</sup> Contrary to Stolpe's declaration, Erik Arbin presented another view of the actual relations. According to him, Stolpe could hardly be regarded as representative of the Group movement. He had been present at a group conference at Arbin's home, and once at a bigger group meeting at Piperska muren, June 4, where he testified about his inner experience in quite a moving way. Arbin and Stolpe had also had long, private talks.<sup>174</sup>

After a short meeting with Erling Wikborg, while giving lectures in Oslo, Stolpe was invited to the house-party at Modum Bad, May 20–27, 1936. Here he declared himself an Oxford-man, and his final surrender followed at a connected, smaller Whitsun party at Sund, north of Trondheim, at the same time as the surrender of Elov Tengblad.<sup>175</sup> Immediately after this experience, Stolpe asked forgiveness of, for example, Harry Blomberg.<sup>176</sup> A vital condition for Stolpe's eager acceptance of Frank Buchman's visions of a national revolution and a supernational renaissance was his own previous inspiration by Manfred Björkquist to a political vision of England and the Nordic countries as a stronghold showing the world reconciliation, close to Buchman's vision for the Nordic North. From this angle we might even say that Stolpe had seen the vision before his encounter with Group revivalism, but through his continued Oxford experience he realized what he called the possibilities to make a real effort, to some extent experienced already during his short, Group revivalistic period. Subsequently, he developed an intellectual understanding of the Oxford Group thinking on man and society, and at the house-party at Oxford in July 1936, he grasped the connection between national problems and individual sin.<sup>177</sup>

After the Oxford house-party, Stolpe went to the Norwegian house-party at

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<sup>173</sup> Stolpe to Björkquist 1935, June 18 (SIB).

<sup>174</sup> Arbin to Björkquist 1935, June 25 (SIB).

<sup>175</sup> See Stolpe 1936:20 ff., essentially reprinted in Stolpe 1975:53 ff., and further Fraenki 1979:25 ff., from the viewpoint of a small group of eight Swedes (including Fraenki and Tengblad) attending the party.

<sup>176</sup> S. Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1936, June 4 (UUB). On the former relations between Stolpe and Blomberg, see Stolpe 1936:51, 53 ff., Blomberg 1937:18 ff.

<sup>177</sup> See Stolpe 1934b:20 f. ('Sven Stolpe: England och Norden ett bålverk. Manfred Björkquist skildrar kyrkostriden i Tyskland och säger: Norden måste visa världen en modell av besinning, förnuft och försönlighet'). Stolpe to M. Björkquist 1935, June 18, Dec. 12 (SIB). F. Ramm to R. Fangen, 1936, July 16: 'Vår ven Sven Stolpe var derfor til å begynne med litt desorienteret men en dag så han sammenhængen mellem de nationale problemer og den individuelle synd og det var for ham innledningen til en ny og fruktbar utvikling.' (488 a, UBO). See also Stolpe's report in StTD 1936, July 10 'England vakna! Oxfordgrupperørelsen håller jättemöte i Albert Hall' with the quotation in English: 'God-guided nations by God-controlled leaders.'

Larvik, August 18–23. In the report he published, he emphasized that an Oxford meeting was not a peaceful, sentimental edifying meeting, but a dramatic fight, filled with agony, for the participants as well as for the leading team. Only when all belief in one's own power, in the Oxford technique, and in safe experiences had disappeared, and the party had been totally surrendered in God's hand, could the souls be reached.<sup>178</sup> Stolpe often acted as a corrector of revivalistic opinions, for example on house-parties: they were not social parties, where you were having a good time with your group fellows. At house-parties we work! We go there if we know that we have something to contribute as members of the team, or if we need clearing up of our own lives, but not generally to be together or catch impulses.<sup>179</sup> The Swedish participants at Larvik included about twelve clergymen, of whom all but one renewed their Christian decisions, and received new courage and new views. Svea Forssman from the Layman's School in Sigtuna had what Stolpe described as a mighty and moving coming to terms with herself, and the writer Harry Blomberg at last made his decision and spoke, moving everyone by his deep honesty. Blomberg's confessional book, *Vi måste börja om*, was to become the most wide-spread Swedish Oxford-book.<sup>180</sup>

Sven Stolpe soon started to act as mediator between the international team and the Swedish Group leaders, and in 1937–1938 he became one of the new leaders of Swedish Group work. His confessional book, *Kopparsme den Alexander*, was received with some reservations in Swedish Group revivalistic circles. Anders Frostenson, for example, hesitated at a public documentation of this kind, written only a couple of months after the writer's own conversion, and emphasized the difference between the so-called truth of the situation and Christian faith. Stolpe found Frostenson's position to be unsympathetic.<sup>181</sup> In May 1937, Stolpe answered the question which books were the 'right' Oxford books. An Oxford book was a book that had its origin in an 'authentic' Oxford experience.

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<sup>178</sup> S. Stolpe: 'Oxford i arbete. Intryck från ett norskt femdagarsmöte,' StTD 1936, Sept. 2.

<sup>179</sup> S. Stolpe, 'Apeller' (LTV 1937 Nr. 25, June 19).

<sup>180</sup> R. Fangen to M. Björkquist 1936, Aug. 24 (SIB), E. Wikborg to H. Blomberg 1936, Aug. 24 (UUB). See also Stolpe 1936:57 f., Blomberg 1937:200 ff. Swahn 1938:94. Blomberg admitted influence by Group revivalism before the Larvik party, though he emphasized a stronger influence by Tolstoy (Blomberg to E. Billing 1935, Nov. 5, LUB). The process of his conversion could be traced many years back, even in his books (Blomberg to B. Malmberg 1937, Oct. 13, L 74:1, KB). The immediate consequences were that he lost all uneasiness, got new courage to look people in the eye, and regained his wife, and that his home was changed into a small electrical workshop (Blomberg to J. Hemmer 1936, Nov. 15; ÅAB).

<sup>181</sup> A. Frostenson: 'Stolpes Oxfordbok', StTD 1936, Nov. 15. Stolpe to Runestam 1936, Dec. 4: 'Den hårda kritiken av min bok i Sverige har jag tagit alldeles lugnt, även om Frostensons oförstående och Hildebrands nedlåtande ton förvånat mig' (Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB). In Norway, the book was very well received in Oxford Group circles, except by C. J. Hambro (Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1936, Nov. 24, UUB).

Still, he admitted that Sverre Norborg's first book on the Oxford Group, despite the fact that it was written before Norborg joined the Group Movement, had driven people to authentic Oxford breakthroughs, and directly inspired life changes.<sup>182</sup> Though recognizing their mistakes, Stolpe had decided to cooperate with the 'arbinists' in Stockholm, and criticized the Finnish Kaisu Snellman for over-emphasizing the difference between Group people in the provinces and the so-called sect of the arbinists in Stockholm.<sup>183</sup> Together with Harry Blomberg, Stolpe took an active part in the National Group days, arranged at Sigtuna April 16–18, 1937, by the 'arbinists,' with participants from the neighbouring countries (Mowinckel, Bugge and wives from Norway, Kaisu Snellman from Finland, and Howard Blake, who was at the time in Denmark). Opening speaker was Mrs. Fanny Carlgren from Stockholm. Elov Tengblad led a session on the Swedish situation, as analyzed from different points of view.<sup>184</sup> In May 1937, the Rev. Arbin took part in the international Oxford Group campaign in Utrecht.<sup>185</sup>

Ronald Fangen, too, was in contact with Manfred Björkquist in Sigtuna, and expressed his joy at Björkquist's experience of a union between the Oxford spirit and the Young Church tradition, emphasizing the need for Christian unity. He recognised that 'we' in the Group movement bore a great part of the guilt. Union and cooperation must be built on a real experience of Christ, even if the opinions differed in matters of method and strategy.<sup>186</sup> As early as in July 1936, Fangen wrote from Sigtuna to Eivind Berggrav on his efforts to win Björkquist for Oxford. If Björkquist came out of his isolation, and co-operated with a team, great possibilities would open at Sigtuna.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> S. Stolpe: 'Vilka är de "rätta" Oxfordböckerna?', SvM 1937, May 19 (also in LTV 1937 Nrs. 23–24). Other non-authentic descriptions were found in Hildebrand 1935, and especially in Nichols 1936, which were not allowed to be sold at English Oxford meetings. Munk 1936 was recommended, though of course being non-authentic. While Fangen 1935 was an Oxford book, his philosophical thoughts and critical thoughts about the era were not common in the Group movement. Stolpe's article was criticized in the Methodist weekly, *Svenska Sändebudet* 1937:333 as being too puritan, and the Methodist publisher Nya Bokförlags AB advertised Russell's second book as well as books by Weatherhead and Raynor as the most distinguished Oxford Group books, as late as in 1938, Nr. 11. The Methodists often reacted against the censorship of Stolpe and others, see, for example, Hurtig 1939:106, on the ban on the books by Weatherhead and Stanley Jones at the Karlberg house-party in Finland.

<sup>183</sup> S. Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1937, Feb. 11 (UUB). On a difficult atmosphere in Stockholm, see also E. Tengblad to Blomberg 1937, Jan. 17 (UUB).

<sup>184</sup> 'Sigtuna: Gruppdagar i Sigtuna', LTV 1937 Nr. 18, May 1; copy of H. Blake to unknown 1937, Apr. 26 (with the Estate of Garth Lean, Oxford).

<sup>185</sup> E. Arbin to E. Gulin 1937, May 17 (RAH).

<sup>186</sup> R. Fangen to Björkquist 1937, Nov. 20 (SIB).

<sup>187</sup> Fangen to Berggrav 1936, July 6 (RAO Pa. 320:10): 'Man blir en smule for færdet over at man kan forene ekumenisk iver med så halsstarrige nationale fordommer og så liten praktisk vilje til at se og elske det universelle i Kristi evan gelium.'



After the Norwegian summer-meetings in 1937, Stolpe reported that hundreds of Swedes had experienced their religious breakthroughs at these meetings. The big youth meeting at Røros in early August counted over fifty young Swedish participants, while, at the same time, seventy-five Swedes attended the house-party for teachers at Elverum, and about the same number took part in the 'double-house-party' at Modum the last ten days of August. At the Røros meeting, a group of Swedish workers all joined the Group, as soon as they had understood that *all* the problems in industry and economic life could be solved if all parts sought the guidance of God.<sup>188</sup> To Björkquist, Stolpe reported in traditional terms about the great revival in Dalecarlia. A whole group of leading Union men in Domnarvet had been won, which showed that the Group was filled with God's own Spirit.<sup>189</sup>

In 1936–1939, Stolpe propagated the Oxford Group views on social responsibilities in articles and discourses, in Sweden and in Norway. Sometimes, this led him into extended and critical public discussions, far from an exclusively personalistic strategy.<sup>190</sup> His many lectures on other matters gave him useful contacts with Group men in the provinces, and in a letter from December 1938, he described his work as lecturing in the evenings and life-changing in the days. Sometimes he travelled alone, sometimes with a whole team, arranging meetings after his lectures.<sup>191</sup>

At the ecumenical Life and Work conference at Oxford, July 1937, Arvid Runestam in his lecture 'From Stockholm to Oxford,' voiced the need for a personal, supranational evangelism, and testified about his encounter with this in the Oxford Group. Emil Brunner emphasized that the most personal kind of faith involved the most universal responsibility. At the same time, the Oxford Group arranged a house-party at Oxford, but an organized meeting of the two conferences was not successful. Buchman talked of his planned visit to Sweden, and that he did not want to be criticized but well received by the most prominent Swedish Christians, while he himself criticized both the ecumenical movement and some leading Christian persons in Sweden.<sup>192</sup> In his discourse at the Swedish Ecumenical Association, October 2, 1937, Emil Brunner spoke on 'Das ökumenische Problem und die Gruppenbewegung', stating that the Group

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<sup>188</sup> S. Stolpe, 'Den kristne och det nationella ansvaret' (SvM 1937, Sept. 15).

<sup>189</sup> Stolpe to Björkquist 1937, Sept. 24 (SIB).

<sup>190</sup> For example, an article by Sven Stolpe in the first issue, 1937, of *Under Dusken*, the student journal in Trondhjem, started a long debate with altogether nine contributions from an engineer, one architecture and two technology students, as well as two replies from Stolpe. Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1936, Nov. 24, (UUB).

<sup>191</sup> Stolpe to 'Kära vänner!' 1938, Dec. 20, to H. Blomberg 1939, Jan. 20, Sept. 6 (UUB). In Norway at the turn of the month, Stolpe lectured on Sigtuna, Brunnsvik, etc., travelling with H. Blake, E. Goulding, Gudrun Egebjerg, Krista Petersen, and some Norwegians, with parties in Stavanger and Bergen together with the teams. For twelve days from Sept. 24, Stolpe lectured in Värmland, co-operating with a travelling team.

<sup>192</sup> Jarlert 1989:139 ff., 145, Werner 1971:150 f. See also Ch. II.2.3.2 (Brunner).

movement was a renewal of primitive Christian life in the churches of today. Here people had discovered that the personalistically working unity of the Holy Ghost could stand theological and ecclesiastical differences, and at the same time lead to a dissolution of the disparities. Brunner also distinguished between the Group movement and the Oxford Group, the latter being the till then sole exponent of the Group movement.<sup>193</sup> Sven Stolpe reviewed Brunner's ecumenical speech with exuberant joy, at least publicly not noting Brunner's independent attitude towards the Oxford Group as merely a contemporary form or exponent of Group revivalism.<sup>194</sup> With his different views, which, as it seems, often changed over a few months, and with his unusual linguistic and stylistic abilities, and in his restless activities, Sven Stolpe's function and position in the Oxford Group fellowship was not without complications.

### *V.2.11. The Formation of the 'Bergslag's Front'*

In the Christian Social Democratic weekly *Broderskap*, E. Bäcklund, in November 1936, asked if the Oxford Group was a road for the Christian Social Democrats. He quoted a personal letter from Elov Tengblad, on the Oxford Group as representing the original, revolutionary Christian religion, which knew only two classes: those under the guidance of God, and those still not. Bäcklund's conclusions were positive and without reservations.<sup>195</sup>

Through his personal friendship with Harry Blomberg, Thure Oskarsson, a postman from Stora Tuna (Dalecarlia), since many years engaged in the Labour Movement and the Social Democratic Party, was led to his changing experience at Stavanger in January 1937, which had been well prepared by Blomberg and especially Erling Wikborg.<sup>196</sup> The case of Oskarsson shows the special difficulties of the Oxford Group practice for a man used to discussions and democratic decisions.<sup>197</sup> Two other workers, Ernst Roos and Adrian Petersson, experienced a change at the youth camp in Røros in the summer 1937. Subsequently, Howard Blake, Francis Goulding, and others, worked at Borlänge to

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<sup>193</sup> Brunner 1938b:19, 26 f. See further Jarlert 1989:142 f.

<sup>194</sup> S. Stolpe, 'Gruppare och ekumener. En stor teolog har ordet,' StTD 1938, June 19.

<sup>195</sup> 'Är Oxfordrörelsen vägen för oss?' (*Broderskap* 1936, Nov. 28).

<sup>196</sup> See Oskarsson 1938:44 ff., 85 f., 100 ff. E. Wikborg to H. Blomberg 1937, Jan. 8, Feb. 2; Christopher F. H. Borchgrevink to Blomberg 1937 Jan. 21, with advice for Blomberg as God's instrument to the further help of Oskarsson, H. Blake to Blomberg 1937, Jan. 25 (UUB). On Oskarsson as a writer, see Ch. II.3.10.2.

<sup>197</sup> E. Wikborg to H. Blomberg 1938, Dec. 21 (UUB): 'For Thures eget vedkommende vil jeg dog anbefale mere fordypelse og mere personlig livsforvandling av andre – på *delingsbasis* og *gjennem felles bøn* mere enn gjennom storslagne, politiske diskusjoner. Partipampen må dagligen druknes i ham. Ja dette skulde jeg jo skrevet til Thure. Du får lese ham teksten på egne og mine vegner.'

create teamwork and a new quality of life.<sup>198</sup>

During the winter 1938, local campaigns were arranged in the industrial belt of northern central Sweden. New Year saw a Scandinavian attack at Borlänge with Kathrina and Sten Bugge, Erling Wikborg, Christian Conradi, Georg Petersen, Ragnhild Borchgrevink, and Gudrun Henie taking part. In Norway it was reported as something new, with many workers from both Sweden and Denmark taking part.<sup>199</sup> A few months later, Sven Stolpe reported about the 'Miracle of Bergslagen,' which had resulted in a contingent of a hundred changed persons, including many leading trade union men, as well as intellectuals like the senior school master Paul Wetterfors in Falun, and Major Winblad in Bergslaget.<sup>200</sup> The number of ordinary workers included in the work is hard to estimate, as the work was primarily directed towards the so-called key persons, and towards the more easily mobile foremen and engineers.<sup>201</sup> The team of Dalecarlia had the vision that Sweden was to be reached through the industry, with the strategical work along a line across the country, from Gävle to Gothenburg ('G.-G.linjen').<sup>202</sup> At Eastertide 1938, the until then probably greatest attack was launched at Sandviken. Taking part were all the changed workers from Domnarvet, several Norwegians and British groupers, many from Stockholm, Harry Blomberg, Elov Tengblad, and Sven Stolpe. On the programme was 'fellowship,' 'the four absolute standards,' and 'a new democracy.'<sup>203</sup> Simultaneously, training of a joint Swedish team of sixty persons from different parts of the country started.<sup>204</sup> In May, Harry Blomberg and Elov Tengblad spoke at the General Assembly of the Church of Sweden as well. Blomberg's hope was for a revival of our time among the working class.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> 'Arbetet i Sverige före Visby' (EPC).

<sup>199</sup> Sten Bugge to R. Fangen [1938] (488a, UBO).

<sup>200</sup> S. Stolpe to M. Björkquist 1938, March 16 (SIB).

<sup>201</sup> S. Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1938, June 28 (UUB; 'Eftersom arbetarna är svårörliga av ekonomiska skäl, kommer alltså, såvitt jag förstår, arbetet att väsentligen inriktas mot arbetsledare och ingenjörer'). See also Stolpe to Saga Hemmer 1938, Dec. 12 (ÅAB; 'Jag skall själv komma upp några veckor till Dalarna och sätta fart på arbetet bland arbetarna, så att där blir ett team, som kan arbeta utan Harry. Nu tynar hans nervositet – som för ett arbetaröra är obegriplig – bara ned de andra').

<sup>202</sup> 'Arbetet i Sverige före Visby' (EPC).

<sup>203</sup> S. Stolpe to M. Björkquist 1938, Apr. 9 (SIB). Specifically mentioned in the press as taking an active part were the agricultural engineer Filip Olsson and his wife (Falun), the music teacher Åke Nygren (Stockholm), Basil Entwistle from England, the workers Roos (Domnarvet) and Nyström, Johannes Dürkop (Denmark), and Miss Karin Laurell (Stockholm); *Norrlands-Posten* 1938, Apr. 19; 'Oxfordrörelsen – en praktisk kristendom,' *Sandvikens Tidning* 1938, Apr. 14.

<sup>204</sup> Up to this point, the contacts were handled by Johannes Dürkop, Howard Blake, and Francis Goulding. 'Arbetet i Sverige före Visby' (EPC).

<sup>205</sup> Lenhammar 1977:131 f. In 1939, Tengblad spoke at the General Free Church meeting as well, see Tengblad 1939b.

In 1938, the pastoral letters of the newly elected bishops Brilioth of Växjö, Runestam of Karlstad, and Jonzon of Luleå were published. An Oxford Group inspiration was notable already in 1937, in the pastoral letter of Bishop Ysander of Visby, which stated that the most important revolution in the world, the revolution of the Spirit of God, still had not taken place in any nation or church, and emphasized Group fellowship based on honesty as a model for married life, and team-work in the congregations.<sup>206</sup> In Bishop Brilioth's letter, signed May 28, 1938, the Oxford Group Movement was said to have taught the truth that one should never despair of any man because of his blasphemies or sins. When the Group movement spoke of mutual sharing, it had grasped something essential, as it had opened the minds to see the necessity of private soul-cure, though it had not as clearly understood the special priestly task.<sup>207</sup> To Bishop Runestam, brother-in-law of Bishop Brilioth, signing his letter June 22, 1938, the subjective emphasis of Group revivalism meant not a contradiction of Luther, but taking advantage of a forgotten heritage in Luther's theology. Group revivalism provided him with experimental arguments against the objective interpretation of Luther in Lundensian theology. He stated that the Christian faith did not so much mean a change of the person or his psyche, but a change of his situation and views. Personal truth was emphasized as the gateway to religious truth.<sup>208</sup> Bishop Jonzon's pastoral letter – perhaps the most extensive one ever published in Sweden – was signed June 8, 1938. It has the most personal contents of any of the letters, and relates how Jonzon was shaken by the personal testimony of Runestam in a priestly circle, and how they had a short, private talk together.<sup>209</sup>

At least one reaction from the extreme modernist wing of the Church of Sweden on Bishop Runestam's pastoral letter was positive. The strong subjectivism of the Oxford Group could lead away 'from the dogma to the gospel,'

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<sup>206</sup> Ysander 1937:51, 179, 181, further pp. 56, 58, 71,

<sup>207</sup> Brilioth 1938:158, 166. According to S. Linton (copy to F. Buchman 1940, Feb. 24, DWC), Brilioth 'wrote friendly of us in his pastoral letter to his clergy, before Visby, but has advanced little since then, had little contact. I was able to give him news and information, and he asked me warmly to come and see him in Växjö.'

<sup>208</sup> Runestam 1938:42 f., 73 f., 132, further pp. 89, 116, 149, 167. See also Ch. II.2.3.3. It is interesting to note that while Harry Blomberg grew more and more critical of the Lundensian theology because of its dualistic interpretation of Luther (to J. Hemmer 1943, Apr. 4, ÅAB), Sven Stolpe 1939:91 applauded the dividing-line drawn by the Lundensians between the antique and the Christian motives, which revealed the ascetic views of sexual life as Greek, and not Christian.

<sup>209</sup> Jonzon 1938:31 f. Jonzon had given one of the very first Swedish presentations of the Oxford Group, at Gävle, December 14, 1924 (Bror Jonzon 1988:71). After the Second World War he was to become *the* M.R.A.-bishop in Sweden. See Jonzon 1951, 1958, Thornhill 1986:177 ff., Bror Jonzon 1988:147 ff.

and should thus be greeted with joy, though there was a risk that it would end in a so-called revival movement of a more primitive kind. This was a positive change from the ultra-liberal late Professor Linderholm's criticism of the Oxford Movement as one of the most primitive phenomena he knew in Church history.<sup>210</sup> Still, the editor of the journal of the liberal reform movement, Gustaf Brandt, was reserved towards the new mentality, and critical of the indifference in the Group as regarded the veracity question, and Linderholm's biographer, Karl Sandegård, criticized both Runestam's views on modern theology, and Ronald Fangen's understanding of the faith in the Godhead of Christ as the decisive difference between faith and disbelief.<sup>211</sup>

In Sweden, the revival groups phase had been of unusual length. Swedish Group revivalism had grown in student circles, and it had given new life, inspiration and form to the weakened activism of the youth work of the Church, once inspired by the Young Church Movement. Mostly due to the length of the revival groups phase in Sweden, the influence on these local groups by the Oxford Group phase in the Scandinavian neighbour-countries, directly or indirectly, often created a dependence on and a fellowship with the international Oxford Group already towards the end of the revival groups phase. But in the public view, the Oxford Group was still mostly regarded, by both Church and society, as a variety of, for example, the Group revivalism of Stanley Jones.<sup>212</sup>

### V.3. The Oxford Group Phase

#### *V.3.1. The Planning and Broadening of the Swedish House-Party at Visby*

In May 1938, the Swedish version of the international Oxford Group publica-

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<sup>210</sup> Herman Neander: 'Oxford och dogmat' (GHT 1938, Sept. 23). 'From the Dogma to the Gospel' was the title of a Harnack-inspired, grammatical essay by Emanuel Linderholm, published 1919 (see further Jarlert 1987:157 ff). Linderholm 1936:24.

<sup>211</sup> Brandt 1937:22, 1938:180 ff., Sandegård 1939:59 f. Further liberal criticism was published by Dymling 1939:17, 44 f. (on Brunner 1937), 118 f. (on propagandistic use of sharing and that in the Oxford Group absolute love was superseded by the other absolutes), 198 f. (on Stolpe 1936 and Brunner 1937). See also Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1938, March 18 (UUB) on Dymling's damaging discourses on the Group movement, and his personal attacks on Blomberg.

<sup>212</sup> See Swahn 1938:94 f., who lumps Blomberg 1937 and Høgsbro 1937 together with the Swedish edition of Jones 1936. *Rising Tide* or *Steigende Flut* was widely criticized as worldly propaganda, see, for example, E. Brunner to A. Runestam 1937, Dec. 6 (Runestam Coll.II: 'Das von der Oxfordgruppe herausgegebene Heft hat bei uns wieder das alte Problem Gruppe und Kirche lebendig gemacht. Das Heft ist auf großen Widerstand gestoßen bei den "Kirchlichen" in der Gruppe.').

tion, *Rising Tide*, was published by Bonniers as *Vänd strömmen*, received by the public as a sign of a new Group offensive. Sweden was the first country where no national team took responsibility for the magazine. The foreign material – with the exception of the Horsey Song – had been translated by Sven Stolpe, while the foreign full-time workers were responsible for the edition. On April 2, a big team from Stockholm, together with several from Dalecarlia and other parts of the country, had been informed of the coming publication and its introduction of Moral Re-Armament and reconciliation of nations.<sup>213</sup> At the same time, three full-time workers, Morris Martin, Basil Entwistle, and Howard Blake, were introduced to the press, together with the Danish journalist Gudrun Egebjerg.<sup>214</sup> *Vänd strömmen* was printed in 42,000 copies, and met with open interest, while a Swedish initiative still was lacking.<sup>215</sup> In the following years, ‘Vänd strömmen’ was to be used as a denotation of the Oxford Group headquarters as well.

Three weeks later, Frank Buchman celebrated his 60th birthday. In some countries, this meant renewed publicity for the Oxford Group, through lots of articles and notices in the press. In Sweden, some important articles were published, including one by Ronald Fangen, in which he nominated Frank Buchman for the Nobel Peace Prize, but the isolated occasion as such was of less importance than, for example, in Finland.<sup>216</sup> This was largely due to the arrival of Frank Buchman in person, only a week later.<sup>217</sup> He spent a week at Saltsjöbaden, and was invited to the Court during the celebrations of the 80th birthday of King Gustav. Buchman was also invited home to the famous explorer Sven Hedin, and met the president of the Stockholm consistory, Pastor Primarius Nils Widner, as well as some foremen and intellectuals. According to one source, the thought of the Visby house-party came to Buchman through a

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<sup>213</sup> See DN 1938, May 13; SvM, May 13; StTD, May 13 (‘Oxford går till offensiv – stridsskrift på svenska’); Norrlands-Posten, May 13 (S. Stolpe: ‘Vänd strömmen!’). S. Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1938, March 18 (UUB). Stolpe tried to persuade Blomberg or Herbert Grevenius to help the foreigners, especially with the literary style of the publication. Six weeks later, Stolpe complained about the daily telephone calls from Stockholm, and about his own constant trips there to help Basil Entwistle and John Caulfield (Stolpe to Blomberg 1938, Apr. 28). ‘Arbetet i Sverige före Visby’ (EPC). According to the latter, Blomberg, Stolpe, Blake, Goulding, and Johannes Dührkop had worked with the edition since the autumn 1937, from March 1938 together with Morris Martin, in April and May also with Caulfield and Entwistle.

<sup>214</sup> StTD 1938, May 13.

<sup>215</sup> ‘Arbetet i Sverige före Visby’ (EPC).

<sup>216</sup> StTD 1938, June 3 (R. Fangen: ‘Fredspris åt Buchman’), AB 1938, June 4 (S. Stolpe: ‘En maktfaktor: Frank Buchman’). On Finland, see Ekstrand 1993:120 ff.

<sup>217</sup> See DN 1938, June 12 (‘Stoppa kriget först i hemmet!’). Two of Buchman’s speeches were published in Swedish: Buchman 1938 (his 60th anniversary speech), 1938b (Broadcast Nov. 27).

conversation with Börje Brilioth, the editor-in-chief of *Stockholms-Tidningen*.<sup>218</sup> The previous efforts by Harry Blomberg to convince the team to locate the house-party in the demilitarized, politically delicate, Finnish archipelago of Åland, were in vain.<sup>219</sup>

The planning of the Visby party included intense life-changing work in Sweden. From Hotel Patricia in Stockholm, team letters were distributed all over the country, showing how to use *Vänd Strömmen*.<sup>220</sup> As a preparation for Visby, Sven Stolpe wanted intense work by a Nordic team, concentrated on the Bergslag's front. A Midsummer party took place at Malung, with the aim of Moral Re-Armament, true democracy, and reconciliation between nations, followed by a smaller meeting at Degerfors. Here the vision for Visby was widened to a Nordic party with the Nordic countries, not only Sweden, as a reconciler of nations. Krista Petersen from Denmark reported from Borlänge about her experience of the Swedes as hard, but fine. She found the country strange, and the work in Sweden sensitive, yet full of miracles.<sup>221</sup> The public image was more propagandistic, for example, when Valdemar Hvidt almost at the same time reported on the Oxford Group in Sweden as forming a network of living and vital cells.<sup>222</sup> During the summer, the Stockholm circles around Erik Arbin were involved in the preparatory work as well.<sup>223</sup> At the end of July, Francis Goulding and John Guise travelled in the Baltic countries 'to get important people to this Nordic gathering.' The Finnish foreign minister, Rudolf Holsti, had given them letters of introduction to the concerned persons. They saw, for example,

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<sup>218</sup> Stolpe to Runestam 1938, July 1 (Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB). Stolpe produced a long list of persons who ought to meet Buchman, starting with the Crown Prince Gustav Adolf, continuing with well-known politicians (A. Engberg, T. Nothin, R. Sandler, Andersson of Rasjön, etc.), press men, university professors (N. Ahnlund, K. Lundmark, J. Landquist, E. Hjärne, S. Tunberg, etc.), five bishops (Aulén, Andræ, Runestam, Ysander, and Jonzon), school men (Alf Ahlberg, Tengblad, etc.), authors (K. R. Gierow, V. Moberg, Hj. Gullberg, K. G. Hildebrand, G. Gustaf-Janson, B. Malmberg, etc.), artists, musicians (no names mentioned), the army, etc. (Admiral Lindström, the generals von der Lancken and Sylwan), state administration (county governors Wennerström, Hasselrot, and Hammarskjöld), trade unions (no names mentioned), industrial men, and doctors (Appendix to Stolpe to Blomberg 1938, June 3, UUB). On Dr. Brilioth: 'Arbetet i Sverige före Visby'; 'Confidentiellt !' (EPC). On the future relations between Sven Hedin and the Oxford Group, see Ch. IV.4.2, and further Hedin 1949:71, 168 ff.

<sup>219</sup> H. Blomberg to Saga Hemmer 1939, March 10 (ÅAB).

<sup>220</sup> 'Arbetet i Sverige före Visby' (EPC).

<sup>221</sup> S. Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1938, June 28 (UUB). Oxford-gruppen Malung 12–25 juni 1938. 'Arbetet i Sverige före Visby' (EPC). Krista Petersen to Halfdan Høgsbro 1938, July 18 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK): 'Folk her er haarde som Staal, men fine Folk, naar man først faar dem. Sverige er et underligt Land paa samme Tid meget vanskelig at arbejde i – og dog fuld af Mirakler. Det er sundt at forvandle Mennesker, der begynder med at afvise en.'

<sup>222</sup> Social Demokraten (Copenhagen) 1938, July 2.

<sup>223</sup> Arbin to A. and M. Lehtonen 1938, Aug. 12 (RAH).

the Latvian foreign minister, and 'several leading statesmen' expressed 'their eagerness either to get to Visby in person or to be represented there.' Simultaneously, they tried to persuade Professor Eelis Gulin from Helsinki to come to Visby, suggesting that he would 'play for Finland the part which Paul Brodersen is playing for Denmark.'<sup>224</sup>

Shortly before the house-party, Bishop Runestam wrote identical letters to his colleagues in Luleå and Visby, bishops Jonzon and Ysander, respectively, in which he related his own original inspiration by Oxford, as well as his subsequent doubts about some of its manifestations. The new situation, together with his new office, had brought a new need and a new decision. Runestam was prepared to go with Oxford – as an instrument of God in the present to renew the spiritual life in the Church – i.e. to identify himself with Oxford, because of the essential parts of its message, and to capitulate with all his dignity, even as a bishop. It was impossible to go on remaining a spectator, and approve of the religious flood of Oxford being channelled into the Church. The situation had changed in a year, and Buchman and his friends seemed eager to place events in the hands of the Swedes, as they now answered questions by directing them to the guidance of the Swedes. He asked the two bishops to take responsibility by going to Visby.<sup>225</sup> Bishop Jonzon answered that, despite his reservations against *Vänd strömmen* and the latest publicity, he felt that it would be cowardice and treachery to remain at a distance, and wanted to join in the work. However, for private reasons, he was unable to come to Visby.<sup>226</sup>

To Archbishop Eidem, Runestam explained his position regarding the Oxford Group, and confessed his former cowardice and fear, which had a long time kept him at a distance from the movement. His continuing reservations were not unimportant, but he was convinced that God in the present used this tool for reaching people, otherwise out of the reach of the Church. The archbishop answered that he thought Runestam was right in going to Visby, as it was totally in accordance with the road onto which God had led him in order to undertake this enterprise. The Norwegian primate, Bishop Berggrav, answered Runestam's letter and emphasized his loyalty to Christ, which made it impossible for him to identify himself with any human method. As a bishop he had to

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<sup>224</sup> Krista Petersen to Halfdan Høgsbro 1938, July 18 (Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK), J. Guise to E. Gulin 1938, July 5 (RAH). On Guise in Finland, see Ekstrand 1993:118 f. See also letters to Gulin from H. Blake (1938, July 21), John [Morrison] (1938, Aug. 14; RAH).

<sup>225</sup> A. Runestam to T. Ysander 1938, July 21 (Biskopsämbetets arkiv, Vol.2:91, Landsarkivet i Visby).

<sup>226</sup> B. Jonzon to A. Runestam 1938, July 25 (Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB). More than twenty years later, Jonzon, in a confessional letter to Runestam, regarded it as blindness that he had not come to Visby in 1938 ('Jag tror uppriktigt att om Du och Torsten Y, och jag i Franks anda tagit upp kampen tillsammans, för varandra, för våra kolleger, för kyrkan, för Guds plan med vårt folk, skulle vi ha blivit i stånd att ta den andliga ledningen i vår kyrka och göra henne till nationens samvete och inspirationskälla,' Jonzon to Runestam 1959, Sept. 25, Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB).



stand free. Through Berggrav's letter, Runestam was liberated from the question of identifying himself with Oxford, and he tried to reach a position in which he was totally with the Group people, yet totally independent. Still, he found that he had previously fought the personal question of the radical message of Oxford, by referring to his position as a priest.<sup>227</sup>

Bishop Runestam also asked Manfred Björkquist to join the Visby party, and to speak positively about Christian faith, without criticizing Oxford. The question was not whether Christian preaching ought to be subjective or objective, only if Björkquist could speak about Jesus Christ from the speaker's platforms put up by Oxford.<sup>228</sup> Sven Stolpe showed a similar attitude towards the philosopher Alf Ahlberg, emphasizing that Ahlberg need not to become an Oxford man, while the Group would benefit greatly from listening to Ahlberg.<sup>229</sup> The attitude towards traditional revivalism was less inviting, and, Commander Karl Larsson of the Salvation Army, who, during his Norwegian service, had attended the Høsbjør party in 1934, was not invited at all, despite his own efforts.<sup>230</sup>

### *V.3.2. The Scandinavian-Baltic House-Party* <sup>231</sup>

According to Stolpe, the aim of the house-party in Visby, August 12–22, was 1) training a Nordic team for the Interlaken party August 26–September 12, which was to continue in Geneva, 2) presenting the experiences from the Bergslags' front (Gävle, Sandviken, Domnarvet, Bofors, Karlstad) to the Nordic team and then in Interlaken, 3) letting the Christian demand of life-changing encounter the Nordic democratic ideology, and raise the questions of the task of the Nordic North, the possibility of a Scandinavianism without changed men, and of showing Nordic nations without national selfishness in their poli-

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<sup>227</sup> Runestam to Eidem 1938, July 28 (EEA C I:35, ULA), Eidem to Runestam 1938, Aug. 6 (Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB). Berggrav to Runestam 1938, Feb. 22 (Runestam Coll.I; see further Ch. III.3.5.), Runestam to Berggrav 1938, Aug. 21 (Pa. 320:10, RAO). Runestam also invited the Finnish archbishop, Erkki Kaila, who answered with severe doubts regarding Buchman's 'moralistic' proclamation on his 60th birthday (Kaila to Runestam 1938, July 31, Runestam Coll. I).

<sup>228</sup> Runestam to Björkquist 1938, July 21 (SIB). Runestam seems to have written several letters on this matter, for example, to Elis Malmeström 1938, July 21 (H 1965:57, GUB).

<sup>229</sup> S. Stolpe to A. Ahlberg 1938, July 26 (H 1991:3, GUB). For Ahlberg's views on the Oxford Group, see Ahlberg 1939:105 f; 1974:96 f; a letter from Ahlberg to Stolpe 1938, July 15 in Krantz 1989:260 n.325. On Dec. 29, 1938, Ahlberg made a broadcast speech on the Oxford Movement, with an objective, but positive approach.

<sup>230</sup> Larsson 1951:175. After the Visby meeting, Larsson talked with Frank Buchman, who hoped that the Swedes would become more sensible.

<sup>231</sup> This English name from a ms. 'The Scandinavian-Baltic Congress at Visby, on Gottland [sic] Island. Five points on the Oxford Group's progress' (Tirley).

tics.<sup>232</sup> Since the house-party aimed at taking responsibility for Europe and the world, and was no old-fashioned Oxford-house-party open for anybody, it had no room for piety and sentimentality, the team had to be of even higher quality, and therefore the preceding training days, August 8–12, were limited to a close circle.<sup>233</sup> The printed invitation stated that the concerned countries together could appear as a supernational unity, a family of nations, in which everybody, maintaining their specific nature, without egoism, was able to cooperate with the neighbouring countries. This was the great opportunity that could mean the recreating of Europe. The twenty million inhabitants in the Scandinavian and Baltic countries could be mobilized for peace and the reconciliation of nations. This demanded a whole army of men and women in living contact with God, liberated from fear in their own lives. At Visby the participants should together find their common way under the guidance of God, – The Nordic North under God may become the Reconciler of Nations –<sup>234</sup>

The vision of Sweden's part in such a work was not new. Among the presuppositions were the motto of the Swedish Young Church Movement: The Swedish people – a people of God!, and Archbishop Söderblom's ambitions for the Church of Sweden – as a Lutheran Episcopal Church with an unbroken apostolic succession – to play a historical, leading and mediating part in the ecumenical work. The Visby party was a genuine Nordic-Baltic party, with several participants from not only Norway and Denmark, but from Finland, and even from Estonia and Latvia.

On August 16, Frank Buchman spoke on the theme of Revival – Revolution – Renaissance. These three words were interpreted as three successive stages of understanding, surrender, and activity. By that time, 'revival' had acquired a bad taint of religious indolence in Buchman's vocabulary – he called it 'a nice arm-chair religion.'<sup>235</sup> Both the positive and the negative reactions were strong. However, in the development of the Oxford Group, Buchman's speech did not open a new era. It was rather a public emphasis on thoughts already spread in international Group work (see Ch. II.1.4).

Sven Stolpe expressed the conclusion of the Visby party: Real democracy

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<sup>232</sup> Stolpe to Runestam 1938, July 1 (Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB).

<sup>233</sup> Copy of S. Linton to Herman Schlyter 1938, July 16 (DWC).

<sup>234</sup> Oxfordgruppen i Visby 12–22 augusti 1938. The international, propagandistic value of the Visby meeting was great. At Interlaken, Frank Buchman even spoke of 'the miracle of Sweden,' summarizing: 'First it was "Norway Ablaze for Christ," and then "Denmark Shaken," and then, "Sweden, the Reconciler." And then, "The Nordic North the Pattern for Europe"' (ms.'11.15. Sunday, 28/8/38.', Caux Archives). Testifying at Interlaken were, among others, Gudrun Egebjerg, Christian Harhoff, Harald Høgsbro, Valdemar Hvidt, Paula Nissen, Jørgen Palsborg (Denmark), Elsa Wollenbeck (Norway), Thure Oskarsson, Claes af Ugglas (Sweden; various mss., Caux Archives).

<sup>235</sup> Buchman 1942:18 ff., 1943 (Sw). The title 'Revival – Revolution – Renaissance' has been found in an Oxford Group manuscript dealing with the results of the Norwegian campaign, and dated as early as 1935, Dec. 12 (Tirley).

was impossible without the Christian faith, and political hatred could not be rooted out without the loving spirit of Christ – only under the guidance of God was it possible for a country to appear as reconciler among other nations. Democracy was expressed as a demand on both the individuals and the nations. He was eager to show the dubious fact that the leaders of the Swedish Oxford Group were to a great extent trade union leaders, for example Helge Nyström from Domnarvet. The Visby party was linked to the subsequent international party for 2,000 Oxford Group leaders at Interlaken in Switzerland in September. All personal conflicts should be solved before Interlaken, since no personal confession was allowed there, the purpose being to seek God's guidance for the settlement of the crisis in the world, which gave the party a political character. The minority problem was emphasized, in connection with the motto: 'God has a practicable plan for every human problem.' In the same way that Visby sought the solution to problems in the home, in marriage, at work, and in society, Interlaken dealt with the plan for the most difficult contemporary conflicts. On September 15, the Oxford Group met with representatives of the League of Nations and the political delegations at the Hotel des Bergues in Geneva. Stolpe emphasized that the Oxford Group was a new way of life, and did not ask for sympathy. It was understood only by those who wanted to place the four absolute standards on every aspect of their lives, and realized that only those who themselves change lives themselves are true servants of Christ.<sup>236</sup>

The Swedish press paid enormous attention to the Visby meeting. *Dagens Nyheter* sent Barbro Alving – pen-name Bang – to Visby, and her reports from the house-party were on the front page with big headlines on four successive days, emphasizing the political dimensions of personal attitudes (– The hell in the world is our signing of Versailles peace treaties with ourselves –) and the public testimony by the famous poet Bertil Malmberg. Barbro Alving was impressed and personally shaken. Though she did not enter the fellowship of the Oxford Group, the Visby experience contributed to her subsequent spiritual development in a Christian direction.<sup>237</sup> In *Stockholms-Tidningen*, Herbert

<sup>236</sup> Stolpe 1938c:344; 1938b:57 f., 61, 63, 66; 1975:129 ff. Nyström wrote articles in Danish press, for example in Nord Jyllands Social Demokraten 1938, Apr. 13. On the Oxford Group and the minority problem, see Vock 1989 (Denmark, Germany, Austria, etc.), further Mowinckel & Skard 1937 (Norway), Ekstrand 1993 (Finland).

<sup>237</sup> DN 1938, Aug. 13 'Genvägarna till freden gå via Oxford och Visby,' Aug. 14 'Vittnesbörd i Nikolai ruin. Slagkraftig grupp finns inom japansk politik. Det gäller Sverige nu. – "Helvetet i världen ligger däri att vi alla ha slutit Versaillesfreden med oss själva!'," Aug. 15 'Bang: Tack för Bertil, dagens Visbyord,' Aug. 16 'Åtta vittnen från Oxfords houseparty.' Bertil Malmberg's personal declaration was published in DN and StTD 1938, Aug. 18. See also Barbro Alving's very personal view in a contemporary letter, printed in Alving 1990:218, and F. Buchman to Alving 1938, Aug. 21 (A 96:96, GUB), in which he writes that 'Private restitution is commendable. Public restitution is not to be overlooked if one has publicly harmed a great cause,' with an obvious allusion to Alving's article, Aug. 14, describing Buchman as skilful and smart in directing the

Grevenius observed the testimonies of both employers and workers on the consequences of personal change for the wage negotiations, as well as the importance of the attitudes and relations at home: cowardly men are created by compromising women!<sup>238</sup> The great number of 3,000 participants at the closing meeting in the Church ruin of St. Nicholas, August 21, was also given big headlines.<sup>239</sup> Much of the critique was serious, and given a central place in the papers, for example an editorial on illusions and reality in *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, which criticized the national generalizations drawn from testimonies of certain key persons – the suggestion of a radical change of mentality in the world through a very limited number of individual victories.<sup>240</sup> In *Vår Lösen*, K.-G. Hildebrand asked if general statements in political world matters really could help people to personal change, and questioned the whole talk on Sweden's calling to perform exceedingly great things in the present world situation, which approached the borderline between prophetic truth and common stereotype.<sup>241</sup> The cheerful atmosphere was heavily criticized by Vilhelm Moberg and Stig Ahlgren, while Hasse Zetterström adopted a positive wait-and-see attitude. Stolpe declared that laughter was absent from the closed party at Interlaken.<sup>242</sup> The definite, rejecting reaction from thirteen Scandinavian writers (including Moberg) came with *Oxford och Vi*, 1939.

The Swedish broadcast service paid attention to the Oxford Group, partly in a programme with personal testimony, August 23,<sup>243</sup> partly in a discussion in

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reaction of the masses, and – concluding with the words that if Jesus had belonged to the Oxford Group, he would not have died on a Cross, but simply lived on, as being the more practical way. On the relation Buchman–Alving, see also G. Egebjerg to Alving [1938, Aug. 17]: 'Jeg forstod paa dig, at du følte at du havde saaret ham saa dybt, at du havde daarlig samvittighed' (A 96:98, GUB), and Spoerri 1971:136 f. See also Karin Stolpe to Alving 1938, Aug. 15 (A 96:116, GUB), and, especially, Gudrun Egebjerg to Alving 1938, Aug. 27 ('[...] Ja eller Nej. Jeg ved ogsaa, at det maa blive Ja, for du er allerede faldet i den levende Guds Hænder, og jeg har ingen Illusioner om at det vil blive billigt for dig at tage Konsekvensen af at stille dig selv og hele dit Viljes-, Tanke- og Følelsesliv ind i Lyset af Kristi Maalestok om Renhed, ærlighed, Uselviskhed og Kærlighed'; A 96:98). Egebjerg's aim was to realize God's plan through journalism.

<sup>238</sup> 'Arbetsgivare och arbetare vittna. "Oxford" förvandlar båda förhandlingsbordets parter,' StTD 1938, Aug. 13, 'Oxfordord: fega män skapas av kompromissande kvin nor,' Aug. 16.

<sup>239</sup> StTD 1938, Aug. 22. Bishop Ysander preached in the Cathedral at the morning service, interpreted by Howard Blake, and the closing evening service counted 400 communicants.

<sup>240</sup> 'Illusioner och verklighet,' NDA 1938, Aug. 15.

<sup>241</sup> K.-G.H. in VL 1938:239.

<sup>242</sup> V. Moberg, 'Skrattet i Visby' (DN 1938, Aug. 19), S. Ahlgren, 'Löjlige familjerna' (Arbetet 1938, Oct. 12. Hasse Z, 'Andligt och kroppsligt' (SvD 1938, Aug. 14; see also a positive interview with Hasse Z in VJ 1935 Nr. 18, May 5, which emphasizes the practical dealing with sin in the Oxford Group. Stolpe in StTD 1938, Sept. 10.

<sup>243</sup> Among those testifying were the worker Helge Nyström, the maid Signe Vesterberg

October 1938, between the psycho-analyst Dr. Poul Bjerre and an Oxford Group physician, Dr. Mauritz (Moje) Molin (Karlstad). The discussion was continued in the newspapers, especially in Stockholms-Tidningen, for almost two weeks. In the programme, Dr. Bjerre had stated even that Jesus had never existed, and presented a theory of religion afterwards described by Bishop Runestam as tame and without contact with reality.<sup>244</sup>

### V.3.3. Reactions to Moral Re-Armament

Negative reactions to the outward emphasis on a 'moral' rearmament, sometimes seen as a moralistic action, also came from the Methodists. In his account of a journey to the United States, Theodor Arvidson reported from an Oxford meeting in New York, and expressed the hope that the appeal to the will and the listening for the voice of God would not be diluted into a vague talk about 'moral rearmament'.<sup>245</sup> A discussion among English Methodists about the Group Movement and the Church was reported in *Svenska Sändebudet* in March 1938, followed a few months later by personal testimonies by twelve Swedish and four English Methodists attending the Visby house-party. Earlier in the same year, in a series on John Wesley, Elof Tengblad stated that Frank Buchman was the heir of Wesley, especially in the call to be a life changer, and Th. Arvidson had published a positive review of the Swedish edition of the English Methodist pastor Cecil Rose's *When man listens*.<sup>246</sup> In the Swedish Methodist Year Book, 1939, the aim of the catchword 'moral rearmament' was welcomed, though regarded as insufficient, and not identical to the necessary spiritual rearmament through contrition, renaissance, and life-change. By keeping to a mixture of traditional Methodist and early Group terminology, the Methodists criticized this particular use of 'moral rearmament' as leading to superficial moralism.<sup>247</sup>

Of great importance for the attitude among Methodists and other Free

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(Alingsås), the student Karl Erik Larsson (Gothenburg), the teacher Birgitta Thulin (Falun).

<sup>244</sup> StTD 1938, Oct. 26, 27, 29, 31, Nov. 2, 3, 4. See also Molin 1942, with advice on diet, health, etc., as well as on the four absolute standards and quiet time. Runestam in SvM 1938, Nov. 2. Bjerre and Runestam had discussed religious matters publicly already in the spring 1927, see Bärmark & Nilsson 1983:452, 417 f., 421 on Bjerre's inspiration by Arthur Drews and the mythological school.

<sup>245</sup> Arvidson 1939:265.

<sup>246</sup> 'Grupprörelsen och kyrkan' (*Svenska Sändebudet* 1938:197 ff.), 'Under Guds ledning. Vittnesbörd från Oxfordgruppdagarna i Visby' (1938:530 ff. resp. 559 ff.), 'John Wesley's religiösa erfarenhet, liv och kristendomstolkning' (1938:4), Arvidson 1938:557 f., also Tengblad 1939b. See also Emanuel 1939 (critical articles in three issues of *Svenska Sändebudet*), Törnblom 1939 (critical of Emanuel), Emanuel 1939b.

<sup>247</sup> Metodistkyrkans i Sverige årsbok 1939:50.

Church people were the books by authors like E. Stanley Jones and Leslie D. Weatherhead. The Swedish translation of Weatherhead's *Discipleship*, with its chapters on surrender, sharing, quiet time, guidance, restitution, etc., could easily be read as representative of an original Group revivalism, in contrast to the programme of a moral rearmament. In his preface, Weatherhead recognized his debts to the Oxford Group Movement, at the same time referring to the brilliant renewal in Britain, thanks not only to the Oxford Groups, but to the Cambridge and Methodist Groups as well. The difference between the Oxford Group work and the Group work promoted by Weatherhead's book is obvious from the subjects for discussions printed at the back of the book.<sup>248</sup> The Swedish Pentecostal leader, Lewi Pethrus, was positive in hoping that life-change was a synonym for salvation.<sup>249</sup> In the Church of Sweden, too, emphasis was put on life-changing, soul-cure, etc, not on world change or the political task of the Nordic countries.<sup>250</sup> The Group revivalism of Emil Brunner was still a current topic for the free denominations at the 7th Swedish Free Church meeting in April 1939, at which a couple of discourses expressed the need for the force and activity of Group revivalism.<sup>251</sup>

At the Visby party, Bishop Runestam gathered some forty clergymen from the Nordic countries to a closed meeting. He emphasized that the question was not which position the Church should take on the Group movement, but what God wanted to say to the individual priest.<sup>252</sup> A few days later, the question what the Swedish priests could learn from the Visby party was answered by the vicar Johannes Lindgren from Stockholm. To the clergy of a big city, the Oxford Group showed a road to fellowship and cooperation with groups at present mostly outside the Church, whether high or low in society. Here the Group had revealed a ripeness for a spiritual revival, which might lead to a deep renewal of national life. The clergy of Stockholm had much to learn for the sake of their mutual relations in fellowship, and not in friendship only.<sup>253</sup>

The position of Arvid Runestam in the Oxford Group reveals an important difference between the attitudes towards the Oxford Group in the churches of

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<sup>248</sup> Weatherhead 1938<sup>3</sup>:11 f.

<sup>249</sup> Husmodern 1938, Sept. 4.

<sup>250</sup> This is clear from the continued publication of Oxford Group books of an earlier, revivalistic character, for example, J. F. Laun's *Gebet und Tat* (1938), with a foreword by Anders Frostenson emphasizing the Oxford Group as a worldwide revival, and not just a successful spiritual method.

<sup>251</sup> Wennfors 1939:66, Nordström 1939:3ff [81ff]. See also Nordström 1938 and Wennfors 1938:124 ff.

<sup>252</sup> DN 1938, Aug. 16, reports on the clerical meeting that it was closed to the press. Runestam is quoted by K. B. Westman, 'Ett och annat om grupprörelsen,' SvD 1938, Oct. 23. See also C. Magne Rønnevig to Runestam 1938, Aug. 15 (Runestam Coll.I), on the personal importance of Runestam's testimony about the humiliation of his total surrender.

<sup>253</sup> 'Vad svenska kyrkans präster ha att lära av Visbymötet,' NDA 1938, Aug. 20.

Denmark and Sweden. In contrast to the different attitudes in the Danish Church between 'Orthodoxfordians' like Dean Brodersen, and Church Barthian clergymen like Halfdan Høgsbro, Runestam was publicly loyal to the international Oxford Group, while in his speeches and comments he remained faithful to his original, personalistic Church Group experience, without emphasizing the visions of either national or world change. While publicly loyal, he regarded the motto of the Visby meeting as inadequate, and found its result not in supranational reconciliation, but in personal revival, conversion, and inspiration.<sup>254</sup> In Sweden, the difference in practice sometimes was bigger between the Oxford Group clergy and 'Orthodoxfordians' like Sven Stolpe, than between Oxford Group priests and several non-Oxford priests of the Young Church movement. Runestam was influenced by Manfred Björkquist, and – according to Stolpe – described by Elov Tengblad as representing the Church more than Oxford: afraid of the Oxford people, and totally occupied by official and ecclesiastical duties.<sup>255</sup>

The national and supranational responsibilities were grasped by several students in Upsala and Lund, though they were focused on individual life-changing and finding God's plan. During Whitsun 1939, a group of students from Upsala went to Lahdentaka in Finland.<sup>256</sup> Among these students, a new combination of Church and Oxford Group was to take shape.

Towards the end of the 1930s, the discussion on social morals in the Swedish society was intensified, the debate on the youth culture culminating in the spring 1942.<sup>257</sup> Against this background, it is not surprising that both the phrase and different programmes of a 'moral rearmament' were frequent in varying social and political contexts 1938–1939. While criticized by some Church commentators for its moral(istic) emphasis, the new catchphrase was positively received in other circles, where Christian morals were more easily accepted than Christian faith. The well-known Socialist Zeth Höglund spoke publicly on the matter, and wrote an editorial in *Social-Demokraten* on 'Moralisk upprustning' interpreted as the strengthening of the moral world opinion. Seeing the need from a Socialist point of view, he found this battle for humanity necessary to Christianity, albeit lacking in dominating Christian circles.<sup>258</sup> In

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<sup>254</sup> Runestam 1947:16.

<sup>255</sup> Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1939, Jan. 20 (UUB).

<sup>256</sup> 'Oxford genomsyrar Uppsala: "Gud har en plan även för den mest skeptiska Uppsalastudent"', AB 1938, Oct. 24; "'Livsförvandling är vårt mål" Vi studenter behöva gemenskapen!', AB 1938, Oct. 27, which contains statements from students in Upsala (Gösta Vestlund, Arts, Stig Beausang, Theology, Sven Carlsund, Medicin, Claes H. Edgardh, Law, Anders Tauson-Hassler, B.Th., and Miss Ruth Carlsson, Arts) and Lund (Magnhild Rydén, Arts, Axel Adlercreutz, Law, Olle Gnosspelius, Arts, Chaplain Gösta Bodemar, Ingrid Nylander, Graduate in Medicine, Eric Starfelt, B.A, Herman Schlyter, B.Th.&A.). 'Det svenska teamets insatser i andra länder' (EPC).

<sup>257</sup> Eivergård 1990:13 f.

<sup>258</sup> SocD 1938, Oct. 18. Höglund had been visited by John Morrison. After subsequent

Falun, the Social Democratic youth club took the initiative to a public meeting on how to rearm morally. The meeting lasted four hours, with short speeches by the Oxford Group as well.<sup>259</sup> The need for a moral rearmament was emphasized in conservative articles too, for example by Major Henric Lagercrantz,<sup>260</sup> and in the pamphlet *Moralisk upprustning* (1939), independent of Group revivalism, with articles on the theme by Ebbe Reuterdaahl and Olov Hartman. The pamphlet was sold in aid of ‘Rikskampanjen mot svärjandet’ [The National Campaign against swearing].

After the house-party at Visby, the Oxford Group was criticized from the political extreme right wing as well. In an open letter to Sven Stolpe, published in *Sverige Fritt*, Holger Möllman Palmgren raised the question whether Oxford was a form of organized national treason. He focused on a statement by Stolpe, published in *Stockholms-Tidningen*, about spending hundreds of millions of crowns on defence, while Christian politics would mean trusting in God and taking all the risks by sending out life-changers in the world for as many millions. Möllman Palmgren insinuated that Oxford was a new link in the efforts of the so-called democratic people’s front against fascism and nazism.<sup>261</sup>

#### *V.3.4. Continuing Work for a Moral Rearmament, 1938–1939*

At the turn of the month October–November 1938, Professor K. B. Westman invited seven professors and two assistant professors and their wives to a party at

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visits by Sydney Linton and Kalle Hautamäki, Höglund was reported – while admitting the rightness of Moral Re-armament – never to have understood its real meaning (‘Confidentiellt !’, EPC). Sven Stolpe, emphasizing the world war against egotism, commented that Höglund embraced the whole Oxford programme and made it his own, while not being ‘a dogmatic Christian’ (‘Värmland är centrum för Oxfordrörelsen,’ *Värmlands Folkblad* 1939, March 7). Apart from the changed Socialists, and the totally critical ones, others were positive. A good example is Karl Kilsmo’s testimony about the Modum Bad party, “‘Oxford’ i arbete. Alla kunna förvandlas’ (LTV 1937, Sept. 11). In the Communist *Ny Dag*, Per Meurling (pen-name John Garter) described the Oxford Movement as a culturally reactionary, irrational current, and its members as a sort of practical mystics, while criticizing the Capitalist system, which necessarily had to be changed in order to work a world change. In his second article, Meurling built on the philosophy of Axel Hägerström (*Ny Dag* 1938, Aug. 18, 30).

<sup>259</sup> Paul Wetterfors to Gustaf Walli 1939, Nov. 19 (A 600:5, GLA).

<sup>260</sup> ‘Moralisk upprustning – självdisciplin’, SvD 1938, Dec. 18. In a circular letter, 1938, Nov. 18 (DWC), Sydney Linton noted the wide use of moral rearmament, and emphasized the need for defining its contents to people in Sweden.

<sup>261</sup> H. Möllman Palmgren: ‘Oxford – organiserat folkförräderi?’, in *Sverige Fritt* 1938, Sept. 9.



Uppsala, and as he insisted that the team should be made up of foreigners, it consisted of Andrew Strang, David Grimshaw, Richard Petersen, Signe Lund, and Sydney Linton.<sup>262</sup> In November, the Stockholm team started arranging parties of their own in their homes, with people from different circles: upper class persons in Djursholm, Social Democrats in the Old Town, among them the writer Ture Nerman, as well as Bishop Bohlin of Härnösand.<sup>263</sup> In the parish of St. Clara, several journalists for some time gathered in the mornings once a week, which resulted in a weekly Bible circle, mostly for press people.<sup>264</sup>

The Oxford Group phase meant a much stronger connection with the international team, mostly through the foreign full-time workers in Sweden, who were keeping in touch with each other whether in Scandinavia, in Finland, or in Britain. Differences of opinion sometimes led to conflicts with the Swedes. For example, in December 1938, Sven Stolpe reported that Howard Blake was upset because of the small size of the Swedish writers' team going to Finland for New Year (Aulanko/Karlberg), Stolpe's need for rest, etc.<sup>265</sup> Other disagreements were caused by the coming and going of the young foreigners at certain

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<sup>262</sup> Copy of S. Linton to Morris Martin 1938, Nov. 2 (DWC). Professor and Mrs. Lindroth were 'all set to begin and want Andrew and Co to come in and see them. Rudberg, head of the seminary, is equally cordial'. Westman himself was not personal or committed, but had 'opened the professor world nicely' before leaving for India, and had got the Archbishop's consent for the boys to visit him after the Church synod. On Hjalmar Lindroth, Professor of dogmatics, and the Oxford Group, see further Lindroth 1938.

<sup>263</sup> S. Linton to Frank Buchman 1938, Nov. 28 ('The Wetterlinds had 60 friends last Friday night, out in the fashionable quarter Djursholm: all strategic people, all deeply gripped, and many have been changed. Evert Palmer had 60 together yesterday, largely social democrats, or worthies down in the Old City, where he is a priest. Ture Nerman was there, an important socialist author, who has been very difficult, [...] Bishop Bohlin was also there: he is increasingly friendly'; M.R.A. Archives, NLC). According to an early interview, Bishop Bohlin was positive towards the message, though critical of the methods of the Oxford Group (Janus 1934:82) – a significant independent Group revivalistic reaction. It is noteworthy that Bohlin, despite his apologetical attitude, and the very personalistic direction of his theology, was not involved in the Oxford Group (on Bohlin, see, for example, Brohed 1982:140 f.). See also Bohlin to H. Blomberg 1936 Nov. 13 (532 C:2, UUB): 'Har själv *icke* deltagit direkt i Grupprörelsens arbete, har egendomligt nog ej känt dragnings till det, men jag känner mig stå i tacksamhetsskuld till rörelsens andliga liv och tror på dess uppgift.'

<sup>264</sup> Werner 1971:124 f. (among the journalists were Ivar Norberg, DN, and Herbert Grevenius, StTD).

<sup>265</sup> Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1938, Dec. 27 (UUB). To Stolpe, it was important that the Swedish writers' team was small, as he did not want to make the language conflict worse. Stolpe answered Blake that he operated after a distinct plan, to be implemented step by step (see Stolpe to Kaisu Snellman 1938, Dec. 29; copy to Blomberg, UUB). As a result of Blake's intervention, Ernst [Roos], B. Kjellberg, and others had written critical letters to Blake (Stolpe to Blomberg 1939, Jan. 20, UUB).

personal and editorial offices, with the aim of changing people, but characterized by Harry Blomberg – even publicly – as dangerous. Among the key persons visited were Crown Prince Gustav Adolf, Prime Minister P. A. Hansson, Foreign Minister Rickard Sandler, the ministers P. E. Sköld, K. G. Westman, G. Möller, the businessman Axel Wenner-Gren, ‘one of the Wallenbergs,’ etc. The visits with some of the press men, like Börje Brilioth and Zäta Höglund, were more successful.<sup>266</sup>

In a letter to Mrs. Snellman on the plans for the work in Finland, Stolpe explained the meaning of a moral rearmament especially as a new view of patriotism, of purity and impurity, and a battle for a new world opinion.<sup>267</sup> In January 1939, Stolpe and Howard Blake flew to London for a conference at Eastbourne with English, French, Dutch, and Swiss Oxford Group people on the future realization of the idea of a moral rearmament.<sup>268</sup> After the Visby party, Stolpe’s relations with Church Group revivalism soon grew worse. This was emphasized when the new director of the Central Board of the Church of Sweden (Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelse), Sam. Palm – himself deeply influenced by independent Church Group revivalism in Gothenburg – in a review of Stolpe’s *Oxfordprofiler*, stated that Stolpe did not even regard the relation between Oxford and the Church as a problem, as the Group seemed to be one and all. From Stolpe’s book, Palm quoted Bill Sunday’s definition of the Church as the fellowship of life-changing men.<sup>269</sup> The difficulties were not specific to Swedish or Scandinavian circumstances. Previous difficulties had occurred in the U.S.A. as well.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Blomberg to J. Hemmer 1939, Apr. 1 (ÅAB). Together with Fr. Ramm, Blomberg on the previous evening warned about a hundred people in Stockholm about the risk. At the same time, Blomberg stated that the English boys were right in being tremendously stubborn, as they had given up so much. But they had to be helped further on, and all secerism had to be avoided. ‘Confidentiellt !’ (EPC) mentions four personal calls to the Prime Minister (by Reginald Holme; George Light, Fred Welch, Sydney Linton, Bill Jaeger, Bill Rowell, and Tod Sloan; Linton and John Morrison; Viggo Löfcrantz), as well as sending him press articles, Bunny Austin’s book, and Frank Buchman’s radio speech. The Prime Minister said in October 1938 that his party (the Social Democrats) always had aimed at an improvement of conditions, including an improvement of human beings, which could be named a kind of moral rearmament. Margit Wohlin and Peggy Blake had met Mrs. Hansson. See also S. Linton’s report ( 1938, Nov. 16) from an interview with the prime minister. The encounters with the other ministers were less successful, Mr. Sandler refusing a suggested second interview, Mr. Sköld being ‘sceptical about the value of religion, or its effects, but was all the same interested,’ Dr. Westman ‘very reserved and cold, showed no signs of being impressed, nor friendly.’

<sup>267</sup> Stolpe to Kaisu Snellman 1938, Dec. 29 (copy to H. Blomberg, UUB).

<sup>268</sup> Blake to S. Hedin 1939, Jan. 12 (RA).

<sup>269</sup> Palm 1938:518, Stolpe 1938:107 f. Sunday even said, p.106, that he regarded the Oxford Group as nothing less than God’s own Church.

<sup>270</sup> See S. M. Shoemaker: ‘War between the forces of God and the forces of Anti-Christ’ (The Church of England Newspaper 1937, Aug. 13): ‘Just now the forces of anti-Christ

In this situation, Manfred Björkquist planned a conference at Sigtuna on the relations between Group and Church, to find forms for cooperation and keeping a united Christian front. Before contacting Stolpe, he got into touch with Bertil Malmberg, Bishop Runestam, Fr. Ramm, Mr. and Mrs. Carlgren, and Harry Blomberg.<sup>271</sup> In his letters to Björkquist, Stolpe demanded that the Group should be represented only by what he called absolutely clear leaders, who understood what the principal point of the matter was, and not by sympathizers or half-decided persons.<sup>272</sup> Stolpe emphasized that the Group was not a revival movement within the Church, but a new type of man, a new Christian culture, even a new Church. Its work had to be realized in cooperation with the Church. In one of his letters, he even stated that he had Frank Buchman's special confidence, and that the Swedish Oxford Group could not be separated from his own person. Stolpe mentioned the thought of seeking guidance for the choice of participants, emphasized the meaninglessness of discussions, and denied rumours that he and Fredrik Ramm had any plans for changing Björkquist.<sup>273</sup> After consulting the British and Norwegian leaders, Stolpe became increasingly hesitant because of the attitude of the Church. At this time, Sam. Palm had answered a short question in a way that Stolpe found critical, deeply insulting, tactless, and un-Christian.<sup>274</sup> In his subsequent letter, Stolpe wrote that Oxford had thousands of sympathizers who used it as a small revival.

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are attempting to wedge apart the Church and the Oxford Group.' In 1941, Shoemaker ended his association with Frank Buchman because of 'increased misgivings' about 'the development of moral re-armament.' As Lean 1985:304 f. points out, the real difference was a difference in view of Church and Group.

<sup>271</sup> Björkquist to H. Blomberg 1938 [1939], Jan. 2 (UUB). Björkquist invited Bishop Lehtonen as well (Björkquist to Lehtonen 1939, Jan. 18, RAH).

<sup>272</sup> Stolpe to Björkquist 1939, Jan. 19, 20, Feb. 5, 8. The following names were accepted by Stolpe as representatives of the Oxford Group: H. and A. Blomberg, S. Fräncki, B. and G. Malmberg, the workers H. Nyström, T. Oskarsson, and E. Roos, in addition E. Tengblad, the engineer Widén, Dr. Molin, and Professor Sundelin, as well as the Anglo-American full-timers Blake, Goulding, Morrison, and the Norwegians Wikborg, Mowinckel, and Ramm. Of those suggested by Björkquist, only Arbin, Runestam, Blomberg, and the Malmbergs were accepted. See also Stolpe to Blomberg 1939, Jan. 20, in which he includes Fanny Carlgren, Arbin and – other uncertain Stockholmers. Instead, Ramm, Wikborg, Mowinckel, Blake, Morrison, Goulding, Sally Salminen, Paul Brodersen, etc, ought to be present. Runestam was regarded as caught by Björkquist, and representing not Oxford, but the Church.

<sup>273</sup> Stolpe to Björkquist 1939, Jan. 20 (SIB; 'Nu är det så, att jag har Franks speciella förtroende, och att den svenska Oxfordgruppen icke kan skiljas från mig'). Consequently, Stolpe interpreted public attacks on himself as a writer or literary critic as attacks on the Oxford Group. Stolpe to B. Malmberg 1939, Jan. 20 (L 74:6, KB; 'Nu är gruppen ingen väckelserörelse – och allra minst någon väckelserörelse inom kyrkan – utan en ny människotyp, en ny kultur, en ny kyrka!'). On plans for changing Björkquist, see R. Fangen's efforts in July 1936 (Ch. V.2.11).

<sup>274</sup> Stolpe to Björkquist 1939, Feb. 5 (SIB), to H. Blomberg 1939, Feb. 2 (UUB).

The Group worked together with the Church in all countries, and the attacks had come exclusively from the young church through Hildebrand, Åke V. Ström, and Sam. Palm. The Group had never criticized, only co-operated. Stolpe did not ask for any thanks for gathering people to the churches and converting writers or workers, but criticism and personal attacks had to cease.<sup>275</sup> The previous day, Stolpe's public statement on Church and Oxford was published on the front page of the Norwegian *Dagen*, declaring that the Church was the exponent of the objective values of Christianity, and that any struggle or competition between Church and Group was unthinkable.<sup>276</sup> According to Stolpe, Björkquist's demands for cooperation were: no further visit of Frank Buchman to Sweden; the inclusion of the Group in the Church layman's Association (Kyrkobröderna); no demands from the Group for personal change among the clergy before cooperation; no house-parties without the advice of Björkquist and the Church leaders, and, finally, all house-parties aiming at the inclusion of people in the established Church. Stolpe agreed with Harry Blomberg on the need for changing the others, while avoiding any discussion.<sup>277</sup>

The planned conference did take place at Sigtuna, in February 1939. As a result, an editorial on the Group movement and the Church was published in *Vår Lösen*. The generally positive influence of Oxford on preaching and soul-cure was recognized, as well as the calling to place oneself as the vanguard of its message, whether the result was Oxford Group party participants or not. Oxford had been critical or suspicious of the Church, and there was much to criticize. But Oxford had been self-sufficient too, and there had been a belief that Oxford could be a Church, replacing the Church, which was impossible if Oxford were not be destroyed. On the other hand, Oxford had been of some importance in the renewal of the Eucharistic life in the Church. Its way of dealing with social and political problems had revealed and shaken the pseudo-Christian relativism, but these problems, on the other hand, were objectively more difficult than sometimes recognized. The conclusion was a common submission to the one Father, and going out as brethren.<sup>278</sup> Sigmund Mowinckel admitted to Björkquist that even those who had been active in the Oxford Group from the beginning must receive criticism, as well as practise criticism, but in the spirit of

<sup>275</sup> Stolpe to Björkquist 1939, Feb. 8 (SIB).

<sup>276</sup> 'Sven Stolpe om kirken og Oxfordgruppen' (*Dagen* 1939, Feb. 7).

<sup>277</sup> Stolpe to Blomberg 1939, Jan. 20 (UUB), to B. Malmberg 1939, Jan. 20 (L 74:6, KB).

<sup>278</sup> Editorial 'Grupprörelsen och kyrkan. Läget och dess krav' (VL 1939:50, 52 ff.). See also the more neutral Hylander 1939:166, who asks for 'ett förtroendefullt och från personliga prestigesympunkter frigjort meningsutbyte överallt där detta är av nöden.' Still, personal conflicts arose. According to Stolpe, Harry Blomberg had hurt some of the priests, and especially Dick Helander became blocked (Stolpe to Blomberg 1939, Feb. 26, UUB). At the same time, Blomberg was more open and positive towards Björkquist, and regarded him to be in the immediate neighbourhood of the Oxford Group. He found the meeting to be one of the most important ones held in Sweden (Blomberg to J. Hemmer 1939, Feb. 6, to S. & J. Hemmer Feb. 18, ÅAB).

identification, which pointed to the ideal intentions and the common responsibility for realizing them. He emphasized that the Oxford Group did not want to be separatistic or sectarian, but to work to vivifying effect in the existing churches and organizations.<sup>279</sup>

The Oxford Group work among the clergy of the Church of Sweden was not transformed after the Visby party, neither did it get any clear direction of national and social change, but it did not cease. In March 1939, a clerical house-party was held at Karlstad, with 195 Swedish and 25 Norwegian priests – according to other sources altogether 200, aiming at confidential and personal talks on the tasks and problems of the priest, a deepened fellowship, and Christian concord. Each day was planned at Morning quiet times the very same day. The number of speakers was not limited to priests clearly identifying themselves with the Oxford Group, and included, for example, the well-known popular preacher, Adolf Kloo, who had previously spoken at Church Group revivalistic meetings. Bishop Runestam found that the special message of Oxford was not personal testimony, but intervening with the personal problems of people to create an opening in their lives for the Christian faith.<sup>280</sup> Erik Arbin was sometimes critical and worried about the Group movement being made superficial by becoming only M.R.A. He saw his own task as doubling his efforts in the personal work while still keeping to the fellowship.<sup>281</sup>

The province of Värmland was regarded as a centre of the Swedish Oxford Group work, and after the team meeting at Karlstad, March 3–5, even Sven Stolpe publicly declared that the work there was done in the best concord with the Church, at the same time declaring his own membership of the Social Democratic party.<sup>282</sup> Privately, Stolpe's comment on Howard Blake's words about 200 changed persons expected for the team meeting, was that he did not know there were that many changed persons at all.<sup>283</sup> In a subsequent interview with Stolpe and Elov Tengblad, the programme of a moral rearmament was

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<sup>279</sup> S. Mowinckel to M. Björkquist 1939, Feb. 20 (SIB).

<sup>280</sup> Inbjudan till möte för präster i Karlstad 20–23 mars. [1939], Norsk Kirkeblad 1939:116, 185. Runestam to M. Björkquist 1939, March 20, 27 (SIB). Karlstads stiftsblad 1939:88, Nyberg 1985:61 f. Of the Swedish priests, about 65 were from other dioceses. Taking part was also one priest from Finland. On the importance of the Visby party for participants from the diocese of Karlstad, see Karlstads stiftsblad 1938:204.

<sup>281</sup> E. Arbin to E. Gulin 1939, Sept. 18 (RAH).

<sup>282</sup> 'Värmland är centrum för Oxfordrörelsen,' Värmlands Folkblad 1939, March 7. On Stolpe's distance to the Stockholm team and his caring for the teams in Borlänge and Värmland, see Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1939, Feb. 2 (UUB). See also Runestam to Eidem 1939, Nov. 16 (EEA C I:42, ULA), that the Group movement – at least on this latitude – focused on the programme in order to make itself unnecessary, or to work as a Church bell; also Runestam to E. Brunner 1940, Aug. 24 (ZZ): 'In meiner Diözese hat sie sich stark entwickelt. Ich bin froh darüber: die Leute lassen sich auch willig korrigieren, und ihr Wahlspruch ist, sich selbst über flüssig zu machen.'

<sup>283</sup> Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1939, Feb. 19 (UUB). See Appendix Nr. 3.

explained as a personal backup of social ideals. All technical problems were regarded as moral ones.<sup>284</sup> A subsequent conference was arranged at Karlstad, November 10–12, 1939.<sup>285</sup> Beside Bishop Runestam and Dr. Tengblad, especially the training college teacher Hjalmar Wiklund (Karlstad) and the assistant school master Sven Fraenki (Kristinehamn) were active Oxford Group men.<sup>286</sup>

Through the Hindås party, November 4–6, 1938, Group work in Gothenburg was influenced by the wider, social direction emphasizing subjects like responsibility and real Christianity; the home – a living cell from which the body of society will grow; or testimony by employers and workers from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Taking part were also people from Finland, England, Scotland, and Germany. On Sunday, 400 came to Hindås.<sup>287</sup> Lennart Göthberg's letters to Harry Blomberg reveal his own difficulties of living up to what Frank Buchman had said at a team-meeting at Visby: 'You will be the new Swedish prophet!', and also the difficulties of finding a fundamental social basis for a national life-change. Göthberg found it easy to get people to understand the need for personal change on a big scale, while it was much harder to say exactly where in society the moral rearmament was necessary.<sup>288</sup>

A team-meeting for planning the subsequent spring and summer seasons was held at Karlstad March 3–5, with special consideration given Frank Buchman's guidance for a Scandinavian team going to the United States.<sup>289</sup> During spring

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<sup>284</sup> 'Moralisk uppgrustning: personlig täckning för socialt ideal,' Karlstads-Tidningen 1939, Sept. 29. For twelve days from Sept. 24, Stolpe lectured in Värmland, cooperating with a travelling team whose work culminated in an attack on Åmotfors, and meetings at Kristinehamn, Degerfors, and Karlskoga (Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1939, Sept. 6, UUB).

<sup>285</sup> Oxfordgruppen Karlstad...1939, which focused on creating peace based on the new type of man and the new culture, signed by Gösta Schotte, S. Stolpe, Aagot Storjohann, and E. Tengblad.

<sup>286</sup> Hassler 1984 gives a vivid picture of the Oxford Group fellowship and activities in the diocese of Karlstad around 1938, but unfortunately, his information is not always exact. Dr. Tengblad, a senior master at the secondary grammar school at Östersund, and from July 1936, school principal in Karlstad, had been invited by Sven Fraenki to the Norwegian house-party at Sund during Whitsun 1936. There he surrendered, at the same time as Sven Stolpe. Tengblad took an initiative for the education conference at Elverum in Norway, 1937, and in the following years he played an important part in the Swedish Oxford Group work.

<sup>287</sup> 'Det är kapplöpning mellan humanism och handgranater,' GP 1938, Nov. 7. Speakers on Saturday were the teacher Karin Aurell, Stockholm (quiet time); Mrs. Anna Winbladh, the manager Carl Lindahl, Alingsås, the Danish journalist Gudrun Egebjerg (responsibility and real Christianity); Mrs. Karin Stolpe, Mrs. Eva Frändberg, Gothenburg (the home...), with 350 participants. On Sunday, resident chaplain Knut Ericson led a devotional hour. The testimony meeting was led by the ironworker Helge Nyström, Domnarvet. A new house-party was announced for Oslo, November 19–20.

<sup>288</sup> Göthberg to Blomberg 1939, Feb. 17 (UUB). On Göthberg's work in Gothenburg, see Jarlert 1994.

<sup>289</sup> 'Käre vän. Visbymötet blev en vändpunkt' (dupl., EPC), 'Käre vän!' 1939, March 7

and summer 1939, a Scandinavian team did go, though some Swedish clergymen criticized the lack of priests from Sweden or Finland in the team.<sup>290</sup>

The Undersåker conference during Easter 1939 was an international branch meeting for university teachers and students, with 200 participants from about ten countries representing twenty-five universities, centred around the question of how to create a new type of man. The aim was rebuilding the culture and lives of the nations. Instead of the Mask man, the Protest man, and the Spectator man, the demand was for a new type of man living in true fellowship, open, free, responsible, and fearless, loving his country and obeying God. This was to be realized through a moral rearmament in the homes, schools, and universities. Whole systems needed to change, not only individuals.<sup>291</sup> A second memorandum divided the programme in the following sections: diagnosis, prescription (culminating with the so-called life-changing experience of Good Friday), research, and renaissance (culminating on Easter Sunday).<sup>292</sup> The conference was prepared by students from Upsala, which gave the participants a vision of 'the new university – professors and students living together in sharing fellowship researching into the science of living together.' All the way down to Stockholm, teams were at work for twelve hours in the reserved railway carriages. In Upsala, the manifesto was translated, and subsequently altered by a cable from London.<sup>293</sup> The message of the Undersåker conference was given much room in the press, as an Oxford message to the whole world stating the need for rebuilding the moral and spiritual foundation of society through the creation of a new type of man. The responsibilities of university teachers were emphasized. The message was signed by the professors Haaken Gran (botany, Oslo), Eiliv Skard (classical philology, Oslo), Aage Bentzen (Old Testament exegetics, Copenhagen), Ebenezer Cunningham (mathematics, Cambridge), and Herbert Turnbull (mathematics, St. Andrews).<sup>294</sup> The message was severely criticized in an editorial in *Dagens Nyheter*, as insufficient in its personalistic approach, and lacking sting because of its silence regarding the world powers.<sup>295</sup>

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(dupl., Alnäs).

<sup>290</sup> See Ch. III.3.7., Appendix Nr. 1, E. Arbin to E. Gulin 1939, June 10 (RAH), in which it is reported that Dean Brodersen of Copenhagen was to leave for the U.S.A. from Bremen June 23. 'Kära vänner o. kamrater' 1939, Apr. 1 (dupl., Alnäs).

<sup>291</sup> 'Konfidentiellt. UNDERSÅKER Nordisk samling för moralisk upprustning' (dupl., EPC). On Sven Stolpe's presentation of the need for a new type of man, see Ch. II.3.3.

<sup>292</sup> 'Konfidentiellt. UNDERSÅKER II.' (dupl., EPC).

<sup>293</sup> Copy of S. Linton to H. Blake, S. Stolpe, and others 1939, May 4 (DWC). The report was printed in Morthorst 1940:103 ff. (Danish), 1941b:111 ff. (Swedish).

<sup>294</sup> 'Oxfordbudskap till hela världen,' 'Universitetet vägen till ny kultur,' StTD 1939, Apr. 15. See also Bernström 1939:82 f. The efforts to get Professor Eelis Gulin (New Testament exegetics, Helsinki) to Undersåker were not successful (see D. Grimshaw to E. Gulin 1939, March 21; A. Tauson-Hassler to Gulin 1939, March 23; RAH).

<sup>295</sup> "Ett budskap till världen" – om Undersåkersbudskapet, DN 1939, Apr. 18, subsequent articles DN Apr. 22 (H. Blomberg: 'Oxford och världen,' and an editorial

A team of Swedish teachers had been formed at the Danish house-party for teachers at Haderslev during Easter 1937, and was working for the maximum school.<sup>296</sup> The invitation card to the Ljungskile conference, August 7–14, 1939, stated that the conference was arranged by the Oxford Group for a new culture through homes and schools. The aim was a moral rearmament through education. The need was for a new type of man, open, free, without fear, feeling responsibility and living in fellowship, loving his country, and obeying God. Through Moral Re-armament, this new man had started to develop in many countries.<sup>297</sup> The first memorandum of the Ljungskile conference emphasized the true aim of home and school as giving guidance about marriage, money, choice of profession, and future, and in addition about the relations between parents and children, parents and teachers, as well as between teachers and pupils, etc.<sup>298</sup> The second confidential memorandum drew up the programme of action for common listening to God. The Undersåker conference had given the philosophy and the foundation of a new education. The appeal for a new type of man: open, free, etc., was published in Greek, Arabic, Dutch, in South Africa, in the *South China Morning Post*, in a French broadcast etc., and aimed at awakening the world opinion. The aim of the Ljungskile conference was to show the way in which this opinion was built on listening to God as the decisive factor in the life of men and nations. The questions of preparation in quiet times were: In what way has listening to God in your experience been the instrument of 1) inspiring and disciplining joint work with others? 2) uniting divided personalities, making them physically and psychologically free for creative actions and thoughts?, 3) uniting divided homes into an edifying power in society? 4) edifying a character, reviving ability of leadership and sense of responsibility?<sup>299</sup> An English statement on the new education was based on Stolpe's *Människan själv*, the Undersåker report, and the message from the English educators to the World Assembly for Moral Re-Armament in California.<sup>300</sup>

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comment on the duty to protest against political, anti-Christian religion and morals), Apr. 27 (H. Blomberg: 'Tre frågor och en rättelse,' and an editorial comment with reference to the protest by Karl Barth).

<sup>296</sup> LTV 1937 Nr. 15 (Apr. 10); Report by Olle Helander, 'Skolan under Guds ledning' (LTV 1937 Nr. 37, Sept. 11); Ernst Neuman: 'Den maximala skolan' (LTV 1937 Nr. 49, Dec. 4).

<sup>297</sup> Oxfordgruppen. *Ny kultur genom hem och skola*. 1939.

<sup>298</sup> P. M. Ljungskile. I; Prolegomena 1. Ljungskile, Sweden 22nd June, 1939 (dupl., EPC). The foreign full-timers present were David Grimshaw, Sydney Linton, Pip Lyth, Andrew Strang, and Basil Yeates.

<sup>299</sup> 'Konfidentiellt. Får ej tryckas. P. M. Ljungskile II.', the subsequent duplicated letter dated 1939, July 25 (EPC).

<sup>300</sup> [R. Mowat:] The new education. As formulated at Ljungskile. According to Howard Blake's report on M.R.A. in Scandinavia since the outbreak of war (dupl., Caux Archives), the Ljungskile conference was inspired by the message sent by English educators to the World Assembly for Moral Re-Armament in California.



Although some press reports put the emphasis on the repeated message from Visby, 1938, the meeting was a success, with more than 375 participants from eight countries, over the week-ends rising to nearly 1,000. A Holy Communion service outdoors was planned for 500 communicants.<sup>301</sup> An interview with Bertil Malmberg, who almost declared his secession from the Oxford Group, made a certain impression, which put a shadow on the singing of Malmberg's song and the progress of the meeting.<sup>302</sup> After the teachers' meeting, Elov Tengblad, Paul Wetterfors, and others took initiatives to propagate a Christian type of teacher and a Christian type of school. The first step was a statement by well-known teachers, which made Christian questions and Christian principles a current topic, created contacts with new individuals, and then continued with individual life-change and Christian branch meetings. Well-known school people like the school inspector Bror Jonzon (Bishop Jonzon's brother) and the principal of the Gothenburg latin grammar school, Sven Ohlon, were reported to be enthusiastic.<sup>303</sup> An appeal to the people of Sweden for a spiritual revolution and a mobilization of all positive forces to promote actions for peace through Moral Re-Armament was signed by eight well-known school leaders, of whom two were to become members of the 1940 Education Committee. The appeal emphasized the four absolute standards and quiet listening for the voice of God. It was published in the press and in the end signed by 10,500 teachers, followed by a similar Norwegian manifest.<sup>304</sup> Separate appeals to students and professors were written by students in Lund, in cooperation with students from Denmark and Upsala and with Professor Hjalmar Lindroth from Gothenburg. Special appeals to the women were distributed in Finland, Norway, Iceland, Sweden, and Denmark.<sup>305</sup> A direct inspiration by the conference at Hurdals Verk in Norway was stated in the invitation to training-days at Höör in the South of

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<sup>301</sup> 'Nordens kallelse är att vara folkens försonare,' GP 1939, Aug. 7. The eight countries were England, Scotland, Holland, Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Fraenki 1979:30. Stolpe to B. Malmberg 1939, Aug. 12 (L 74:6, KB). Stolpe reported to H. Blomberg 1939, Aug. 18 (UUB), that the team was so weak that Stolpe got guidance to go there, found some very weak things, and worked hard for three days and nights.

<sup>302</sup> S. Stolpe to Malmberg 1939, Aug. 12 (L 74:6, KB).

<sup>303</sup> Stolpe to M. Björkquist 1939, Aug. 30 (SIB).

<sup>304</sup> Till Sveriges folk! 1939, signed by Elisabeth Dahr (Jönköping), Emil Eljas (Djursholm), Bror Jonzon (Stockholm), Einar Lilie (Göteborg), Sven Norrbom (Stockholm), Nils Schenke (Stockholm), Elov Tengblad (Karlstad), and Paul Wetterfors (Falun). Dahr and Jonzon were to become members of the Education Committee. 'Kära vänner!', 1939, Aug. 25 (dupl., EPC). Among the teachers who signed were Alf Ahlberg, Sven Grauers, Olle Hjortzberg, John Landquist, Olallo Morales, Marianne Mörner, Sven Norrbom, Sven Ohlon, and Lydia Wahlström. See Fraenki 1979:31. The appeal was printed in Morthorst 1941b:120 f.

<sup>305</sup> 'Lund den 9/10 1939. Kära vänner!'; 'Studentapellen'; 'Till Sveriges kvinnor,' signed by thirty-three women (dupl., EPC).

Sweden in October 1939.<sup>306</sup>

A subsequent 'pedagogic conference' was arranged at Södertälje, near Stockholm, November 4–5. The aim was to turn teachers and their pupils into people with an inner security and capacity for unselfish cooperation with others. The following questions were to be answered: What meaning has the task to create a responsible neutrality and to prepare for peace for the schools? What may be done to create new possibilities for an education of the character? How is a new and fruitful cooperation between homes, schools, and other authorities shaping public opinion to be achieved? Listening to God, letting oneself be guided by him – what does that mean to the individual, the homes, the school, and society?<sup>307</sup> Unlike the Visby and Ljungskile parties, the Södertälje conference and some of the subsequent meetings were not called house-parties, but conferences, and often the Oxford Group label was omitted as well.

In 1939, Oxford Group activities for a moral rearmament reached its peak – with most of the foreign full-timers still in the country – for example, in November:

3–5 Teachers at Södertälje; Värmland team at Säffle

7 Fanny Carlgren having certain leading women, including two cabinet-wives who are invited, to talk over our responsibility for neutrality.

8 Big Rotary 'do' in Upsala, with changed speakers.

9 Dinner for Professors in Upsala.

10–12 Upsala Student-house-party at Skarholmen, Agricultural house-party at Katrineholm, Värmland team at Karlstad, Skåne team have a house-party.

16–17 Ronald Fangen in Stockholm; gathers the team at Engelbrekts after his lecture on the 16th.

18–19 Possible Press house-party at Jönköping?

23–25 Katrineholm.<sup>308</sup>

During a period beginning in 1939, a few teachers in Gothenburg regularly let

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<sup>306</sup> 'Käre vänner! Genom dem, som voro i Hurdal i Norge [...]', 1939, Oct, (dupl., Alnäs).

<sup>307</sup> Inbjudan till pedagogisk konferens 1939, signed by Gustaf Walli, Elov Tengblad, and Elisabeth Lindgren. A smaller conference on a moral rearmament through education in homes and schools, with some 100 teachers and parents, was arranged at Tyringe, November 10–12, 1939 (Inbjudan till konferens för Moralisk Upprustning genom uppfostran i Hem och Skola...1939). At a meeting in Landskrona, 200 teachers and parents came ('Käre vän!' Lund 1939, Dec. 10, dupl., Alnäs).

<sup>308</sup> Shortened extract from copy of Peggy Blake and S. Linton to A. Strang, D. Grimshaw, H. Blake, and Kaisu Snellman 1939, Oct. 30 (DWC). At the same time, Gunnar Dahlberg, Margit Wohlin, Anders Tauson-Hassler, and Willy Broschet were in Finland, in addition to Helge Nyström and Johannes Dürkop. The house-party for the press was to be arranged by Fredrik Ramm, Sture Mattsson, Yngve Hamrin, Leo Torgny, 'and other changed journalists, Rolf Stille, Nils Petterson, Gunnar Fahlnäs, Tage Darning, and probably others.' Copy of Linton to Ramm 1939, Oct. 30 (DWC).

their classes listen during quiet times, using small blue books for the notes, which were often read together in class. But the method was impaired by suspicious parents and ‘politicizing’ head-masters.<sup>309</sup> Two female teachers at Kristinehamn had practised quiet time with voluntary note-books in class for five years, before the practise finally was discussed at the local school board. At a public meeting arranged by the local Socialist party, their method was considered as exerting confessions of sins from the children, though the teachers were defended by a male teacher, Vilhelm Gustavsson, who claimed that they were not doing the children any harm.<sup>310</sup>

A new education committee was appointed in November 1940, and worked until 1947, producing a series of reports. During the first years of the war, the emphasis was on character formation, and developing moral strength, self-discipline and will-power in the young, not very unlike the emphasis of the Oxford Group. However, during later war years, emphasis changed to the training of the intellect and the critical faculties.<sup>311</sup>

## V.4. The Partial Isolation Phase

### V.4.1. *Ecumenical Actions for Peace*

In Sweden, the Isolation phase did not include any public pressure or even prohibitions on the Oxford Group work. Nor was the working fellowship totally limited to national forces. Information from Britain and the United States was translated, printed, and spread in Sweden even during the first year of this phase, though at a slow pace.<sup>312</sup> The perpetual working fellowship with the international team was cut off, and the isolation soon grew as the war spread. In April 1942, a copy of Peter Howard’s *Innocent Men* arrived in Stockholm: ‘There seems to be only one copy in this country, but it is getting well read!’ Frank Buchman’s *Remaking the World* arrived in June 1942, but letters from the

<sup>309</sup> Andersson 1968:8 f., reports on female teachers, L. Göthberg to H. Blomberg 1939, Jan. 29 (UUB) on a male teacher in an extra class for less talented children.

<sup>310</sup> ‘Kristinehamns barn anteckna “synder” i bok. Originell folkskoleundervisning under debatt,’ *Nya Wermlands-Tidningen* 1944, Jan. 11; ‘Diskussionen om “tänkeböckerna” i Kristinehamn,’ *Värmlands Posten* 1944, Jan. 14.

<sup>311</sup> See Richardson 1978:54 ff., 73 ff., 313 f. Among the members of the committee were two of the eight original signers of the 1939 appeal to the people of Sweden for a spiritual revolution and a mobilization of all positive forces to promote actions for peace through Moral Re-Armament, namely Elisabeth Dahr and Bror Jonzon.

<sup>312</sup> For example, Buchman 1939 (speech in San Francisco 1939, Aug. 27), 1939b, 1940 (speech in Boston 1939, Oct. 29), 1940b (speech in San Francisco 1940, June 4). The next edition, Buchman 1943, contains only Buchman’s speech at Visby, 1938.

U.S.A., posted in January 1942, and containing news from Britain in April 1941, did not arrive in Stockholm until August 31, 1942.<sup>313</sup> When Philip Mottu arrived in Stockholm in January, 1945, it was the first personal visit by anyone from the team in England for five years.<sup>314</sup>

In October 1939, after the outbreak of the Second World War, Mrs. Fanny Carlgren from Stockholm met Hermann Göring in Berlin, and tried to mediate between the world powers. Göring is said to have been positive to her suggestions for a top meeting, but nothing came of this enterprise. It may be regarded as an example of active neutrality, as recommended in a team-letter.<sup>315</sup>

During autumn, the Oxford Group worked for a joint Christian action on the first Sunday of Advent, December 3. Among the suggestions was a service in Stockholm with the bishops of Upsala, Oslo, Copenhagen and Turku (Åbo) speaking, and keeping a few minutes silence, perhaps together with the prayer for peace, at the regular Sunday services all over the country, obviously as a part of the realization of Frank Buchman's vision of a hundred million people listening to God on Dec. 1–3.<sup>316</sup> Erik Arbin and Harry Blomberg visited the Pastor Primarius, Nils Widner, and were received by the archbishop, October 29, though he was not informed about the plans for the Advent Sunday until November 16 by Bishop Runestam. Dr. Eidem was 'einverstanden' with this central religious line, but wanted to give the appeal a common Christian character not coloured by any party.<sup>317</sup> The special service in the Stockholm Cathedral was held on November 30, with Bishops Berggrav (only after pressure), Fuglsang-Damgaard, and Lehtonen, as well as Archbishop Eidem, taking part, with the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess in the congregation. The whole of this peace action was given a sinister background by the first Russian bombing of Helsinki on November 30.<sup>318</sup> The next evening, meetings followed

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<sup>313</sup> Copy of S. Linton to H. Blake 1942, Apr. 27, Aug. 22, Sept. 1. As early as in the autumn 1940, a letter from England arrived two months after the posting (copy of Linton to Blake 1940, Oct. 15, DWC).

<sup>314</sup> See Ph. Mottu to F. Buchman 1945, Feb. 6 (NLC).

<sup>315</sup> See Ludlow 1974:31 f. At first, Mrs. Carlgren gave the impression of being sent by King Gustav V, as an offer to mediate himself in the war. The following day she apologized, explaining that she had greetings, but no authorization from the king. 'Kära vänner! Jönköping 1939, Oct. 10 (dupl., Alnäs).

<sup>316</sup> Runestam to Eidem 1939, Nov. 16 (EEA C I:42, ULA). Eidem had gone to Stockholm to confer with Widner and Arbin. Personally, he appreciated silent prayer, but thought that the congregations were unaccustomed to this practice. Buchman 1939b:11.

<sup>317</sup> Copy of P. Blake and S. Linton to A. Strang, D. Grimshaw, H. Blake, K. Snellman 1939, Oct. 30 (DWC); copy of Eidem to Runestam (EEA C I:42, ULA).

<sup>318</sup> Arbin to A. Lehtonen 1939, Nov. 7, 13, 23, Dec. 21 (RAH). On difficulties with Berggrav, see also copies of S. Linton to E. Goulding, D. Grimshaw, A. Strang, H. Blake 1939, Nov. 20 resp. to Blake, Strang, Goulding, K. Snellman Nov. 23 (DWC), and Eidem to Lehtonen 1939, Nov. 9 (RAH). H. Blomberg tried to get Berggrav, R. Fangen, A. Fjellbu, S. Mowinckel, Sten Bugge, Fr. Ramm, E. Wikborg, and Arnold Öhrn to

in nine churches, with speeches by sixty laymen from the Nordic countries, on the following evening there were meetings in the Concert Hall, the Auditorium, and a cinema on the theme 'Sverige – Norden – Världen' [Sweden – the Nordic North – the World]. On the First Sunday in Advent, December 3, on the initiative of the archbishop, two minutes of silence was included in the ordinary Church services, before the saying of the Lord's Prayer. The same was done in the other Nordic Churches.<sup>319</sup>

Erik Arbin regarded the ecumenical action of November 30–December 1, 1939 ('Folkfred – Gudsfred'), and subsequent activities in Stockholm during the war as examples of personalistic ecumenics, without committees or elected delegates, based on individual Christians, who felt an inner guidance to take the lead in actions. Personalistic ecumenics began with sharing and restitution between members of different denominations. It meant not just actions, but also, for example, cooperation with Methodists and Salvationists in the soul-care.<sup>320</sup>

One week before the German occupation of Denmark and Norway, April 9, 1940, Harry Blomberg asked Bishop Aulén of Strängnäs to take the initiative to an informal brotherly deliberation at Strängnäs, with the bishops, the leaders of the bigger free denominations, and perhaps some laymen able to shape public opinion. The aim was to let them come closer to each other as human beings, and, as a visible result, to issue a joint Whitsun message to the Christians in the country on the one necessary thing: to fight side by side, more fiery and generous than ever. Then the bishop could appeal to the Nordic bishops for similar initiatives resulting in a Whitsun message to all the Christians of the world, in -

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come to Sweden (Blomberg to Fangen 1939, Oct. 24, 488a; Blomberg to Eiliv Skard 1939, Nov. 27, 598, UBO). StTD 1939, Dec. 1 'Förfäras ej, det finns blott en stormakt'; SvM 1939, Dec. 1 'En enda världsmakt finns ännu kvar – rättfärdighet.'

<sup>319</sup> StTD 1939, Dec. 2 'Lekmäns budskap fyllde nio Stockholmstempel'; SvM 1939, Dec. 2 'Sextio lekmän tala i Stockholms predikstolar.' Among the Nordic speakers were Haaken Gran, Eiliv Skard, Fredrik Ramm, Krista Petersen, and Lennart Segerstråle. In the Pentecostal Philadelphia Church, Harry Blomberg and Erik Arbin spoke to an audience of 4,000. Ramm and Skard spoke in the Concert Hall, together with Professor Gudmundur Kamban from Iceland, Bertil Ohlin, Manfred Björkquist, and Bror Jonzon. Speaking in the Auditorium were the young people, like the chairman of the United Student's Association, Dr. Gösta Lindeskog, and the athletes Karl-Erik Grahm, Lennart Strandberg, and Per Lie, and at the midnight meeting in the cinema, the famous free Church evangelist Frank Mangs, together with Elov Tengblad, Sture Mattsson, etc. Behind the invitation to the Auditorium meeting were Lennart and Karin Bernadotte, Elsa Cedergren, Fredrik Ström, and others. Lennart Bernadotte even said, in private: 'Misuse my name all you want, and go everywhere on it. I want to back you all I can in this. And you can use my office here, and my stenographer all you want' (S. Linton to H. Blake, A. Strang, E. Goulding, and K. Snellman 1939, Nov. 23; DWC). StTD 1939, Dec. 3 'Lördagsmöten för freden fyllde tre nöjestempel.' SvM 1939, Dec. 4 'Tysta minuter i Nordens kyrkor.' See also 'Kära Vän!', Stockholm 1939, Dec. 14 (dupl., EPC).

<sup>320</sup> Arbin 1941:214 ff., 221 f., 225 f. Arbin told about personal, Nordic contacts, too, see Arbin 1944:236 (the story of Kaisu Snellman), or 1945:41 f. (Karin and Sydney Linton).

cluding Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians.<sup>321</sup> While typical of the Oxford Group strategy of targeting key persons, Blomberg's message was obviously ecumenical, intended to promote world peace, and his turning to the Christians of the world contrasted with Frank Buchman's strategy of reaching the peoples with the message of a moral rearmament, without consideration of their respective religions.<sup>322</sup>

During the winter war between Finland and the Soviet Union, Swedish Oxford Group men like Erik Arbin and Harry Blomberg collected money for the work among Soviet prisoners in Finland. It was transferred through Mrs. Kaisu Snellman, one of the leading women of the Oxford Group in Finland, with the aim of spreading the message further into the Soviet Union.<sup>323</sup>

#### *V.4.2. National and Social Actions Inspired by the Oxford Group*

From the summer 1938, the Swedish Oxford Group work was focused on the strategy of Moral Re-Armament. The outbreak of the war led to the emphasis being changed to a programme of spiritual preparedness in 1940. This was not due to any opposition against the international direction of the work, instead the fundamental continuity is found in Frank Buchman's broadcast speech June 4, 1940, emphasizing 'true preparedness – the result of a nation morally re-armed' as 'the responsibility of every citizen.'<sup>324</sup> The motto 'andlig beredskap' had been used – in a somewhat different sense – in the training and work of the Oxford Group in Sweden in the spring 1940, and Frank Buchman might have got the idea of spiritual preparedness from Howard Blake in Sweden.<sup>325</sup> The

<sup>321</sup> H. Blomberg to G. Aulén 1940, Apr. 2 (LUB).

<sup>322</sup> Cf. Buchman 1942:44 (broadcast speech 1939, Oct. 29), 'Think of the vast forces available – Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Gentile; think of the spiritually re-armed everywhere who may be the pacemakers for the pacemakers of to-morrow!', also Buchman 1939b:11, 1940:9 f.

<sup>323</sup> E. Arbin to A. Lehtonen 1940, Jan. 2 (RAH), who further mentions Helge Nyström in the Swedish Oxford Group, and the Swedish Pentecostal leader, Lewi Pethrus, as interested in the project.

<sup>324</sup> Buchman 1942:47. See also F. Buchman: 'Andlig beredskap och försvar' (StTD 1940, July 26), and Buchman 1940b (including Vad är andlig beredskap [1940], and Att lyssna). In 1940, 'moralisk upprustning' was still used outside the Oxford Group in an open, social-moral sense, see Yngve Hugo: 'Sveriges andliga hemvärn. En redogörelse för folkberedskapen och upplysningsnämnderna' (Från departement och nämnder, May, 1940:13).

<sup>325</sup> 'Kära vänner,' 1940, Apr. 26 (dupl., EPC). Copy of S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940, Feb. 24 (DWC): 'the team is awakening to action on "Andlig Beredskap" as Howie wrote recently – "spiritual and cultural preparedness," the counterpart to the many forms of military and civilian "preparedness" in which the country is being trained.' That 'Andlig beredskap' was 'a new name for a new programme, and not just a continuation of our work on the same level as before' was emphasized by Sydney Linton (copy to F.

new motto had taken shape in Group circles in Stockholm in February, and was presented at big meetings in the Auditorium, February 27–29, ('Ett folks inre styrka – andlig beredskap'), and at Upsala, March 11–13. Subsequently, it was used by both Church and state, in interaction with the Oxford Group work.<sup>326</sup> In August 1940, Bishop Runestam stated that the relations between Group and Church were good – 'Die Engländer haben sich ja nunmehr zurückgezogen, und die Bewegung hat sich – meines Erachtens zu viel – mit der nationalen Erweckung zusammengefunden unter dem Schlagwort "geistige Bereitschaft".'<sup>327</sup>

The spiritual preparedness was handled through a special committee of the Central Church Board (Diakonistyrelsen), which included the Group revivalistic general secretary of the board, Sam. Palm, and the well-known Oxford Groupers Professor Gustaf Sundelin<sup>328</sup> and Dr. Margit Wohlin. The committee published a message ('sändebrev') on Church and spiritual preparedness, emphasizing, among other things, the need for a volunteer corps in every parish, and the advisability of a cooperation with the Christian-humanitarian action, whose prime mover was Harry Blomberg. The question was not one of a looser or stronger organization, or of forming any association, but of getting real workers.<sup>329</sup> In his speeches on Christian preparedness, Harry Blomberg

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Buchman 1940, March 28), who further states that 'cuttings from America and Britain show that their work is on a very different line from ours. That is right and natural' (copy to Pip Lyth 1940, May 8, DWC).

<sup>326</sup> 'Kära Vänner' Stockholm 1940, Feb. 23 (dupl., EPC). Inspiration came from Danish Group work as well as from Andliga Befolkningsskyddet (A.B.S.) in Finland. 'Internationell splittring isolerar ej grupprörelsen,' interview with Erik Arbin (StTD 1940, May 6). 'Andlig beredskap' was used in the Swedish press as early as in the autumn 1939.

<sup>327</sup> A. Runestam to E. Brunner 1940, Aug. 24 (ZZ).

<sup>328</sup> The experimental scientist Gustaf Sundelin visited the Visby meeting, where he experienced his sin and change, and subsequently defined the change as the consequence of a repeated personal surrender to Christ, giving a new attitude to life and men ('Vad har kristendomen betytt för mitt liv och min gärning?' 1948:135 f.). In Sundelin 1943:54 f., 56 f., 70, 72, he explained his experience as a change from theism to a personal faith in the resurrected Christ.

<sup>329</sup> Kyrkan och den andliga beredskapen 1940:7 f. An ecumenical committee for Christian preparedness (Kommittén för kristen beredskap), formed earlier in 1940, arranged, together with the Central Church board (Diakonistyrelsen), a national day for spiritual preparedness on June 30 (DN 1940, June 14; 'Militär beredskap dagens lösen moralisk styrka morgondagens,' StTD 1940 July 1; 'Kristen beredskap', Folkberedskap, Apr. 1941:2). Speakers in Stockholm were the minister for education and ecclesiastical affairs, Gösta Bagge, Manfred Björkquist, Harry Blomberg (see Blomberg 1941:74 ff.), and the Methodist pastor Th. Arvidson. In many towns, the Stockholm speeches were relayed in public places, on the initiative of the local committee, and then followed by some local speakers (copy of S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940, July 12, DWC). In the Free denominations, spiritual preparedness was even interpreted, in accordance with Buchman's speech, as presupposing a moral rearmament (see Eeg-Olofsson 1940:4). See

pointed to the Kingdom of God as the real fatherland of the Christians. This implied a special mentality: Christ told his disciples to go out and make men *his disciples*, not to make them *share their opinions* ! If the Church were to be able to work for reconciliation, all active Christians had to be thoroughly shaken by the atonement of Christ. To be a Christian, and not strive with all one's power to be a reconciling and uniting force among the people, was treachery to God.<sup>330</sup> The keyword in the present national situation was *preparedness*. Being a Christian was to live in permanent preparedness. It meant a duty to support the government in its attempts to consolidate democracy, as part of the reconciling work. Social care and information would never be enough, since personal friendship could not be organized. The collective, too, was a bad substitute for friendship. The strengthening of the moral power of resistance through a deeper consciousness of the necessity of sacrifices, was a task for all good forces in the nation.<sup>331</sup> The example of A.B.S. in Finland, the personal contacts, visits, and the fellowship which had grown there, was encouraging. In some parts of Sweden, such work had already started, in religious or idealistic circles, under the motto: Everybody has a responsibility for everybody else, and everyone can do something for someone.<sup>332</sup> Finally, Blomberg united his former liberal theology – the life of the Christians as a fifth gospel – with his recent discovery of the sacramental aspects – to become, like Christ, bread and wine for others.<sup>333</sup> This sacramental personalism was to be promoted especially through the Vadstena meetings (see Ch. V.4.5.). On his lecturing tours, Blomberg addressed audiences of 25,000 people, and in many cities, the local committees for Christian preparedness invited and got leading citizens to come to the lectures. Blomberg further gathered some of the Oxford Group team in every town, and 'set them in action, surrounding the people with responsibility.'<sup>334</sup>

The Christian work for spiritual preparedness was part of the work for a cultural and social preparedness of the people, organized by the State Informa-

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further Montgomery 1982:358 ff.

<sup>330</sup> Blomberg 1940:8 f.

<sup>331</sup> Blomberg 1940:11, 15 ff., 19.

<sup>332</sup> Blomberg 1940:20 ff., 26 f. ('Alla ha ansvar för alla och envar kan göra något för någon'). On the inspiration by A.B.S., see also *Andliga Befolkningsskyddet i Finland. Redogörelse efter upplysningar av Konstnären Lennart Segerstråle, Borgå (dupl., Alnäs), and Yngve Hugo: 'Sveriges andliga hemvärn. En redogörelse för folkberedskapen och upplysningsnämnderna (Från departement och nämnder, May 1940:13). On Lennart Segerstråle and A.B.S., see Ekstrand 1993:178, 181 f., on A.B.S. further Klemelä 1982:330.*

<sup>333</sup> Blomberg 1940:28 f.

<sup>334</sup> Copy of Linton to F. Buchman 1940, July 12 (DWC). The efforts to reach the leading citizens were 'particularly successful' in Upsala and Luleå. The tours of Blomberg and Mrs. Ester Lutteman were organized by *Kommittén för kristen beredskap*. During these tours, 12,500 Swedish Crowns were collected for the benefits of the families of the conscripts. See 'Kristen beredskap' (*Folkberedskap*, Apr. 1941:2).



tion Board (Statens Informationsstyrelse) through its section for cultural preparedness of the people. The work was obviously inspired by the Oxford Group, and out of nine small conferences with representatives of different sections of society, decided Oxford Group people took part in at least four, and were thus able to inspire and influence the planning of the work.<sup>335</sup> Subsequently, as the different associations wanted to nominate their own representatives, the Oxford Group influence seems to have weakened.<sup>336</sup>

The Oxford Group worked on this question outside of Church and state committees as well. Conferences for spiritual preparedness were held at Hålsjö folk high school in Ådalen, April 27–28, 1940, in Tibro, April 30–May 2, with a campaign in the province of Västergötland on a united province as the first step towards a united nation, subsequently at Svalöv (north of Lund) in August 1940, with more than 200 participants. A postcard was circulated with a printed text, which answered the question: What is spiritual preparedness? Publisher was K. J. Åke Nygren, a music teacher and speech therapist in Stockholm, who often acted as a cover for the Oxford Group. Along with some more common or undecided explanations, the postcard stated that spiritual preparedness creates a positive mentality of cooperation, which builds bridges between human beings, between worker and employer, countryside and city, and between nations. This meant to direct oneself to be honest, pure, unselfish, and loving – not just to the extent of the neighbour or the competitor, but in an absolute way. Spiritual preparedness is – finally – to recognize the authority of God and to listen to Him every day.<sup>337</sup>

The shopkeeper Gösta Almgren from Norrtälje tried to launch a military inner preparedness in talks with staff officers, the minister of defence, P. E. Sköld, Count Folke Bernadotte, and the chief army chaplain ('fältprost'), Gustaf

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<sup>335</sup> Copy of S. Linton to P. Blake 1940, May 10 (DWC): 'The state appointed an Informationsstyrelsen [...] Margit [Wohlin], Sundelin, Arbin, and three others submitted a report of our activities to them, with suggestions of how they might begin, with the result that Margit is elected to the cultural committee they have appointed [...]' *Kulturell och social folkberedskap 1941:13 ff. Conferences for representatives of the Church and the Christian denominations April 29, 1940 (Margit Cassel-Wohlin, Saga Hemmer), adult educational activities May 3 (Gösta Herthelius), women's organizations May 6 (Saga Hemmer), temperance associations May 9 (Harry Blomberg, Joel Kullgren), trade unions May 15, political youth associations May 29, universities and high schools June 5, teacher's associations June 6, organizations for physical education June 12.*

<sup>336</sup> 'Omorganisation' (Folkberedskap, Feb. 1942:1 f.).

<sup>337</sup> *Västgötar! 1940, Kära vänner! Mariestad den 17 maj 1940. Vad är andlig beredskap?* [1940]. The text was spread with references to Frank Buchman's speech on June 4, see 'Vad är andlig beredskap?' (SvM 1940, Aug. 20). Cf. the earlier definition of spiritual preparedness in the Swedish work, in April 1940 ('Andlig beredskap betyder framför allt fyra ting. 1. Frihet från fruktan och panikstämning. 2. Ofervilja och osjälviskhet. 3. Enighet och sammanhållning. 4. Disciplin och strängare livsstil'; 'Kära vänner,' 1940, Apr. 26; dupl., EPC). *Inbjudan till konferens för andlig förnyelse i Svalöv den 9–11 augusti 1940.*

Malmberg. Out of the twelve points on the postcard for spiritual preparedness, ten are almost identical with Almgren's definitions of military inner preparedness.<sup>338</sup> Another branch of the work was Sveriges andliga hemvärn [Sweden's Spiritual Home Guards].<sup>339</sup> Inspired by Finland's A.B.S., mediated by Harry Blomberg, a system of visitors to the homes of the conscripts, built upon personal confidence, was organized by the representatives of the Information Board and local committees. As early as September 26, 1940, more than a hundred families in Gothenburg only had been referred by the social authorities (Familjebidragsnämnden) to the Spiritual Home Guards, who visited the families every week. Still, the spiritual help, not the material one, was regarded as the chief aim of the work, and each visitor was responsible for only one or two families.<sup>340</sup>

After the Oxford Group conference at Gränna, 1940, the idea of a Christian-moral appeal to the candidates in the general elections in September 1940, was realized. During ten days before the elections, lists of signatures were collected by Oxford Group people. The appeal emphasized the creation of a campaign mentality without irrelevant or divisive criticism, the sacrifice of party views for national views, the electors themselves living up to the moral principles they expected in their candidates, and the education of leaders who were willing to build their public and private life on honesty, unselfishness, and obedience to God.<sup>341</sup> On March 8, 1941, the appeal, signed by 20,000 men and women of different professions, was presented to the speakers of the parliament by a deputation from the Oxford Group, led by the director-general Anders Örne.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> G. Almgren to E. Petré 1940, Dec. 29; 'Vad är militär inre beredskap?'; 'Vår militära inre beredskap. Förslag till appell och möte...'; 'Vår militära inre beredskap. Förslag till kampanj för stärkande av den inre militära fronten i vårt land,' Oct. 1940 (EPC).

<sup>339</sup> See further Yngve Hugo: 'Sverige andliga hemvärn. En redogörelse för folkberedskapen och upplysningsnämnderna' (Från departement och nämnder, May 1940:8 ff.) and Hugo 1943:125 ff.

<sup>340</sup> See 'Rundskrivelse till Pastorsämbeten, frikyrkosamfund, sociala institutioner m.fl.' Gothenburg 1943, July 18; 'Upplysningar och instruktion'; 'Det andliga hemvärdet i Göteborg.' (dupl., EPC). The organization of the work was led by Mrs. Tilander.

<sup>341</sup> Inspiration seems to have come from Canada ('we have formed four points, almost identical eventually with the Canadian points,' copy of S. Linton to H. Blake 1940, Sept. 6, DWC). Lists, for example: Annie Feldin to 'svenska medborgare och väljare' 1940, Sept. 13 (standardized form; EPC). The appeal: Till våra valkandidater! 1940, also, for example, in Arvika Nyheter 1940, Sept. 6 (signed by A. Runestam, E. Tengblad, Gösta Schotte, Ewert Larsson, Sigvard Bergsjö, Mauritz Molin, Nathan Hedin, and Annie Feldin). It is worth noting that neither the absolute character of the standards nor the standard of purity were even mentioned by the Oxford Group people in political issues. As early as October 1, 1935, Dean Brodersen, preaching at the opening service for the Danish parliament, emphasized the need for honesty, unselfishness, and love.

<sup>342</sup> 'Folkappell till riksdagen. Slå vakt om våra moraliska värden! 20.000 olika yrkesmän bakom Oxfordrörelsens vädjan,' StTD 1941, March 9. Other members of the deputation were Erik Arbin, Margit Wohlin, Gustaf Sundelin, Gerda Kjellberg, Baron Claes af

Since no occupation had suddenly plunged the Oxford Group into national tasks as in Denmark and Norway, a Danish report found Group work in Sweden in December 1940 ‘still that of a minority aiming to produce a new thinking by changing individuals and capturing public opinion,’ compared with the Danish one, with ‘a minority working with other responsible people at the heart of the nation to remake the nation.’<sup>343</sup>

In 1941, Landsförbundet för arbetslöshetens bekämpande (LAB) [the National Association for Combating Unemployment] was established in order to make a moral and material effort to increase job opportunities and food production. Its work, its name, and its abbreviation, were modelled after its Danish predecessor.<sup>344</sup> Some well-known Oxford Group people were members of the first national board of LAB.<sup>345</sup> Together with David Grimshaw, the unemployed worker Alfred Ahlberg in the autumn of 1940, travelled around in the country, ‘setting on foot advisory councils for the unemployed, setting workers and employers to work together on this.’ December 6–8, about forty workers and employers met at Nora Herrgård outside Stockholm on the question of unemployment and the relations between workers and employers. The Oxford Group mentality was still clearly recognizable in 1943, in the plans for dealing with the post-war unemployment problem.<sup>346</sup>

On the Sunday before Advent (Domssöndagen), November 23, 1941, a national meeting of the parliament (riksdagen) with the Church synod (kyrkomötet) took place in the Town Hall of Stockholm. Speaking were the chairman of the City Council (stadsfullmäktige), Fredrik Ström, Archbishop

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Ugglas, Joel Kullgren, and Albin Arvidsson. In Stockholm, the teachers counted 11,2%, nurses 7,2%, higher officials 2,7%, workers 2%, journalists 1%, etc. In Värmland, 10% were workers.

<sup>343</sup> Translation of K. Petersen to G. Egebjerg, 1940, Dec. 3 (appendix to G. Egebjerg to F. Buchman 1941, Feb. 8, NLC).

<sup>344</sup> A preliminary conference was held July 21, 1941, and the constituting one October 4, 1941, in Stockholm. LAB. LAB för ökade arbetstillfällen och ökad livsmedelsproduktion 1943; Stadgar för Landsförbundet för Arbetslöshetens Bekämpande 1942 (‘I detta syfte skall förbundet sträva att göra en moralisk och materiell insats’); ‘Landsförbundet för arbetslöshetens bekämpande...Verksamhetsberättelse för tiden 4/10 1941–31/12 1942’ (dupl., EPC). On the Danish L.A.B., see Ch. IV.4.3.

<sup>345</sup> Pastor Gösta Bodemar (secretary of the board), the merchant Sigfrid Falk-Faulkner, the farmer Albin Arvidsson, and the agricultural engineer Filip Olsson (‘Landsförbundet för arbetslöshetens bekämpande...Verksamhetsberättelse... – 31/12 1942,’ EPC).

<sup>346</sup> ‘Kära vänner,’ Stockholm 1940, Nov. 16 (dupl., Alnäs), copy of S. Linton to H. Blake 1940, Nov. 20 (DWC); see Alfr. Ahlberg: ‘Arbetslöshetsfrågan ur andlig och moralisk synpunkt’ (Ny Tid. Nya Människor 1941:11 ff.). KONFIDENTIELLT (dupl; DWC). Despite the German occupation of Denmark, Richard Petersen from Copenhagen took part, and spoke about the Danish L.A.B. Copy of Anna Ronnebäck to ‘Kamrat’ 1943, Sept. 28; ‘Torsdagen den 9 september [1943] samlades några personer hemma hos Anna och Adrian Ronnebäck...’ (EPC), in which the need of a working team under the guidance of God was emphasized.

Eidem, the minister for education and ecclesiastical affairs, Gösta Bagge, leader of the Conservative Party, and the speaker of the second chamber of the parliament, the Social Democrat August Sävström. A message to the Swedish people was introduced, which emphasized the need for a deepened national unity, unviolated freedom, and care of the native Christian culture. Sweden's line was presented as the Christian line, and words by the 16th century Lutheran reformer Olavus Petri were quoted.<sup>347</sup> The time chosen for the meeting was wise. In May 1941, the general assembly of the Church of Sweden (allmänna kyrkliga mötet) for the first time included representatives of the entire Swedish Christianity, even the Roman Catholic bishop Erik Müller. Professor K. B. Westman spoke on the Swedish line in our inner history, thus inspiring to the motto of the November manifestation. The uniting function of the Church of Sweden was emphasized.<sup>348</sup> Then the Archbishop could to some extent act as a representative, or at least a symbol, of the entire Swedish Christianity.

A few days after the national manifestation, those who had been behind it met with some interested persons, like the bishops Bohlin and Runestam, the speaker of parliament, August Sävström, the vice speaker, Karl Magnusson, and Fredrik Ström, and elected a committee consisting of Ström, Erik Arbin, the film director Bertil Edgardh, and pastor Anders Tauson-Hassler, the last three of whom were active in the fellowship of the Oxford Group. The message from the meeting of the parliament with the Church synod was to be sent to all parishes, to be posted in vestries, classrooms etc. all over the country, and the speeches were to be published in a pamphlet. The Swedish Film Industry (SF) had promised to show some items of a Christian-national kind in their bi-weekly newsreels, starting on December 26 with a clip of the archbishop reading the message from the manifestation. On New Year's Eve, Bishop Runestam in his New Year's sermon broadcast from the Cathedral of Karlstad would ex-

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<sup>347</sup> 'Wij swenske höre ock Gudhi til, så wel som annat folk och thet måål wij haffve, thet haffver Gudh gifvit oss.' SvD 1941, Nov. 24 ('Den svenska linjen är den kristna linjen'). Montgomery 1982:360. The meeting was arranged by Arvid Runestam, Fredrik Ström, and Anders Tauson-Hassler, Harry Blomberg assisting in writing the manifest (Hassler 1984:51). For the message to the Swedish people, and the archbishop's speech, see KG 1941:145 ff. According to D. Wiklund, 'Något om Värmland som ideologiskt centrum' (DWC), Hjalmar Wiklund was the real initiator. Though Appelqvist 1993:133 notes that the words on Sweden's line as the Christian line were to become a motto in the ongoing moral rearmament, he does not mention the Oxford Group.

<sup>348</sup> Lenhammar 1977:138 ff. Westman 1941:50 (Christian experiences and the Christian heritage are traced back to the Middle Ages. The Swedish flag has a cross; the law, the jurisprudence built upon a Christian foundation, is a heritage from the Middle Ages), 52 (the most important point in the Christian heritage is faith itself), 53 (the Church in Sweden is a part of the universal Christian Church, planted into our country). Among the most important prerequisites – to Westman, and to the idea of Sweden's line as the Christian line – was the Swedish Young Church Movement and its motto: 'Sveriges folk, ett Guds folk' (The people of Sweden – a people of God).

plain the meaning of the slogan 'Den svenska linjen är den kristna' [Sweden's line is the Christian line].<sup>349</sup>

During the period February 1–8, 1942, a series of meetings took place at various churches and other places in Stockholm, which presented the Swedish line as related to the Christian heritage, the press, the workers, the youth, the schools and homes, art and literature, and the general public, and concluded with a meeting on Sweden's line as the Christian line.<sup>350</sup> Some of the meetings were crowded, with more than 1,000 participants at the concluding one, the publicity was great, and the emphasized unity of Christian and national aims and fellowship was extensively related to the message of the Oxford Group.

However, distinct criticism came from both secular and Christian circles. In November 1941, *Dagens Nyheter* had emphasized the many unanswered questions in an editorial. In August 1942, an editorial on Christian and human ideals stated that there was also a fighting, atheistic humanism, and that the talk of the Christian front as the only front line against the forces of violence was untrue. The readers were reminded of the propaganda by Frank Buchman, who once was prepared to negotiate well with the same power of violence. The editorial was also critical of the disgusting, merely official Christianity.<sup>351</sup> An editorial in the Christian *Svenska Morgonbladet* emphasized the need for a personal answer to the question of Sweden's line as the Christian line, and Bishop John Cullberg of Västerås noted the remaining questions and the risks of confusing national with Christian ideas. Professor Anton Fridrichsen criticized the utilitarian abuse of Christianity as a means of saving the world from destruction, as a legalistic

<sup>349</sup> E. Arbin to T. Andræ 1941, Dec. 22 (T 3aa:3, UUB).

<sup>350</sup> Den svenska linjen – den kristna linjen 1–8 februari 1942 [programme]. 1942. Speakers were, among others, Feb. 1, in St. John's Church: Bishop Andræ, Fredrik Ström, vice speaker Magnusson, and Erik Arbin; Feb. 2, the editors-in-chief Yngve Hamrin and J. A. Selander, the journalists Axel Bråland, Herbert Grevenius, and E. Hj. Linder; Feb. 3, in the Civic House (Medborgarhuset): workers, including the members of parliament Hemming Steen and Anna Lindqvist-Petersson, as well as pastor Gösta Bodemar; Feb. 4, representing the youth: Åke Zetterberg, Daniel Wiklund, Sven-Erik Bäck, Anders Tauson-Hassler; Feb. 5, in the Immanuel Church: Dr. Margit Wohlin, Rev. and Mrs. Frostenson, Elov Tengblad; Feb. 6, in the Engelbrekt Church: Sven Stolpe, Bertil Edgardh, the pianist Ingmar Bengtsson, and Nils Bolander; Feb. 7 a personal exposition, The Swedish line and all us Swedes, Erik Arbin concluding that they were born as Swedes but must also become Christians! ('Vi födas till svenskar men måste även bli kristna!', SvD 1941, Feb. 2). At the concluding meeting on Sunday, Feb. 8 in the Town Hall, Manfred Björkquist, Arvid Runestam, and the county governors Bror Hasselrot and Carl Hamilton spoke ('Svenskt och kristet måste följas åt,' SvD 1942, Feb. 9). Åke Zetterberg: 'Den svenska linjen och den kristna' (Vår Kyrka 1942, Nr. 8). Arbin to Andræ 1941, Dec. 22, 1942, Jan. 30 (T 3aa:3, UUB).

<sup>351</sup> DN 1941, Nov. 25, 'Kristligt och fosterländskt' ('Men där betygades av kyrkans och statens ledning att kristligt och fosterländskt inte är och inte bör få bli motsatser i detta land [...] och har gemensamma fiender 1941'), 1942, Aug. 15, 'Kristna ideal och humana.'

interpretation of the Gospel, and instead emphasized that the world already had God's law, even without any Church.<sup>352</sup> Harry Blomberg emphasized that the Swedish line would not be Christian without the universal character of Swedish thinking. Furthermore, the road through death to resurrection was the necessary one for both the Church and individual Christians.<sup>353</sup>

In their joint book, Fredrik Ström and Arvid Runestam presented two independent views of Christianity at war.<sup>354</sup> In a synthesizing manner, Ström dealt with Christianity, democracy, and freedom. He found the weaknesses of democracy to be the same as its indifference to the ideal and moral demands of Christianity. Western civilization needed a fighting Christian Church, a fighting humanism, and a fighting democracy. The new world must be built upon an alliance between Christianity, democracy, and socialism. Ström's aim was to have Christianity permeate the world and society. His views were idealistic and anti-materialistic. The German instinct was described as seeking salvation only for the people, while the Semitic and Christian instinct seeks the salvation of the individual. The primacy of the personality was emphasized by quoting the philosopher Hans Larsson: From the ideas to the personality!<sup>355</sup> and Ström characterized the ennoblement of man as the nucleus of democracy, identical with the programme of the Gospel.

In his essay on Christianity and world improvement, Arvid Runestam described the relations between Christianity and culture as a problem.<sup>356</sup> Both the ecumenical movement and the Oxford Group had worked for world improvement – the former through the improvement of human conditions and the Christianization of social orders, the latter through the renewal of individuals, thus infusing a new spirit into their nations. Both needed encouragement and a clearer understanding of their programmes. The programme of spiritual pre-

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<sup>352</sup> 'Den svenska linjen är den kristna linjen,' SvM 1941, Nov. 24. Cullberg 1942. Fridrichsen 1942:86 ff.

<sup>353</sup> Blomberg 1942b:14 f. Treachery against Christianity was treachery against the national fellowship as well (p.8).

<sup>354</sup> They were so independent that Runestam's part was published separately in 1944. The Social Democrat Ström, a notable writer, had been the secretary of the Communist Party 1920–1925, was since 1926 a Social Democrat again, and, 1932–1936, editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Social-Demokraten*, then chairman of the city council of Stockholm.

<sup>355</sup> Ström & Runestam 1942:17, 93, 28, 86 (the Spirit is also called Ariel), 79, 112, 140, 88, with a sharp criticism of the new German religion and its God of Strength in contrast to the Christian God of Love. Ström found the union of the Christian and the humanistic spirit in Bishop Thomas, Engelbrekt, the Vasa kings, Thorild, Tegnér, Geijer, and Strindberg, p.44. See also 'Den svenska linjen är den kristna linjen' (VL 1942:14 ff.).

<sup>356</sup> Ström & Runestam 1942:105, 149 f., 263 ff. Ström emphasized the undogmatic nature of Christian ideals, p. 93, 105, 130, and quoted the philosopher Hans Larsson's words on the harmonious synthesis of Christianity and humanism in Söderblom.

paredness and the motto of the Swedish line as Christian could be misused, the former as a link in the military defence, the latter as something unclear and without real understanding of the Gospel. Instead, Runestam exclaimed: Let the Church be Church!<sup>357</sup> While rejecting the utilitarian abuse of Christianity in order to save western civilization and culture, even when it appeared in the guises of the Oxford Group, Runestam criticized the contemporary, non-idealistic theology (i.e. of Lundensian or Barthian origin) for defending the specifically Christian faith in a way that could help un-Christian ideologies, by isolating the Christian ideas from the world, and by tendencies of ultra-evangelism (for example, by Anton Fridrichsen, who resembled Gogarten). The salvation from evil was a salvation from *all* forms of human need, not a salvation *for* this world, but *out* of it. The effects of the Kingdom of God in this world were not identical with its aim.<sup>358</sup> The Christian idea of calling is emphasized as a guarantee against cultural indifference. At the national manifestation in November 1941, two Christian callings – of state and Church, respectively – had met. Now the Christian line had to go through the Swedish souls. The primary Swedish responsibility was not reconciliation or any other calling in the world, but the battle for the faith in the individual soul.<sup>359</sup>

A subsequent conference with 150 participants (workers, employers, and farmers) was arranged at Enköping, November 1942, on the connections between social problems and personal and moral relations, especially concerning everyday conflicts, confidence, and cooperation. The invitation was signed by people from political parties, trade unions, temperance organizations, and the Church, as well as a couple of Oxford Group men.<sup>360</sup>

### V.4.3. *Continued House-Parties and Conferences*

Since Sweden was isolated though not involved in the war, through neither warfare nor foreign occupation, the conditions for public house-parties were much better than in most European countries. Plans for an Oxford Group centre in Gothenburg were not realized, but in Stockholm, where the administration and central work was directed from Hotel Esplanade (Vänd Strömmen), need for a privat home, with a personal and ‘homely’ atmosphere, modelled on the Copenhagen centre in the home of Jens Tvede, was expressed. A splitting

<sup>357</sup> Ström & Runestam 1942:151 ff., 196 f.

<sup>358</sup> Ström & Runestam 1942:158, 173 (if the motto Only new men are able to create a new world! was interpreted in a utilitarian way, it was outside the Gospel), 163 f., 223 f., 167, 173 f.

<sup>359</sup> Ström & Runestam 1942:271 f., 277. Cf. Runestam’s private statement in February 1940, that ‘fundamentally there is something divine in democracy with all its failings, and that it is God’s plan for, and weapon in the world, for creating the real humanity that must come’ (Copy of S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940, Feb. 24, DWC).

<sup>360</sup> Enköping 6–8 nov. 1942:2 f; ‘Kära Vän!’, Stockholm 1942, Dec. 5 (dupl., EPC).

up of the administrative functions in press contacts, literature, and finance, was also planned.<sup>361</sup> From December 1940, such a home was provided at Malm-skillnadsgatan, while the rooms in the Hotel Esplanade remained the Swedish centre, staffed only by Swedes.<sup>362</sup>

Around the turn of the year 1939–1940, representatives of the teams all over Sweden gathered<sup>363</sup> with friends from the other Nordic countries at Karlskoga, with an emphasis on life-change, a new type of man, team fellowship, and leadership. The work should be concentrated to the province of Värmland, in cooperation with the Norwegians. After the training days, the Värmland team was specially trained by a meeting for mostly school and industrial people at Kristinehamn, with an audience of 150.<sup>364</sup> The fellowship and work of the team in Värmland was renewed and deepened.<sup>365</sup> When the Swedish schools were closed for three weeks in order to save fuel, a series of conferences were arranged at Karlstad in March 1940. After a preliminary conference with ten participants at Mölnbacka, just outside of Karlstad, the teacher's team, counting 30–50 members, met March 9–15, with an emphasis on guidance and spiritual preparedness.<sup>366</sup> March 15–17, a conference for pedagogues with 130 participants followed, on education under the guidance of God, with the aim of the training some of the teachers who had signed the appeal to the people of Swe-

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<sup>361</sup> Copy of S. Linton to E. Goulding 1939, Oct. 23 (DWC). Vänd Strömmen produced and distributed literature, photographs, and duplicated letters, and had the basic financial responsibility for the Oxford Group work in Sweden.

<sup>362</sup> The home of Sydney and Karin Linton (née Laurell), and David Grimshaw. Responsible for the press work were Kerstin Rääf, Lennart Göthberg, and the young engineer Per Olof Dahlman (S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940, Dec. 13, M.R.A. Archives, NLC).

<sup>363</sup> A list of the Swedish team in the early 1940s, divided up according to their respective provinces, is presented as Appendix Nr. 3.

<sup>364</sup> 'Kära vänner landet runt', 1940, Jan. 19 (dupl., EPC). A weekend-conference for industrial and school people was arranged at Säffle on the theme: Neutrality – a moral obligation, as early as November 4–5 ('Käre Vän! Lördagen den 4 och söndagen den 5 november anordnas en weekend-sammanskomst i Säffle [...] *NEUTRALITET – EN MORALISK FÖRPLIKTELSE*'; dupl., EPC).

<sup>365</sup> 'Returning this week from Stockholm, I found the whole situation immensely changed – to my absolute joy. A team meeting was to take place that night, with 32 of the team. Hjalmar [Wiklund] led it, in bubbling confidence. Elov [Tengblad] shared personally and costlily his own inadequacy. Quite a lot of the team bubbled up into initiative and activity, and we finished on our knees, with all 32 praying. It was a real rebirth' (S. Linton to H. and P. Blake, D. Grimshaw, E. Goulding, A. Strang, P. Lyth, and F. Goulding 1940, Feb. 24); 'a network of steadfast people, whom one can rely on through thick and thin, to carry on with the new civilization, living themselves in touch with God, radically living the four absolutes, and passing on that life to others. There has been created here a citizen leadership' (copy of Linton to P. Blake 1940, May 10, DWC).

<sup>366</sup> 'Mitt i denna allvarstid får Sveriges lärarkår plötsligt fritt från sitt arbete tre veckor i mars [...]' (dupl., EPC). Copy of S. Linton to P. Blake 1940, May 5 (DWC).



den in 1939.<sup>367</sup> During Eastertide, a broader conference (about 500) emphasizing the need of spiritual preparedness was arranged. On Easter Sunday, Holy Communion was celebrated in the Cathedral by 'four young revolutionary priests,' Harald Ernevi, Gunnar Malmeström, Tauson-Hassler, and Börje Larsson. In the afternoon, a public meeting was held in the theatre, led by Elov Tengblad. The writer Olof Seger testified about his own home relations, and Mrs. Ella Grönroos from Helsinki spoke about the experiences of spiritual, material, and social preparedness during the winter war. Nineteen Norwegians took an active part as well.<sup>368</sup>

Local separatist plans in Stockholm to change the direction of the work into something Swedish, through breaking up the national office, Vänd Strömmen, and removing two of the foreign full-timers from the country, were relinquished.<sup>369</sup> Instead, the Stockholm team, growing in initiative and responsibility, took over Vänd Strömmen, which was refounded.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> Inbjudan till Pedagogisk Konferens i Karlstad den 15–17 mars 1940. 1940, signed by Tengblad, Hj. Wiklund, Rakel Kullgren, Paul Wetterfors, Stina Jansson, and Fränki.

<sup>368</sup> Inbjudan till Påsksamling för Andlig beredskap i Karlstad den 21–25 mars 1940. Among the speakers were Erling Wikborg and two other Norwegians (Karlstads-Tidningen 1940, March 27). Copy of S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940, March 28 (DWC), on the growing development into leadership of Hjalmar Wiklund, Elov Tengblad, Olof and Elinor Seger, and Karin Laurell. In copy to A. Strang, E. Goulding, and H. Blake 1940, Apr. 4 (DWC), Bishop Runestam is reported to summon the Tengblads, the Molins, the Wiklunds, A. Tauson-Hassler, Karin Laurell, the Bishop's clerical assistants Malmeström and Ernevi, and S. Linton to a diocese 'war council' (kriksråd). Among other conferences was a party for nurses at Landskrona, April 6–7 (Ruth C[hristensson] to A. Feldin undated; EPC).

<sup>369</sup> Copy of Linton to Strang, E. Goulding, Lyth, and Grimshaw 1940, March 30 (DWC) positively on the Stockholm team (Robert Lilja, Margit Wohlin, Nils Hagelin, etc.) 'beginning to take over responsibility for the team all over the country'; to Strang, E. Goulding, H. Blake 1940, Apr. 4 (DWC), on the turning tide in the relations between the Stockholm team and the work at Vänd Strömmen: 'the negative bunch, who are mostly Erik [Arbin]'s followers found they had no support from him [...] Nils Hagelin told me some of the back history. There has been a little bunch planning to remove me and Pip from the country, break up Vänd Strömmen and start something Swedish. They had a secret meeting in Värmland at Lundsberg while we were at Karlstad. The people concerned seem to be Gustav Linnroos, Arvid Persson, Erik Carlsson, Gösta Herthelius, Åke Zetterberg, Carl Hoppe and Hans Rabén. [...] it is an interesting specimen of inactivity backfiring in attack on the main source of activity by way of compensation of their conscience, I think. Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. I was very grateful to be there, though I think the worst was cured before I knew the real extent of the conspiracy.'

<sup>370</sup> Present were Karl Welin-Berger, K. J. Åke Nygren, Nils and Astrid Hagelin, Robert Lilja, Margit Wohlin, and Kerstin Rääf. See also copy of Linton to H. Blake 1940, Apr. 22 (DWC). Föreningen Vänd Strömmen was constituted April 1, 1940, with K. Welin-Berger (chairman), Nils Hagelin (secretary), and Rob. Lilja (cashier). Other participants were Margit Wohlin, Astrid Hagelin, Kerstin Rääf, and K. J. Åke Nygren. During the

Instead, the German occupation of Denmark and Norway changed the plans and Group work in Sweden as well. Howard Blake was called back to the U.S.A. by Frank Buchman personally.<sup>371</sup> David Grimshaw and Edward Goulding were both in Norway when the German troops landed, but escaped – Grimshaw to Sweden, where he remained, together with Sydney Linton and Pip Lyth. For some time, these three planned to leave, informing about twenty-five of the leaders of this possibility at a conference at Nora in May 1940, but the direct advice from Frank Buchman was to consider remaining in Sweden.<sup>372</sup>

A conference for national education ('folkuppfostran') was arranged at Gränna, August 8–12, 1940, with about 675 participants. The individuals as well as the nation needed a so-called new moral substance. The growing national unity needed a deeper foundation in a national life-programme. By accepting absolute standards and conforming one's life to the will of God, the gain was true freedom, lasting unity, and capacity for unselfish cooperation. The conference would seek the answers to questions of the new man, how to educate the youth and the whole people to new human beings, and what such an education demanded of homes, schools, press, film, radio, art, literature and sports.<sup>373</sup> The invitation to the preceding training days, August 2–8, was sent to

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subsequent years, Olof Seger, Laila Persson, R. Kettner, and Erik Arbin also had posts in Föreningen Vänd Strömmen (Minutes, Alnäs). Another formal association was Föreningen för andlig beredskap, Litteraturtjänst, which aimed at the production of books, photographs, and pamphlets, established in October 1940 (Minutes, Alnäs).

<sup>371</sup> Copy of Linton to H. Blake 1940, Apr. 14 (DWC).

<sup>372</sup> On the escape of Goulding and Grimshaw, see copy of Linton to Goulding 1940, May 31; Linton to Lyth 1940, May 8: 'for the Swedish team, they must some day take over the supreme leadership of the work in their own country. This seems undoubtedly the psychological moment. In that case, we help them most by being out of the country'; to P. Blake 1940, May 10; to F. Buchman 1940, June 6 (DWC). Linton, who had been staying in Karlstad since January 1940, and Grimshaw moved to Stockholm two days before the province of Värmland was closed to foreigners. Andrew Strang was caught in Denmark, interned and sent to Germany, see Ch. IV.4.2. Lyth returned to England at the end of 1942 ('Kära vän!' Stockholm 1943, Jan. 21, dupl., Alnäs).

<sup>373</sup> Inbjudan till konferens för folkuppfostran i Gränna den 8–12 augusti 1940, signed by Elov Tengblad (school principal), Gustaf and Saga Walli (training college principal and artist, respectively), Gustaf Sundelin (professor), Rakel Kullgren (secondary grammar school teacher), Folke Mårtensson (elementary school teacher), Waldemar Lorentzon (artist), Margit Wohlin (doctor of arts), Olof and Elinor Seger (writer and domestic science teacher, respectively), Paul Wetterfors (training college senior master), Gunlög Mosesson (B.A.), Josef Olsson (folk high-school principal), and Åke Nygren (music teacher). The educational side of the population problem had been emphasized in Gunnar Biörck's *Vårt folk och vår framtid* 1940:66, 72 et passim, which states that the lack of faith in the future must be treated as an educational problem, while the social and economic injustices must be treated as social problems. The Swedish Oxford Group view is presented in Tauson-Hassler 1941, which emphasizes the importance of testimony, working fellowship, Bible-reading and listening in the Christian homes.

active Group people able to ask themselves how to help in the creation of the new type of man, and what sort of change it demanded of them personally. Questions were raised about which members of the team who were to take responsibility for the conference, which people who should be invited, and how the economy should be settled.<sup>374</sup> The conference was carried through on Swedish initiative, with the foreign full-timers acting only as advisors. In her opening speech, Rakel Kullgren emphasized that spiritual preparedness was in itself national education. The Finnish delegation of thirteen persons played an important part at the conference. Among the speakers was the famous Swedish writer Elin Wägner. Kerstin Rääf's work for creating a national education through the art and among artists was brought to attention.<sup>375</sup> After the conference, thirty-five leaders stayed for planning, led by Margit Wohlin, and discussed, for example, the coordination of the Finnish and the Swedish work.<sup>376</sup> Many teachers seem to have taken notice of the Gränna meeting, and plans were soon made for a similar message to the Swedish farmers. As a preparation, a questionnaire was sent to team members, with the aim of creating a new type of farmers, and an agricultural life led by God.<sup>377</sup>

In October 1940, the so-called Stockholm Week was arranged under the motto: The Greatest Revolution of History Whereby the Cross of Christ Will Change the World. The training days were arranged with parts of Frank Buch-

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<sup>374</sup> Inbjudan till träningsdagar i Gränna den 2–8 augusti 1940, signed by Margit Wohlin, Olle Helander, Folke Mårtensson, Paul Wetterfors, Rakel Kullgren, Rut Danielson, Elinor and Olof Seger. Among the most active of the 150 participants were Dr. Nils Frykman from Näsjö, who presented 'a clear and uncompromising message on sex in all areas' (copy of S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940, Aug. 17; DWC). See further N. Frykman: 'Den nya sexualmoralen och naturens sexuallag' (Ny Tid. Nya Människor 1941:5 ff.).

<sup>375</sup> 'Gränna vill ha hela landet att lystra till parollen om sann folkuppfostran,' JP 1940, Aug. 8; 'Konferens om folkuppfostran,' StTD 1940, Aug. 9; 'Vårt land behöver en ny människotyp,' JP 1940, Aug. 9; 'Den nya människan Gränna mötets mål,' StTD 1940, Aug. 10; 'Att lyssna till Gud grund för gemenskap,' JP 1940, Aug. 10; 'Grännakonferensen: Krav på lydnad för Gud och ärlighet även i politik,' StTD 1940, Aug. 12; 'Apellen från Gränna,' Svenska Journalen 1940, Nr. 34:14 f. In the Finnish delegation were Lennart Segerstråle, Fred Runeberg, Helga Rientola, Heikki Teitinen, Elma Nallimaa, Anja Thesless, Olavi Bonsdorf, and Ukko Kivistö (leader of the A.B.S. in the counties of Åbo and Björneborg, now experiencing his first Oxford Group conference (see 'Oxfordkonferensen i Gränna,' Människovännen 1940, Aug. 22). Copy of S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940, July 12 (DWC).

<sup>376</sup> Copy of S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940, Aug. 17 (DWC).

<sup>377</sup> 'Käre vän!', Stockholm 1940, Sept. 9 (dupl., EPC). A house-party for farmers and workers was arranged at Fornby in Stora Tuna, May 27–29, 1939 by Filip Olsson, Gustaf Sundelin, and Philip Lyth ('Kära vän!' May 20, 1939, dupl., EPC), an agricultural meeting at Axvall, January 5–7, 1940 ('Kära' 1939, Dec. 16, dupl., Alnäs), and March 16–17, 1940, about thirty people from the agricultural team met at Borgen outside Stockholm on the biggest problems of farming (Världsfronten, 1940, Apr. 5; dupl., EPC).

man's speeches, special questions for the quiet time, as well as certain Bible texts as its basis.<sup>378</sup> In March 1941, a conference on home and work was arranged at Sigtuna, in April, a conference on the responsibilities of homes, schools, hospitals, and local councils at Nora herrgård, and in May, a conference on the youth and the future, at Kristinehamn, by persons from different organizations who worked with young people. In the summer 1941, about a hundred people stayed together in periods at Glava in Åmotfors, aiming at 'a really natural and normal' family life and simple living, with children of all ages from five months to fifteen years, and with Olof and Ellinor Seger acting as hosts.<sup>379</sup> Around the turn of the year 1941–1942, a team party was arranged at Mullsjö, on discipline, obedience, and love.<sup>380</sup> March 30–April 7, 1942, 400 Swedish team-workers met for a conference on deeper sharing before the four absolute standards, which would create life-changers. Life-changing came 'to the fore again in the thinking,' and there were reports of 'the fresh emphasis on lifechanging,' which sought to convey 'the fundamental part of the Christian message.'<sup>381</sup>

In July 1942, more than a hundred teachers from different levels and parts of the country met at Sigtuna for a conference on character-building ('karaktärsfostran'). It was initiated by Sven Fraenki during the winter meetings of fifteen elementary school teachers and as many grammar school teachers in Stockholm. The idea was built on the directives to the school commission of 1940, which stated that the final aim of the school was not to convey information, but education in the widest and deepest sense of the word. Here the Oxford Group ideas of a new man met with other forms of reform pedagogy, for example the pedagogic experiments in Gothenburg, inspired by the Austrian psychologist Dr. Elsa Köhler. The discourses at the conference were published by the secretary of the elementary school teachers' association.<sup>382</sup> Several articles emphasized the need for a new relationship between pupils and teachers, but the only one with a clear Oxford Group message was Elov

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<sup>378</sup> 'Historiens största revolution, varigenom Kristi kors skall förvandla världen, inkallar människor till tjänst i dag. Stockholmsveckan 6–13 okt. 1940' (dupl., EPC).

<sup>379</sup> Sigtuna 19 22–25 mars 41... inbjudes härmed. 'Käre vän,' Stockholm, 1941, March 29 (dupl., EPC), Ungdomen – Framtiden... 1941, signed by Ingrid Andersson, Eric Källqvist, Ernst Nordström, Fingal Ericsson, Sven Frænki, Märta Hydén, and O. Kostet. 'Visst räcker våra kuponger till Finland!' StTD 1941, July 30; copy of S. Linton to P. Lyth 1941, June 30, to H. Blake July 8, to A. Strang Aug. 18, to F. Buchman Aug. 19 (DWC); Hassler 1984:52.

<sup>380</sup> D. Wiklund to E. Petrén 1941, Dec. 15 (EPC).

<sup>381</sup> 'Kära vän!' 1942, March 12; P. M. för påsken i Stockholm; P. M. II. Påsksamlingen i Stockholm; 'Kära vän!' 1942, Apr. 27 (dupl., EPC). Copy of S. Linton to H. Blake 1942, Apr. 27, July 24, Aug. 22 ('Somehow we have found our lifechanging form again and got going'; DWC).

<sup>382</sup> Rakel Fraenki (née Kullgren) in Fraenki 1979:90. Draft for invitation 'Konferens om karaktärsfostran...' (EPC). Stigbrand 1943:72, 79, 88. Dr. Köhler had taught in Gothenburg in 1936. See further Myhre 1972:380 ff.

Tengblad's discourse, which stated that Christian education means

- 1) giving our children a clear and firm knowledge of the Christian fundamentals [...]
- 2) placing ourselves under the Christian truths we teach the children.
- 3) teaching our children how a man through listening to the inner voice may come into personal contact with God himself. In the same way that we train brains and hands, so the conscience ought to be trained. Nothing is more important at this time than a renaissance of the Christian conscience.
- 4) teaching the children the art of cooperation in both theory and practice.
- 5) rationalizing school-forms, curriculums, and educational methods to a better correspondence with the individual talents of the children, and the need of so ciety.
- 6) letting the children grow up in an authoritative, healthy, and inspiring atmosphere of piety, love of mankind, inner freedom, safety, joy, and kind consideration.<sup>383</sup>

A subsequent conference was arranged at Upsala at Easter 1944, with an emphasis on the wider social responsibility of the teachers in the search for a common task.<sup>384</sup>

To many 'old Christians,' the Strängnäs conference, August 12–17, 1942, with more than 400 participants, rising to 550, and its preceding training days, meant a new surrender and a clearer view of God's demands in the present situation: an army of men willing to place themselves totally at God's disposal. Many of the Visby appeals were repeated, the invitation pamphlet emphasizing the responsibility of Sweden in the serious peace crisis to come, and for its underlying moral or religious problems, and its need for guidance and fellowship.<sup>385</sup> Having consulted Bishop Aulén, Dean Elis Malmeström accepted a leading position, in order to seek an opportunity for a private conference with the Oxford Group leaders, aimed at a more Christian realistic view on the relation to evil, to the world, evolutionism, the new man, etc. He prepared this through contacts with Erik Arbin, Bishop Runestam and Bishop Aulén, wishing Bishop Cullberg of Västerås, too, to join a private conference. Runestam agreed

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<sup>383</sup> Stigbrand 1943:67 f. See also Rakel Kullgren in *Livsduglig ungdom* 1942:106 f. (Reform education), 114 (Quiet time in class), Daniel Wiklund, *op.cit*:149 f. (the Undersåker conference on the new type of man), and further articles by Hj. Lindroth (GP 1941, Sept. 1, 1943, Sept. 27), Sven Fränki (StTD 1942, Aug. 20), Hakon Swenne (Helsingborgs Dagblad 1942, Oct. 18).

<sup>384</sup> *Oxfordgruppens lärarsamling Uppsala – Påsken 1944*:2 f.

<sup>385</sup> *Strängnäs-konferensen 1942*:2 f. Among the inviters were Arbin, Blomberg, Gerda Kjellberg, Hj. Lindroth (Gothenburg), E. Malmeström, F. Ström, Hj. Wiklund, and Margit Wohlin, who were greeted in the pamphlet by Bishop Aulén. See also 'Kära vän!', Stockholm, 1942, June 15, 'Kära vän!', Strängnäs, 1942, June (dupl, EPC), which emphasize the need of participating men, not only women; P. M. *angående Strängnäs-konferensen* (dupl, EPC), which emphasizes the need for an army of life changers to solve national problems.

totally with Malmeström.<sup>386</sup> A private Group report stated that ‘two Bishops on the invitation I think could be managed, provided they are balanced by adequate non-religious names, and not by a whole heap of clergy.’ The invitation to the conference pointed out that after the war a crisis of peace must be expected, as complicated as the crisis of war. Therefore the personal problems behind the political, economic and social ones needed to be solved.<sup>387</sup>

At the conference, Fredrik Ström talked of his failure with ideals and programmes, and pointed to the need for a recreation of man from within. An early Holy Communion service counted 304 communicants in the Cathedral. Erik Arbin was reported to have ‘stepped out into real leadership for the whole work, not only for the work within his parish.’ After the conference, Arbin thanked Bishop Aulén for being not just an interested onlooker, but helping to carry the conference in his prayers – a phrase used in duplicated letters as well. A significant experience was the discovery by Karin Hartman and her two fellow students at Birkagården that they were in fact a team, though they previously had not worked as one. More than 700 came to an after-meeting in Stockholm for those who had been unable to go to Strängnäs. The emphasis on life-change was repeated at a conference at Enköping, October 31–November 1. In the autumn 1942, a couple of travelling teams visited the Enköping conference, November 6–8, training days in Västerås, and a party in Skellefteå, which continued on to Luleå, Umeå, and Sundsvall.<sup>388</sup>

On January 2–6, 1943, approximately a hundred active persons from different parts of the country gathered at Viggbyholm.<sup>389</sup> April 17–18, 1943, a conference on the Christian view of life in the workplace was arranged at Norrahammar, near Jönköping, with an emphasis on God’s plan and the importance

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<sup>386</sup> E. Malmeström to John Cullberg 1942, July 22 (VDA), A. Runestam to Malmeström 1942, July 24 (Acc. H 1965-57, GUB). On Malmeström and the Oxford Group, see also Malmeström 1936:5 f., and further Eckerdal 1992:51, who emphasizes Malmeström’s combination of influences from the Young Church Movement, the Oxford Group, and the new, sacramental teaching on the Church. See also Runestam to Malmeström 1938, July 21, and Arbin to Malmeström 1942, July 5. Runestam did not attend the Strängnäs conference (Runestam to Malmeström 1942, July 24, Aug. 12; H 1965:57, GUB). Bishop Aulén’s positive attitude was strengthened by his knowledge of the Oxford Group in Norway during the German occupation, see his preface to Stolpe 1942 (Oct. 17). Aulén influenced the contents of Stolpe’s book as well (Stolpe to Aulén 1942, Oct. 20, LUB). Theologically, Aulén was critical of the personalistic emphasis of the Oxford Group; to change the world through changed men was utopian (in discourses at Sigtuna and Gothenburg 1944, Aug. 30 and Oct. 27, respectively; see Lind 1975:271).

<sup>387</sup> Copy of S. Linton to D. Grimshaw 1942, June 23; to H. Blake 1942, July 24 (DWC).

<sup>388</sup> Copy of S. Linton to H. Blake 1942, Aug. 22 (DWC); Arbin to G. Aulén 1942, Aug. 25 (LUB). K. Hartman 1984:113 f. S. Linton to F. Buchman 1942, Nov. 11 (NLC). ‘Käre vän!’, Upsala 1942, Sept. 25; ‘Kära Vän!’ Stockholm 1942, Dec. 5 (dupl., EPC).

<sup>389</sup> ‘Kära Vän! Välkommen till Viggbyholm’, Stockholm 1942, Dec. 14 (dupl., EPC); ...inbjudes härmed till en konferens i Viggbyholm den 2–6 januari 1943, signed by Erik Arbin, Thorsten Nunstedt, Elov Tengblad, and Anders Tauson-Hassler.

of his commandments in working life.<sup>390</sup>

During the later war years, the Swedish Oxford Group work was focused on the reconciling vision from Visby and the future task of rebuilding the world. The pamphlet *Du har en insats att göra...* (1943) emphasized Sweden's possibilities to remain a spiritual world power, if the three military branches were given their corresponding defence lines: sound homes, confidence in working life, and will towards reconciliation between the peoples. This could be realized only through change, cooperation, and battle.<sup>391</sup> It is worth noting that the method still was the personalistic one, and that neither Moral Re-Armament nor ideology were even mentioned.

The conference at Lundsbrunn, June 1943, with about 350 participants, emphasized the need for reconciliation between city and rural area, between workers and employers. The Midsummer meeting at Vindeln, June 22–27, was the first big party in Norrland (150 participants), and aimed at building a totally new world, with God as the leader. The invitation to the preceding training days, June 19–22, emphasized the purpose of personal, radical life-change. The training days included short, personal presentations (name, occupation, and special problems), with the aim of training for life changing.<sup>392</sup> Short attacks on the basis of *Du har en insats att göra* were made in different parts of the country. Travelling teams went to Skellefteå, Umeå, and, subsequently, to Sundsvall, with emphasis on reconciliation among nations, beginning with the individuals,<sup>393</sup> and at the turn of the month October–November Arvika was

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<sup>390</sup> Kristen livssyn i arbetslivet. Norrahammar 17–18/4 1943.

<sup>391</sup> *Du har en insats att göra...* 1943:7, 9 ff., 17 ff. The pamphlet was edited by 'Andlig beredskap' in Stockholm. Several preliminary drafts; 'Sven Stolpes anmärkningar'; A. Tauson-Hassler to Annie Feldin 1943, May 30; according to copy of A. Feldin to Kerstin [Rääf], Syd[ney Linton] and Anders [Tauson-Hassler] 1943, May 28, corrections were made by Laila [Persson], Olof [Sejer], Sven Stolpe, S. Linton, David R[alson], and Silas [Rydgård]; 'Kära Lagkamrat!', Stockholm, 1943, June (dupl; EPC). The publicity was great, see, for example, an editorial 'Du har en insats att göra,' *StTD* 1943, July 29.

<sup>392</sup> Lundsbrunn 12–14 juni 1943. Among the inviters were Sven Fränki, Thorsten Nunstedt, and Sten Westling; 'Kära Vän!' Lycksele, 1943, July 21 (dupl; EPC). 'Kära kamrat! Visionen om en större framstöt i Norrland [...]' Umeå, 1943, May, (dupl., EPC). Midsommarsamlingen i Vindeln 22–27 juni 1943. Among the inviters were Gustaf Sundelin and Olof Seger. See also Hartman 1984:117 f., further "'Stilla stunden" bildar en ny epok i denna tid,' Västerbottens-Kuriren 1943, June 26.

<sup>393</sup> "'Bara ett nytt sätt att leva...'" Sundsvalls Tidning 1943, Aug. 14; 'Oxfordrörelsen vill kristen revolution,' Sundsvalls Tidning 1943, Aug. 16; 'Oxford-partyn samlade över 100,' *Nya Samhället* 1943, Aug. 16; 'Sunda hem och vilja till folkförsoning,' *AB* 1943, Aug. 16. Among the preceding activities among people from Norrland was a gathering of a dozen workers from Ådalen at Nora in June 1940, initiated by Rikard Friis and Gösta Belfrage, with the help of Sten Lilliehöök, Karl Welin-Berger, and E. Em. Lindqvist, which changed a locally planned house-party in Ådalen into twelve days of leadership training (S. Linton to H. Blake and E. Goulding 1940, June 22; to P. Lyth 1940, Sept. 6; to H. Blake 1940, Oct. 15; *DWC*). In the autumn 1940, Kramfors was visited by a Swedish-

visited by the so-called Oxford youth, who worked on a personal level, through minor meetings, and to audiences of sometimes more than 140.<sup>394</sup> The Karlstad party, November 13–14, 1943, raised the question of a solution to the national and individual problems, with the aim of helping each other to a clear idea of a life under the guidance of God, and the Midsummer meeting at Alingsås, 1944, emphasized the total effort for peace and rebuilding by individuals and nations.<sup>395</sup> In the winter 1944, a small team travelled the North of Sweden, training local teams in Skellefteå, Umeå, etc, and making personal calls at Sollefteå and Haparanda as well, and at Easter 1945, teams from Härnösand, Hudiksvall, Sundsvall and Lit met.<sup>396</sup> At Easter 1945, a gathering was arranged in Malmö in southern Sweden as well, with about forty, mostly young participants, and an emphasis on life change.<sup>397</sup>

The biggest Swedish house-party since Visby, 1938, was arranged at Lund, August 4–14, 1944, with about 1,400 participants, on the theme, the demands of peace ('Freden kräver'): new men, sound homes, God-guided education, confidence in working life, reconciliation between peoples, i.e. a demand put on Sweden, and on the individual person. The preparations for the invitation were made by a team of twenty-six (sixteen from Stockholm, ten from Skåne). In the invitation brochure, both King Gustav and the prime minister Hansson were quoted. The task was described as the greatest rebuilding and reshaping work of history. The need was for men, filled by love, trained to co-operate, taking their power and guidance from God, creating the quality of life in the Swedish nation that was demanded for its contribution to the spiritual and material renewal of the world. Joint quite times were held daily at 8 a.m.<sup>398</sup>

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Finnish team dealing with the unemployment problem ('Kära vän!', dupl., EPC).

<sup>394</sup> Vårt ansvar för vårt folk [Invitation card for Oct. 31]. 1943. 'Inre förvandling nödvändig för att skapa en bättre värld,' Arvika Tidning 1943, Oct. 30; 'Sinnesändringen måste komma hos den enskilde,' Arvika Tidning 1943, Nov. 2. Taking a leading part were Erik Petrén, Kerstin Rääf, Rangel Ekblom, Anders Tauson-Hassler, Annie Feldin, Sven Fränki, Märta Molin, among others.

<sup>395</sup> Finns det en lösning? [1943]. The invitation was unsigned, but registrations were to be sent to Mrs. Rut Malmeström (wife of Dean Malmeström, now in Karlstad). Oxfordgruppens midsommarsamling... 1944:3, quoting Berdyayev. Other meetings were arranged in November 1943, for example at Hässleholm with eighty young men and women taking part ('Oxfordmöte i Hässleholm,' Norra Skåne 1943, Nov. 23), and in Borås for about a hundred participants ('Ett Gott Nytt År på Guds stridsfront,' 1943, Dec. 12, signed by nineteen persons (dupl., EPC).

<sup>396</sup> S. Linton to E. Petrén and others 1944, Jan. 25, Feb. 4; dupl. 'Kära Vän' 1944, Feb. 25. (dupl., EPC). Travelling were Sydney Linton, Laila Persson, and Ingeborg Lövgren (from Borås). S. Lilliehöök and others to Sidney [sic] and others 1945, Apr. 17 (EPC).

<sup>397</sup> 'Väl mött allesammans i Skånelaget!' 1945, March 13 (dupl., Alnäs), P. M. för påsksamlingen i Malmö 1945, 'Kära vänner i Skåne och Blekinge, Lund and Malmö' 1945, Apr. 21 (dupl., EPC).

<sup>398</sup> 'Konfidentiellt i högsta grad!' 1944, May 19 (dupl., DWC); 'Kära Vän!' 1944, June 21 (dupl., EPC). Oxfordgruppen Lund 4–14 aug. 1944:2 f.; H. Eneborg: 'Oxfordgruppens



The different national situation in the occupied countries compared with that of neutral Sweden was emphasized by Mrs. Vera Molland from Norway, who criticized the weaknesses of Swedish Group work. Of the leaders, she found only Harry Blomberg and Professor Lindroth open to Church, sacraments, and congregational life. The work had not deepened during the war.<sup>399</sup>

After the closing of the period, in November 1945, ten full-time workers were active in the Swedish Oxford Group work: Silas Rydgård, Kerstin Rääf, Karin and Sydney Linton, Olof Seger, Laila Persson, Greta Hasselberg, Gunvor Norrman, Sigbritt Therner, and Lennart Sjögren.<sup>400</sup>

#### *V.4.4. The Swedish Youth Team in Social Work*

During the early war years, the Swedish youth team took on the major problems, 'with their vigour and imagination rapidly outstripping the older leaders and figureheads.' They planned a gathering in the early new year, 'to meet some of the older leaders and set them a new pace personally' in a group of about thirty people, half of which were older leaders and half of which young people. The British full-time workers hoped that the young people would give 'a new pace and direction to the work in this country, which the leadership here has never been able to give hitherto,' and lead to 'real strategic planning for the whole country.'<sup>401</sup>

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Lundakonferens' (Vår Kyrka 1944, Nr. 3). The 'major responsibility' for the planning was taken by Åke Zetterberg and Gösta Bodemar, the latter had 'especially a way with the workers – a rare quality in Swedish priests' (S. Linton to F. Buchman 1944, June 4, NLC).

<sup>399</sup> E. Molland to A. Runestam 1944, Aug. 22 (Runestam Coll.I): 'Sidney [sic] Linton og de andre prestene var ikke betydelige nok: Lindroth hade åpent blick for at det må være en vekst i kristenlivet, og at det finnes skatter skjult i ord og sakrament som det er en oppgave å leve sig inn i. Sundelin virket naiv i alt som var utenom hans fag. Harry Blomberg var den som var sterkest kirkelig forankret, og som min hustru hade størst glede av å treffe. Han talte om hvor nødvendig det er å leve sig inn i menighetens liv. Han reiste imidlertid dessverre efter noen dager. Arbin kom sent og var kort.' On the lack of understanding of the sensitive, political situation, see Ch. III.4.2. On Linton's work, cf. Ph. Mottu to F. Buchman 1945, Feb. 6 (NLC): 'It was not always easy for Sydney to stay in Sweden because, as you know, the Swedes do not like always to have people from foreign countries among them for too long a time. Sydney was a living demonstration of what your work stands for in the Nordic North and I think that it is difficult to realise where it would be without him and his loyal and constant caring for the team over there.'

<sup>400</sup> L. Persson to 'Kära vän!' 1945, Nov. 10 (dupl.).

<sup>401</sup> S. Linton to F. Buchman 1940, Dec. 13, David Grimshaw to Buchman 1940, Dec. 13 (M.R.A. Archives, NLC). See also 'En nation i toppform även i andligt avseende. Samförstånd medlet, som skall rasera hindren, anse oxfordungdomar,' StTD 1940, Dec. 4 (interviews with Greta Elmér, Gunnar Wieselgren, David Wiklund, and Lennart

During Easter 1941 (April 7–14), a confidential, small conference (fifty participants) was arranged at Sigtuna, in order to train the young people who already had taken or would take leading responsibility in the country into a leadership built on public and private honesty, unselfishness, and obedience to God. Planned subjects were the population problem (including the new type of man), viable ('livsdugliga') homes, and unemployment. During the conference, emphasis was placed on the task of Sweden, and on the population problem. Special attention was given the attitude towards and relations with Finland.<sup>402</sup> The students' team ('Universitets- och högskolegruppen') emphasized the need of making university education character-building. Students must seek clarity in the aim of the subjects they study, partly on their own, partly together with their teachers, furthermore asking what is important in these studies, and for the task of each individual.<sup>403</sup> In August 1941, about twenty students gathered with Professor Lindroth at Åsbro, and in January 1942, more than forty students met at Lidingö with Professor Henrik Edenholm from the Royal Institute of Technology, with the emphasis on the road from individualism to fellowship, and a high spiritual standard of life. In the reports before the Strängnäs House-party, 1942, special emphasis was put on 'samstudier,' a joint work of intellectual training in combination with education towards unselfish cooperation and independent thinking. The students took part in the Strängnäs party, staying two days after the conference. The Student's team planned a seven to ten day course in the summer 1943, on the education of reconcilers of nations ('folkförsonare') from universities and high-schools.<sup>404</sup>

In May 1941, Sydney Linton reported on 'the enormous growth,' mostly due to 'a bunch of young people,' who were developing 'a real love for their

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Göthberg). As early as 1939, Nov. 23, Linton wrote that he took his hat off to those boys for what they had done in planning the youth meeting, Dec. 2, 1939 (to H. Blake, A. Strang, E. Goulding, K. Snellman; DWC). On the work with artists and musicians, see further Ch. II.3.10.5.

<sup>402</sup> Första P. M. för påsken 1941 (dupl.); Andra P. M. för påsken 1941 (dupl.), 'Ungdomskonferens i Sigtuna' (dupl., EPC); Konfidentiellt. Sverige-Finland 1941, May 3 (dupl., DWC)..

<sup>403</sup> Konferensen i Sigtuna 7–14 april 1941. Rapport från universitets- och högskolegruppen; Stockholm den 31 jan. 1942 (dupl., EPC).

<sup>404</sup> Erfarenheter från studiesamarbete praktiserat vid Stockholms Högskola v.t. 1942; 'Vi, några lärare och studenter [...] ' (dupl., EPC). Immediate aims were limited life-changing tasks leading at each higher institute of education to the total identification of one academic teacher, one law student, one medical student, and the founding of an independent female team (Hampus Lyttkens and Silas Rydgård: 'Konfidentiellt. Universitets- och högskolerapport från Strängnäs,' 1942, Aug. 24; EPC). The conference was held August 23–29, 1943 (H. Lyttkens to 'Kära Åke, Wivecka, Gunnar, Karin, Erik, Sigvard, Claes, Birgitta, 1943, July 26; Förslag till inbjudan till studentträff; EPC). In the winter 1943, seven Group members were delegates at the so-called student's parliament, and small, active teams were established in different sections of university life in Stockholm (S. Rydgård to E. Petrén 1943, Feb. 12; EPC).

country, studying the needs and seeking to give the answer in the light of the experience of Jesus Christ which they have.<sup>405</sup> In June, two members of the youth team went to Finland, working to build bridges between the two countries. In a letter dated 9 July, they emphasized that the Swedish responsibility had been widened due to the outbreak of the new war. Because of the isolation, the Swedish agricultural industry had its own problems as well.<sup>406</sup> A few months later they were reported to have grown 'tremendously in leadership and in insight,' with a three-point programme of 'building SOUND HOMES, creating CONFIDENCE IN INDUSTRY and of opening peoples eyes to SWEDEN'S DESTINY.' They had had a new experience of Christ, and were at the same time 'really getting after business men.' In the spring, there had been 'a real epidemic of life changing' in the Institute of Technology at Stockholm, and two students had joined the team. Others among the young people had worked for Skördeberedskapen (harvest relief work), inspiring office workers in the towns to devote their free evenings in summer to help farmers gather in crops which they would otherwise have had difficulty gathering in time: 'This work is meeting a vital national need and getting those who are leading it in contact with those responsible for the country's supplies, and showing them that God's guidance is the most practical solution.' In the autumn, 'the boys here in town' (Edgardh, Tauson-Hassler, Petrén, Göthberg, and Fränki) got their own flat, 'a great centre of activity.'<sup>407</sup>

On September 20, 1941, public meetings were arranged in Stockholm by the Christian youth organizations, on the theme 'Vad vill Gud?' Nils Bolander spoke about the fate of Ronald Fangen and Fredrik Ramm. The next day, 'Skördeberedskapens dag' was arranged, on the motto 'Stad och land, hand i hand' [Town and country-side, hand in hand]. The Oxford Group terminology was avoided, but at the coffee meeting, Gustaf Sundelin, Erik Arbin, and Harry Blomberg were three of five hosts, Sundelin also presiding at the closing discussion on the tasks of Skördeberedskapen for 1942.<sup>408</sup>

On November 23, Erkki Vuoristo, youth leader of Det Unga Finlands Stöttrupper [The Vanguard of Finnish Youth], spoke at Hotel Eden in Stockholm on the Finnish harvest relief work.<sup>409</sup> Four days later, a discussion was arranged,

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<sup>405</sup> Linton to Buchman 1941, May 27 (M.R.A. Archives, NLC). The young people mentioned were Erik Petrén, Lennart Göthberg, Bertil Edgardh, Ruth Carlsson, and Kerstin Rääf (to Blake, 1941, Jan. 11, DWC; Linton mentioned Göthberg, Gunnar Wieselgren, Petrén, Rääf, and Edgardh).

<sup>406</sup> Erik Carlsson, Erik Petrén, Elsa Larsson, and Gunnar Wieselgren to 'kära vän ner' 1941, July 9 (dupl., EPC).

<sup>407</sup> Grimshaw to Buchman 1941, Sept. 1 (M.R.A. Archives, NLC); copy of S. Linton to R. Holme 1941, Dec. 12 (DWC).

<sup>408</sup> NL 1941 Nr. 20:2. 'Program vid "Skördeberedskapens Dag", söndagen den 21 september 1941' (dupl., EPC). Music during the closing discussion was performed by Sven [Erik] Bäck (violin), Eric Ericson (piano), and Herbert Westrell (piano).

<sup>409</sup> Vuoristo, who was a leading Oxford Group man in Finland, was killed in the war (see

on the invitation of Prince Gustaf Adolf, with the aim of organizing a cooperative association between thirty-three national youth organizations and the authorities, present through representatives of the commissions for the labour market and provisioning, together with some people involved in the preliminary work.<sup>410</sup> On December 9, the interim board for Sveriges Ungdomsberedskap arranged a meeting in Stockholm, the Scout leader Reino Aalto speaking on national youth work in Finland.<sup>411</sup> In January–February, Elsa Larsson, Erik Petrén, and Lennart Warodell studied the organization and work of Talkoungdomen [The Young People’s Voluntary Work Movement] in Finland, and on February 25, 1942, Sveriges Ungdomsberedskap was constituted. Prince Gustaf Adolf was elected president, with Sven Skogh as vice president and chairman of the working committee.<sup>412</sup> In 1942, a wide collecting and planting work was started. During the years 1942–1949, 600,000 young people

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Ekstrand 1993:130, 139, 168, 182, 200). The meeting was arranged by Sveriges Lantbruksförbund, Skördefrämjandet, and ‘för ungdomens skördeberedskap in tresserade’ (‘...inbjudes härmed att tillsammans med personer i Skördefrämjandet...’, 1941, Nov. 17; EPC). Det Unge Finlands Stöttrupper, founded July 5, 1941, changed its name to Talkoungdomen/Nuorten Talkoot [Young People’s Voluntary Work Movement], Nov. 27, 1941 (see Varjo 1979:242 in Swedish, 245 in English). A Swedish organization, Ungdomens arbetsberedskap, which organized young people from the four big political youth associations, was established in 1940, and Skördeberedskapen in the autumn 1941. Already in the autumn 1941, 2,000 young people from Stockholm took part in the harvest work out in the country (Varjo 1976:1).

<sup>410</sup> ‘...inbjudes härmed att deltaga i/sända representanter till sammanträde torsdagen den 27 november 1941...’; ‘P. M. angående vissa riktlinjer för: ”Sveriges ungdomsberedskap”’ (dupl.); ‘P. M. till sammanträde med ungdomens riksorganisationer m.fl. rörande bildandet...’ (dupl.), with smaller changes from the preliminary drafts ‘Riktlinjer för: Skördefrämjandet – ungdomens arbetsberedskap –’ (dupl.) and ‘Förslag till resolution’ (dupl., EPC). Dropping the emphasis on harvest work meant a widened direction of the work, while the motto all the time aimed at cooperation between urban and rural population (‘Stad och land, hand i hand’). Building bridges between the urban and rural population had been topical at least since the autumn 1939 (see ‘Kära’ 1939, Dec. 16, dupl., Alnäs). The ‘P. M. angående vissa riktlinjer...’ defined the task in the following words: ‘Ungdomsberedskapens uppgift är att samordna och intensifiera ungdomens vilja till arbetsinsats i olika beredskapsuppgifter, i första hand sådana som sammanhånga med folkförsörjningen samt att planlägga och genomföra erforderliga åtgärder. Detta skall ske i intimt samarbete med ungdomens riksorganisationer och statliga myndigheter.’ See also Bro mellan land och stad 194?, and further Varjo 1976:1.

<sup>411</sup> ‘Härmed bedja vi...’, Stockholm 1941, Dec. 4 (dupl., EPC). The other speakers were the agricultural graduate Sigurd Örjangård (J.U.F.) and the secretary of Stockholms läns och stads hushållningssällskap, M. Carlson.

<sup>412</sup> Varjo 1976:1. Skogh represented the commission for the labour market. See further Skogh 1942, Löfgren 1943, and other articles in *Från departement och nämnder*. Contacts with Finland were close: in 1942, Lennart Segerstråle visited Sweden in January (Vigbyholm), and in August, and Harry Blomberg spoke in the Borgå (Porvoo) Cathedral in October (see Ekstrand 1993:183 f.).

put in work equivalent to more than 42 million Swedish crowns.<sup>413</sup> In the late war years, team-work was subsequently substituted by work camps and individual work.<sup>414</sup> This fact might be interpreted as due to a waning influence of the inspiration from the Oxford Group. The most important contribution by the Swedish Oxford Group workers to the establishing of Sveriges Ungdomsberedskap was probably their personal and firm contacts with Group men in national youth work in Finland.

Of great importance to the youth team of the Oxford Group, was the training college teacher Hjalmar Wiklund in Karlstad, as advisor and spiritual guide, and sometimes acting as a soul surgeon. Wiklund told them about his renewed surrender to God, and carrying the Cross – not as a leader, a prophet, or anything important, but as a servant. His vision was that Sweden should find its place in the world as a serving nation, thus moving into the Kingdom of God. The servant's mentality would destroy the war mentality. It was a privilege for Sweden to have such a youth team preparing to become the new leaders of the country, and reconcilers of the peoples of Europe. To Wiklund, the postwar time was the time for the promises of the Christian revolution.<sup>415</sup> In the autumn 1942, the youth team was scattered over the country, but their example had 'challenged and provoked the elder men to take fuller leadership' (Erik Arbin, Åke Zetterberg, and Joel Kullgren).<sup>416</sup> Hjalmar Wiklund kept in close contact with his youth team. In April 1943, he wrote from the army in the field about the need for a private gathering at Svartå June 5–11, in November 1944, he suggested another meeting, and at Easter 1945, he played a central part in the Nordic team's training at Viggbyholm.<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Varjo 1976:2 f. See also Åmark 1952:1149.

<sup>414</sup> Ekholm 1976:122 f.

<sup>415</sup> H. Wiklund to E. Petrén 1941, Sept. 22, 1942, Sept. 19, further 1943, Sept. 18 (EPC). See also David Wiklund, 'Något om Värmland som ideologiskt centrum' Oct. 15, 1986 & May 10, 1991 (DWC), which emphasize the importance of Hjalmar Wiklund as a visionary and a secret statesman. David Wiklund (unrelated to Hjalmar Wiklund) was a journalist at StTD, 1943–45, and published editorials as well (see, for example, "Oxford" lever', Apr. 9, 1944).

<sup>416</sup> S. Linton to F. Buchman 1942, Nov. 11 (NLC): 'I confess that I would like to see a less clerical team take the lead. However it is undeniable that these men are those who are in point of fact taking responsibility for the nation's future under God, and I am glad and grateful for them.'

<sup>417</sup> Hj. Wiklund to E. Petrén 1943, Apr. 19, May 30 (sent also to Anders T.-H., Åke Z., Sydney L., Silas R., Hampus L., Lennart G., Sven Fr., Sigvard L., Gunnar W., Bertil E.; EPC), 1944, Nov. 25 ('Kära Pojkar!' to Lennart G-rg, Erik P-n, Anders T-H, Sigvard L-st. Gunnar W-n, Bertil E-rd, Klas R-ch, Hampus L-ns, Börje M-n, Kjell N-ldt, Silas R-rd, David W-nd; EPC), Dec. 12 on a meeting Jan. 11–14 (EPC), 'Edsgate-gänget' 1945, March 10; P. M. för den nordiska lagträningen påsken 1945 (dupl; EPC). Consequences of the Nordic team training are listed to Petrén 1945, Apr. 14, a team meeting at Karlstad Sept. 29–30, 1945 (dupl. 'Kära Vänner!' 1945, Sept. 15; EPC), to Petrén Sept. 15 (EPC).

In a typewritten summary of the aim and instruments of the Christian revolution, completed five days before his ordination in December 1942, the young priest Anders Tauson-Hassler dealt with the vision of the Christian state under the dictatorship of God leading to an alternative, theocratic form of democracy.<sup>418</sup> Its third chapter, on current tasks, emphasizes Sweden's responsibility for building the unity of the Nordic North, extending the axis Sweden-Switzerland for tasks in the future Europe, as well as mobilizing women, workers, Church, and youth for an effort to reconcile the peoples.<sup>419</sup>

During the later war years, the number of refugees, especially from Denmark and Norway, was continually rising. In the autumn 1944, Kerstin Rääf initiated activities for the Norwegian refugees, for example home evenings for families staying in Sweden since one or two years, but who had still not been invited to any Swedish home. The young Norwegians in the Gottröra camp outside Stockholm were given invitations to families in Stockholm, Swedish-Norwegian youth parties were arranged, and eight young Swedish artists and musicians went out to the camp to entertain people there. Subsequent arrangements with tea, entertainment, and short speeches were made in Stockholm. More than twenty women's organizations were informed about the work and the needs of the Norwegians in other camps, and spread information all over the country, in several places inspiring local work. Money and ration-cards collections were organized, and the work grew throughout the war.<sup>420</sup>

#### *V.4.5. The Influence of the Oxford Group in the Churches During the War Years*

The influence of the Oxford Group on preaching, soul-care, and evangelizing work in the Church of Sweden was obvious during the war years, first through active Church members in the fellowship of the Oxford Group, then through certain clergymen deeply inspired by the message of the Group, and finally through more or less official cooperation between the Church and the Oxford Group.

An example of the first category is Erik Arbin, resident chaplain of the Stockholm parish of Engelbrekt, from 1940 rector of St. John's parish. In the 1940s, Arbin arranged district meetings ('kvartersmöten'), inviting all his parishioners to the parish house, and then, when up to half of the inhabitants came flocking, in the girl's school at Sveaplan. Arbin and people from the neighbourhood spoke on the theme: We all need each other – we will all help

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<sup>418</sup> A. Tauson-Hassler: 'Vår väg. Kort sammanfattning av den kristna revolutionens mål och medel,' completed in Sigtuna 1942, Dec. 12 (EPC). On its first and second chapters, see Ch. II.3.7.3, and Tauson-Hassler 1943.

<sup>419</sup> A. Tauson-Hassler: 'Vår väg...' p.26 f. (EPC).

<sup>420</sup> K. Rääf to A. and E. Petré 1944, Dec. 21; Norge-brev, 'Till alla deltagare i Lundakonferensen!', Stockholm 1944, Nov. 3, 'Kjære venner!' Upsala, Gottröra, Stockholm 1944, Dec. 15, 'Kära vän!' Stockholm 1945, Feb. 23 (dupl; EPC). On the political situation, see Ch. III.4.2.

each other. Arbin arranged modern catechismal meetings ('husförhör') as well, in St. Stephen's Church, on themes like: To be a Christian in Corinth in 56 a.D. and in Stockholm in 1943. Subsequently, the crowded meetings moved over to the bigger St. John's Church, gathering 1,200 people week after week. Several Oxford Group people were active in this congregational work, and one of Arbin's curates, Åke Zetterberg (the future Pastor Primarius), even 'got together a little team, whom he is training in life-changing, and in the giving of their message. They meet in his home every week, and are this winter to travel out to a number of nearby towns, and give such help to the local teams as they need.'<sup>421</sup> Of special importance in Arbin's work was the interchange between soul-care, district or catechismal meetings, and book publishing, themselves inspiring the work in other parishes, even in the neighbouring countries. In his first book, *Mellan fyra ögon*, on soul-care, Arbin focuses on the importance of the small group supporting the personal and spiritual life of the individual. He emphasizes the working fellowship of the small group in the congregation, stating that a Christian fellowship that did not become a working fellowship must in the end languish, but also that the fellowship of a closer circle could be no substitute for the fellowship of the congregation, and that the older revival movements – despite their intense fellowship – had languished if they had had no connection to church and congregation.<sup>422</sup> The working team was not the same thing as the association built on the need for solving a problem, a special task, living in the open. Individualism was a dangerous enemy of team-work.<sup>423</sup> A practical example is the spiritual home defence, which aimed at personal support of the families of conscripted men.<sup>424</sup>

In his Parish work Arbin used Group practices like quiet time and sharing even with formerly unknown people, in reconciliation talks, though without using the Oxford Group terms.<sup>425</sup> He found the personal attitude when meeting people necessary for the existence of the Church as a 'Volkskirche' ('folkkyrka'). The tension between the work aimed at one single person and the contacts with the many was perhaps inevitable in Christian work.<sup>426</sup> Although not a High

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<sup>421</sup> Hassler 1964:70, Arbin 1944b:15. See further Arbin 1944. Copy of S. Linton to H. and P. Blake 1941, May 9 (DWC), reported about Åke Zetterberg and Gösta Herthelius starting a club for young men at Stefansgården, and Nils Hagelin doing circles for workers and unemployed (Arbetsringen). S. Linton to F. Buchman 1942, Nov. 11; 1944, June 4 (NLC).

<sup>422</sup> Arbin 1941:109, 114. See also Arbin 1940, published as a printed greeting to his new parishioners. Three of Arbin's books were translated into Danish, 1942–1945, and one into Finnish, 1942.

<sup>423</sup> Arbin 1941:158 f.

<sup>424</sup> See Arbin 1940:6.

<sup>425</sup> Arbin 1941:146.

<sup>426</sup> Arbin 1943:147, 156 f. In Arbin 1944b, he reported the results of a great field investigation in his parish, made as a preparation to a bishop's visitation, which showed a common need both for personal soul-cure and for social Church fellowship. Arbin

Church man, Arbin noted that many newly converted discovered the Eucharist, and that the morning Communion service on a weekday fulfilled a strong need, he emphasized the importance of sacramental fellowship in the congregation, and special invitations to Communion services in St. Stephen's Church were distributed as team letters.<sup>427</sup> *Det hände i Korint...* (1944) emphasized the personal, priestly absolution, as well as the society's need for an absolute Lord to maintain democracy, and also the world revolution from hate and injustice to love and righteousness. The distinction between the system and the persons was of fundamental importance.<sup>428</sup> In his congregational work, Arbin used films as well. The short film 'Den stora trappan,' which was produced by the twenty-three year old Bertil Edgardh for the Swedish Film Industry (SF), and dealt with the everyday work in a city parish, gave a vivid picture of the personalistic way of working with an isolated, unemployed young man, who met a new fellowship in the parish club for the unemployed. The isolating character of sin was emphasized.<sup>429</sup> The social programme was all the time the very simple: Man first! which was said to be synonymous with: God first! To act in a Christian spirit was to act in a genuinely human way. Examples were given of a new spirit of fellowship between business-men and workers.<sup>430</sup> In *Spräng gränserna* (1943), Arbin emphasized the group as a road into the wider fellowship of the congregation. Guidance was regarded primarily as God's guidance through different persons and events, and less emphasis was placed on listening.<sup>431</sup> In *De präglade ett folk* (1945), the historic continuity was stressed, with examples from the lives of Isaiah, Henric Schartau, Frank Buchman, and an anonymous young man in Stockholm.<sup>432</sup> Arbin's views on the Group in relation to congregational life are obvious from a letter to Bishop Aulén, which emphasizes the importance of openness towards a revival within the Church – if, when, and how it may ever come.<sup>433</sup>

Other examples are given by Arbin's successor as resident chaplain, the well-known Nils Bolander, future dean and later bishop of Lund, and one of Sweden's most famous preachers in the 1940s and 1950s, who was influenced by the radicalism of the Oxford Group way of life, though he never identified himself

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1945:233 emphasizes both personal change and the reshaping of social life and conditions in a Christian spirit. Already in 1934, Arbin had emphasized the double need of the Christians, and of the people, for the Oxford Group (Janus 1934:108).

<sup>427</sup> Arbin 1941:120; Stockholm 1940 Apr. 15 '[...] Vi samlas därför till nattvardsgång i Stefanskyrkan [...]' (dupl., Alnäs).

<sup>428</sup> Arbin 1944:41, 51, 54, 63.

<sup>429</sup> Arbin 1941:99 f., 1943:187.

<sup>430</sup> For example, Arbin 1945:104 f.

<sup>431</sup> In his published radio speeches, Arbin, 1946:10, warned against the inner word and the inner light, and emphasized the need for the revealed Word of God in the Bible, as well as total surrender and fellowship with God as conditions for guidance.

<sup>432</sup> Arbin 1945:24 ff.

<sup>433</sup> E. Arbin to G. Aulén 1942, Aug. 25 (LUB).



with the Group.<sup>434</sup> In *Våga språnget!*, published 1943, Bolander criticized different claims to know God's will, including Frank Buchman's vision of God's will for Sweden as a reconciler of nations, and a forced moral rearmament.<sup>435</sup> Since his marriage to Ulla Lidman (of the Pentecostal tradition) in 1941, Anders Frostenson had arranged evening meetings in the Gustav Vasa Church, sometimes with 2–3,000 participants, and including a sermon and testimonies in the manner of Group revivalism, but also traditional prayer meetings with intercessions for the sick, etc.<sup>436</sup> In March as well as in November 1944, Arbin, Bolander, Anders Frostenson, and Johan Hoff spoke before 2,000 people each evening, in two ecumenical revivalistic actions in Osterman's automobile show-rooms in Stockholm.<sup>437</sup>

Though critical of its methodic legalism and moralistic effects, the future bishop Bo Giertz later concluded that Group revivalism in Sweden had positive effects on preaching, as it taught many preachers that salvation was something very real, with concrete experiences of sin and human reservations, excuses, and mistakes to be treated in a soul-curing way, not just with theoretical knowledge, but with an understanding given by personal experience.<sup>438</sup> This was an important foundation of a more or less official cooperation between the Church of Sweden and the Oxford Group during the war years.

In the diocese of Karlstad, Group revivalistic influence was strong at the youth summer courses in Arvika, 1938, and at Kristinehamn, 1939, with Sam. Palm leading Bible hours prepared in private quiet times, but with fewer participants than before. A couple of female teachers reported on keeping quiet times in class. However, in Olle Sundby's report from the boy's camp at Ärtemark, 'stilla stunder' (quiet times) meant devotional hours with short sermons or messages. In 1940, the youth course was abandoned because of the war.<sup>439</sup> In the diocese year book, 1940, Anders Tauson-Hassler testified about the soul-cure of the Oxford Group among the young people.<sup>440</sup> While Group revivalism had a renewing function in individuals and on the diocesan level, it did not inspire to forming new youth circles in the parishes.<sup>441</sup> At the diocese clergy meeting, 1941, Bishop Runestam acknowledged the positive effects of the Oxford Group among the youth,<sup>442</sup> though his clerical assistant Gunnar Malmeström in 1940

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<sup>434</sup> On Bolander and the Oxford Group, see H. Ivarsson resp. M. Ridderstedt in [Bolander] 1960:35, 120.

<sup>435</sup> Bolander 1943:35, 71, mentions Buchman together with Goethe, Pascal, and Kierkegaard as coming from among human beings, and thus unable to help.

<sup>436</sup> Olofsson 1981:57 f.

<sup>437</sup> See Bolander & Frostenson & Hoff 1945.

<sup>438</sup> Giertz 1983:80.

<sup>439</sup> Nyberg 1985:68; Gunnar Malmeström resp. Olle [sic!] Sundby, 'Från sommarens ungdomskurs och läger', Karlstads stifts julbok 1939:139, 141, 144.

<sup>440</sup> Tauson-Hassler 1940.

<sup>441</sup> Nyberg 1985:93.

<sup>442</sup> Biskopens ämbetsberättelse (Handlingar rörande prästmötet i Karlstad...1941:79).

had concluded that the expected revival did not come, and that the Oxford Group had stagnated.<sup>443</sup> At the diocese conference at Karlstad, September 1942, with 900 participants, Bishops Jonzon of Luleå and Lehtonen of Tampere (Finland) spoke together with Bishop Runestam and Sam. Palm on ecclesiastical subjects in a way coloured by their experiences of the Oxford Group. Bible talks in groups activated the participants.<sup>444</sup> The programme of a clerical conference in 1944 was typical of a 'mixed' Church Group revivalism, while the diocese conference 1944 emphasized the moral problems among the Swedish people.<sup>445</sup>

Such an official form of cooperation was established in the diocese of Skara, too, where Bishop Ljunggren, though never identifying with the Oxford Group, promoted Group work, since Thorsten Nunstedt was able to lead it as the bishop's clerical assistant, 1939–1943. Nunstedt played a leading part in the publication of *Nytt Liv*, and published separate pamphlets like *Andlig disciplin*, which contained instructions for a victorious Christian life according to Oxford Group methods, and emphasized surrender, quiet time, and guidance, in combination with a petition list for each day of the week, and a plan for Bible reading.<sup>446</sup> In *Västgötaungdomens julbok* 1939, Ruben Melin presented the aim of the Oxford Group as renewing all of everyday life, while the visions for the world were totally lacking.<sup>447</sup> In the following years, many so called Oxford meetings were arranged in the diocese. These Church meetings seem to have been activist and personalistic, emphasizing the need for a Christian front, and, at least sometimes, presenting the vision of a changed nation. At a meeting for clergywomen's wives at Skara, Mrs. Saga Walli from Gothenburg opened a discussion on the Oxford Group Movement, February 28, 1939.<sup>448</sup> At the youth course at Lyrestad, June 14–18, 1939, speakers well-known from Swedish Oxford Group work, like Erik Arbin, Gustaf Sundelin, and Thure Oskarsson, took part, and at

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<sup>443</sup> Nyberg 1985:67. L. Göthberg reported to E. Petréon 1941, Sept. 7 (EPC), that Runestam had a clear view, but lacked energy and fire, and needed a real team around him.

<sup>444</sup> Nyberg 1985:77 f., Runestam to Lehtonen 1942, June 11 (RAH).

<sup>445</sup> Möte för präster i Karlstad den 17–19 april 1944, with Sam. Palm, Adolf Kloo, Arbin, Bo Giertz, Gösta Hök, and Sophus Norborg (dupl., Alnäs), Nyberg 1985:78 f.

<sup>446</sup> In June 1940, the Västgöta team was trained at Mariestad by Pip Lyth, David Grimshaw, and Karin Laurell. Nunstedt had 'stepped out into much greater leadership,' and the provincial team was described as fine and energetic (Copy of S. Linton to H. Blake and E. Goulding 1940, June 22, DWC). Nunstedt had his roots in the Church revivalistic tradition of his diocese. He dedicated an edition of his sermons to his teacher and spiritual father, Adolf Kloo (Nunstedt 1946:[5]). Nunstedt's former travelling activities in the service of Group revivalism were considered a merit for the office of the Bishop's clerical assistant. See further Franck 1991:135 ff.

<sup>447</sup> Melin 1939:41.

<sup>448</sup> Ljunggren 1939:123. Mrs. Walli – a well-known artist – testified at a meeting for female teachers at Gössäter (year unknown) as well, see 'På "västgöteam" i Alingsås...' (EPC).

the Vårgårda course, August 1–6, the message of the Group movement was preached.<sup>449</sup> In 1940, meetings were arranged in connection with the Västergötland campaign for a united province, at the folk high-schools of Axvall and Fristad, as well as in Mariestad at Midsummer, and at a girl's camp at Flämslätt, July 18–23, the vision of a new Sweden with Christ as the absolute ruler was presented, with emphasis on the change of homes, schools, and workplaces. Visitors from Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Britain helped in this work. On May 1, in connection with an 'Oxford-conference,' a religious demonstration was arranged at Tibro, and at the youth course at Rångedala, 450 participants and 150 weekend visitors were divided up into small groups for personal talks and testimony.<sup>450</sup> In 1941, the 'Oxford front' held a conference at Lundsbrunn, August 14–17, with 150 participants at discourses and Bible hours. The motto of one of the days was A new Sweden, but the whole arrangement was typical of ecumenical Church Group revivalism. Members of several religious parties took part in a joint Holy Communion. In Borås, Group people took the initiative to arrangements for a military camp, which included Church attending, discourse and singing. The coffee-party counted approximately 1,300 people.<sup>451</sup> At the diocese clerical meeting, 1941, Bishop Ljunggren stated that the Oxford Group Movement had meant much to many pre-varsity students who had had no or little former relation to Church and Christianity. Some of it had certainly been to sketchy, but the absolute attitude had in a new and gratifying way been made alive among the students of the diocese.<sup>452</sup> From the following years, there are reports of conferences (Axvall, Kungslena 1942 and Stora Skottek, Ulricehamn, Lundsbrunn 1943), with a joint Holy Communion as the high point. In January 1942, about a hundred young people, aged fifteen to thirty, gathered at Axvall, for a conference on the question how to become spiritual leaders. Bishop Ljunggren visited the camp. Many Group men took part in Church courses and camps in an active way. An increase in lay preaching was said to be a fruit of impulses from the Oxford Group Movement.<sup>453</sup>

As many thoughts and methods of the Oxford Group began to merge into Church work, a conference was arranged, in Norrköping, September 14–15, 1942, in order to bring people from the Oxford Group, and from the Group revivalist, Old Lutheran, and High Church traditions together. Concrete results of the conference were the so called Vadstena meetings for personal and

<sup>449</sup> Västgötaungdomens julbok ('Från kurser och läger') 1939:57 f. (The subjectivism of Oxford was said to make the objective message of the Church twice as alive), 60.

<sup>450</sup> Västgötar! 1940, Kära Vänner! Mariestad den 17 maj 1940, Lindstedt 1940:170 f., Västgötaungdomens julbok 1940:68. See also Johansson 1940, on Christ and a socialist, emphasizing the guidance and plan of God, etc.

<sup>451</sup> NL 1941 Nr. 18:1 f., 7, Ahlner 1941:167, Nunstedt 1987:105 f.

<sup>452</sup> H.H. Biskopens ämbetsberättelse, Prästmötet i Skara 1941:110.

<sup>453</sup> Johansson 1942:172, 1943:175. 'Kära vän!' 1942, Jan. 29 (dupl., EPC), 'Kära Vän!' 1942, Apr. 21 (dupl., Alnäs), 'Kära vän,' 1943, March 21 (dupl., Alnäs), 'Kära vän!' 1943, March 26 (dupl., Alnäs).

Church renewal, later moved to Medevi, and continued up to 1985.<sup>454</sup> The first Vadstena meeting took place in August 1943, with 500–600 participants (about forty were clergymen).<sup>455</sup> Here, a sacramental form of everyday religion was practised, with the inspiration from the Visby house-party notable still in the 1950s.<sup>456</sup> Activistic personalism – often of a liberal colour – and old revivalistic personalism – conservative in theology – both merged into a new form of sacramental personalism. Harry Blomberg described the Vadstena meeting 1945 as arranged by an independent working fellowship within the Church. It was planned as a house-party, following a carefully prepared plan. The old revivalist hymns, subjective testimony, and liturgical services together formed a unity. Many went to private confession with the priests. Compared with the following Group meeting at Åmotfors, the latter was haunted by a ten year old circle thinking, a heterogeneous Church doctrine, and a diffuse Scandinavism.<sup>457</sup>

A team letter from Gothenburg, where the atmosphere of Church Group revivalism was influential in Group circles, summarized their impressions from the 1943 Vadstena meeting as follows:

- 1) The Oxford Group should avail itself of the broad, Christian fellowship of the Church. While a more closed fellowship had its strength, there was a danger of exclusivity and coterism.
- 2) The warnings of Bishop Runestam against too optimistic an attitude in life - changing work leading to disappointment, even despair. The most difficult of the Christian demands was to remain sinners with nothing to trust but the grace of forgiveness.

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<sup>454</sup> Nunstedt 1987:106 wrongly dates the conference to 1943. In the autumn 1942, Evert Palmer had compared the High Church movement and the Group movement, and Harry Blomberg, 'Grupp, kyrka och folk,' answered that the common endeavour often was, and had to be the Christian, soul-winning activity (StTD 1942, Dec. 16).

<sup>455</sup> Norrköpings Tidningar 1943, Aug. 16 'Kyrkligt stormöte i Vadstena'; StTD 1943, Aug. 17 [Editorial:] 'Vadstenamötet – löftesrikt tecken,' Aug. 19 'Låt oss bli farliga kristna – maning på Vadstenamötet'; Östgöta Correspondenten 1943, Aug. 16 ('Över 500 deltagare i "Vadstenamötet 1943"'), 17 ('Vadstenamötet om kyrklig förnyelse'), 18 ('Vadstenamötet'), 19 ('Vadstenamötets avslutning'). Among the inviters were four bishops, and several Oxford Group men, among the speakers Erik Arbin, Knut Ericson, Bo Giertz, Olov Hartman, Adolf Kloos, Simon Lüders, Filip Olsson, Sam. Palm, Bishop Runestam, and Dr. Margit Sahlén.

<sup>456</sup> Bolander & Borgenstierna & Rosendal...1953:5 ff. (Nils Bolander: "Vi ha sett den nya synen..." inspired by Frostenson's Visby song). See also Rosenberg 1992:188 ff.

<sup>457</sup> H. Blomberg to L. Segerstråle 1945, Aug. 8 (printed in Segerstråle 1950:171 f.); to J. Cullberg 1946, Oct. 27 (VDA): '[...] för mig finns det ingen klyfta mellan "oxford" och "högkyrklighet"[...];' to A. Runestam 1945, Aug. 27 (Okat. saml. Runestam, UUB), finds some Swedish priests even more Group-minded and 'Orthodoxford' than Frank Buchman himself, being disloyal to their Church without understanding their own split personality. Critical views, emphasizing the differences between the Oxford Group and the Vadstena meeting, sceptical towards Church Group revivalism, in A. Tauson-Hassler to E. Petré 1943, Aug. 21 (EPC).

3) Testimonials should not emphasize some untrue perfectness in the changed man, but the fact that life still was a battle, though a battle on new conditions.<sup>458</sup>

Liturgical order was observed in Sydney Linton's instructions for Bible reading, *För vardagen*, in five parts, according to the daily lessons of the Church of Sweden from Advent to Whitsun, with an emphasis on practical action as a prerequisite for Christian growth.<sup>459</sup>

As observed by Per Eckerdal in his dissertation on the Small Church movement in Gothenburg, the influence of the Oxford Group Movement – or, more correctly, Group revivalism – was important for molding one of the fellowship models of the Small Church work after the world war.<sup>460</sup>

In 1937, Miss Gunvor Paulina Norrman, a teacher at Hornö, near Enköping, encountered the Oxford Group message of listening to the voice of God and obeying. She experienced her calling to a monastic life, but kept in contact with the Stockholm team, in 1945 even as a full-time worker. In 1941, Mrs. Else Bøgebjerg-Wolf in Denmark encountered the Oxford Group, and subsequently, she, too, experienced her monastic calling. In 1945, the two women met, their fellowship growing into the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Mary of the Evangelic Way of St. Mary (Congregationen Mariadötrarna av Den Evangeliska Mariavägen), established in 1949. Paulina Mariadotter, as Miss Norrman later named herself, found that they were united neither by an ideology, nor by a task, but by a life, i.e. a way of life.<sup>461</sup>

During the War years, the relations between the Oxford Group and the magazine *Nytt liv*, published in the diocese of Skara, grew worse. In an article in December 1942, Harry Blomberg criticized certain magazines for having falsely declared themselves as special organs of the Group movement, and in August 1944, he explicitly repudiated *Nytt liv* as published by private persons, who had misunderstood the message of the Oxford Group and increased publicistic confusion.<sup>462</sup>

#### V.4.6. Continuing Personal 'Change' out of the Oxford Group

During the war, several of the cultural leaders in the Oxford Group were developing in other directions. Bertil Malmberg's road went in a religious, though not explicitly Christian direction. For several of the others, the development was a continuing personal 'change' out of the Oxford Group and into other Christian fellowships.

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<sup>458</sup> 'Kära vänner', Göteborg 1943, Sept. 20 (dupl., Alnäs).

<sup>459</sup> Linton 1944-45:1, 31, 73, 103, 133.

<sup>460</sup> Eckerdal 1992:119, 225.

<sup>461</sup> Brodd 1972:129 ff., [Mariadotter] 1990:33 ff., 64, 70 ff.

<sup>462</sup> H. Blomberg: 'Grupp, kyrka och folk' (StTD 1942, Dec. 16), 'Slaget vid Lund' (SvM 1944, Aug. 18).

In the essay 'Oändlighetsmystik eller livsförvandling?' [Mysticism of the Infinite or Life Change?] (1940), Sven Stolpe tried to apply Nathan Söderblom's distinction between 'mysticism of the infinite' and 'mysticism of personal life' on contemporary Swedish Church life. The aim of 'personal religion' is interpreted as 'life-changing,' and, consequently, the central aim of the work of the Oxford Group is said to be the creation of what Söderblom called 'personal religion.'<sup>463</sup> The lives of many Church and denomination Christians in Sweden could not be used by God for changing the lives of others, because religion in Sweden was to such a great extent not a personal religion, but a mysticism of the infinite. This was not a matter of personal limitation only, but of the very comprehension of Christian life. Many old Christians did not see their task as activity, since they did not understand their religion as a life-changing existence in fellowship under the guidance of God. Their religion was a religion of the infinite, which weakened their sense of responsibility and their consciousness of sin, and such dutiful phariseism was still frequent under the sign of the Oxford Group.<sup>464</sup> Stolpe's attitude towards traditional spiritual language was critical. In his translation of Fangen's *Det nye liv* (1936), he deliberately avoided the Swedish Bible of 1917, as it meant a big step backwards, from a linguistic and poetic point of view.<sup>465</sup> In a subsequent essay on the tongue of Canaan, Stolpe – on the contrary – attacked the common use of archaic words from the Bible, with a newly made, archaic Church style as its consequence. Side by side with this tongue of Canaan, Stolpe wanted to create another, realistic Christian language, like the one already spoken by preachers like Sven Lidman, Manfred Björkquist, and Harry Blomberg.<sup>466</sup>

At the same time as he criticized the 'old Christians,' Stolpe tried to orient himself towards the traditions of pastoral soul-cure of the 'old Christian,' Schartau Church revivalism. In his broad reviews of Bo Giertz' *Kyrkofrombet* (1940) and *Stengrunden* (1941), he admits that the Group Movement with its methods and demands of activity had got into a somewhat incongruous situation in its relation to the churches in the Nordic countries. However, in the exclusive tradition of western Sweden, more or less influenced by Schartau, central experiences are found, which directly correspond to the experiences of Group people, despite the fact that no formal contacts had yet been established.<sup>467</sup> The moment commonly named 'change' was just the start along the road to a real Christian faith: a starting experience, for example, at an

<sup>463</sup> Stolpe 1941:185 (in *Nytt Liv* 1940 Nr. 11).

<sup>464</sup> Stolpe 1941:188 ff.

<sup>465</sup> Fangen 1936Sw:169.

<sup>466</sup> Stolpe 1941:202 f. (published 1:0 in *Nytt Liv* 1940:20). Such criticism was common among Oxford Group writers, see, for example, Blomberg 1941:120 ff. ('Kanaans språk'). A literary example of this staleness of the tongue of Canaan is given by Elisabeth in Stolpe's *Världen utan nåd* (1941b:315), who is sick of all linguistic sentimentality, even addressing God as 'Brummer.'

<sup>467</sup> Stolpe 1941:224 ff. (in *Nytt Liv* 1940 Nr. 19).

Oxford meeting or after the first sharing with a friend. Real change or conversion was another thing. Here Stolpe often recognized the moralistic view applied to religion by people who had recently made their decision – an often repeated experience in different classic Christian traditions as well as in the Group. A person was not changed until God, on the ruins of human reservations and self-reliance, had created the faith in Jesus alone. This order of grace – or road of life-change – did not mean proudly ascending the stairs through ethical perfection, but rather descending, God depriving men of the foundations for their false consolations.<sup>468</sup> Stolpe tried to combine these views with the standard advice from within the Oxford Group, given to common Christians in doubt and uncertainty, i.e. repeated sharing. In an earlier article, Stolpe had pointed to ruthless, reiterated, loving and patient sharing and deep sharing (‘djupdelning’) as the answer when searching for the cause of religious paralysis. If the incision had cut deeply enough, the will to live, the contact with God, and the life-changing ability would return.<sup>469</sup> Only a couple of months later, his belief in renewed sharing had at least been modified. The emphasis on the Christian fellowship and on sharing in this fellowship was still there, but now connected with Luther and the Swedish 19th century philosopher E. G. Geijer. Stolpe’s final conclusion was that since the Schartau tradition and the Oxford Group soul-cure agreed in all essentials, they ought to co-operate.<sup>470</sup>

The subsequent road of Sven Stolpe led away from the fellowship of the Oxford Group. His activities in the Group reached its peak in 1939. After the Ljungskile conference, he worked for the Oxford Group mostly through books and articles. In April 1944, his wife’s plans to convert to the Roman Catholic Church were topical, and Stolpe stated in a letter to Bishop Björkquist that for ten years he had been convinced, that the Roman Catholic Church had the truth, that he had as well been attending Catholic services in Sweden, etc., though without feeling any compulsion to become a convert.<sup>471</sup> A few weeks later, he wrote to Erik Petrén that he had not changed his view on Oxford, and continued to be loyal to his death, but he saw clearly that Oxford was a kindergarten, while ripe Christianity was something else and something greater. He was influenced by Kaj Munk’s criticism of sharing – while true sharing, under guidance and in a spirit of tender love and mutual respect, was a fine and efficient instrument, much of the practised sharing had been self-centred babble (‘tjabbel’).<sup>472</sup> In August 1944, Stolpe still publicly presented himself as an Ox-

<sup>468</sup> Stolpe 1941:228, 230, 233. Cf. Stolpe 1941:274 – The road is one, and its name is *decision of the will* (‘viljeavgörelse’).

<sup>469</sup> Stolpe 1941:187 (in *Nytt Liv* 1940 Nr. 11).

<sup>470</sup> Stolpe 1941:235.

<sup>471</sup> S. Stolpe to M. Björkquist 1944, Apr. 23 (SIB). In 1938, June 8, Stolpe wrote to Alf Ahlberg (1991:3, GUB), emphasizing the need for meeting Christ in the Communion as an automatic consequence of the moral shaking up that was the aim of the meetings. At the same time, he was himself dissatisfied with the services of the Church of Sweden.

<sup>472</sup> S. Stolpe to E. Petrén 1944, May 9 (EPC). Already in 1938, June 8, Stolpe wrote to

ford man, while in an interview, published in December, he combined Roman Catholic personal examples (St. Teresa of Lisieux and the Fatima miracle in Portugal) with the lives of Fredrik Ramm and other Oxford men.<sup>473</sup> Still in September 1946, Oxford Group men hoped that Stolpe would participate in their future work.<sup>474</sup> After his conversion to Catholicism, Stolpe emphasized the important role of the Oxford Group as a kindergarten of Christian faith.<sup>475</sup>

The road to Rome was not unique for Sven Stolpe. In May 1944, Lennart Göthberg declared that – intellectually – nothing separated him from Catholicism, as he longed for conversion, but still hesitated out of respect for his parents. He found sharing as practised in the Oxford Group too simple a scheme, describing it as a kind of religious psycho-analysis, in that it was only quasi and pseudo and all sorts of things.<sup>476</sup>

Harry Blomberg developed in a sacramental direction, propagating a richer liturgy, opening churches on weekdays, etc. He sometimes criticized the modern, dualistic Swedish Lutheran theology, and studied the inner light of the Quakers and the medieval mystics, but also Geijer and Einar Billing. Though defending Catholicism, the matter of conversion was never actual for him. After the war, he identified himself more with the Church than with Caux, where he found no response to his ideas.<sup>477</sup> As we have noted, the Vadstena meetings with people from different Church parties and from the Oxford Group meant much to him. While some regarded the Group as a new denomination, Blomberg emphasized the unnecessary of the ‘Oxford’ label.<sup>478</sup> In a bitter tone he concluded that in ten years, the Group in Sweden had not dared to think one

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Ahlberg (1991:3, GUB), comparing the judgement of the Group Movement by its house-parties with judging Christianity by the religious education of the primary school.

<sup>473</sup> S. Stolpe: ‘Oxford-gruppen nu’ (StTD 1944, Aug. 23), ‘Den personliga gudstron vilar på säker grund’ (SvM 1944, Dec. 30).

<sup>474</sup> A. Hassler to E. Tengblad 1946, Sept. 4 (DWC).

<sup>475</sup> See Stolpe to A. Runestam 1948, Jan. 6 (Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB: ‘a kindergarten’; Stolpe 1949:14), further Adam 1952:7 ff. (‘the best possible nursery-school for Christian faith’). Such thoughts were expressed as early as in 1938 by Manfred Björkquist, see Ch. V.2.5.

<sup>476</sup> Göthberg to E. Petrén 1944, May 23, Aug. 19 (EPC). In the latter letter, Göthberg wrote that he could not find the living Christ in a dead formal system like Schartaivism or the new orthodoxy of Giertz, and not in the sharing of Oxford. Cf. copy of Petrén to Göthberg 1944, Sept. 14 (EPC) on the unity in the Body of Christ, and serious doubts in the established Church of Sweden, though not in the traditions mentioned by Göthberg.

<sup>477</sup> Löfström 1950:144, 146; H. Blomberg to J. Hemmer 1943, Apr. 4; 1944, March 31 (ÅAB); Berggrav 1950:32 f; Blomberg to J. Cullberg 1948, Sept. 25 (VDA): ‘Du har kanske läst Grevenius’ artiklar om *Caux* i St.-T. [StTD Sept. 19, 20, 22]. Han uttrycker rätt bra mina egna åsikter, fåfängt framförda till Buchman och hans ärkeänglar på ort och ställe. Det är en bitter historia. Men jag blir inte katolik för den skull, fast jag f. n. längtar till Rom och Assisi mer än på länge’; further Blomberg to A. Runestam 1948, Jan. 16 (Okat.saml.Runestam, UUB).

<sup>478</sup> H. Blomberg, ‘Grupp, kyrka och folk’ (StTD 1942, Dec. 16).



independent thought or listen to anything but Anglo-American orders, in the naïve belief that the voice of God was more audible in that way. This had turned the Group into a sect striving for a state of sanctity, with a relation of absolute obedience impossible for men, and led to a religious-moral cramp. They could not see that man was made righteous, and still a sinner. They dared not rest, but had to do things, being efficient and rational, which led to continuing crises (this he knew from personal experience). The Group was one of God's instruments, but as long as the leaders emphasized the M.R.A. label even at the expense of truth, the message was stifled.<sup>479</sup>

#### *V.4.7. Plans for Post-War Work*

The vision of a united Nordic North under the guidance of God, built by fellowship men, had been vivid since the Visby meeting, 1938. The strategy was mainly to present the Christian foundations for a new Nordic North before anyone else did it from another viewpoint. Inspiration came from the Gotthard-Bund in Switzerland. The vision was kept alive at Oxford Group conferences during the war. Preparedness for the post-war situation was actual since the Strängnäs conference in August 1942. As early as in June 1942, the Swedish team was invited to take part in an Oxford Group gathering in Switzerland the following month, in order to prepare the post-war situation on a supranational level together with 'friends from the other European countries.'<sup>480</sup>

Several representatives of different branches of Swedish society met on March 24, 1944, in Stockholm, to discuss the tasks of Sweden after the war. The meeting was opened by Bishop Björkquist of Stockholm, who greeted the Finnish guests, Lennart Segerstråle, Erkki Vuoristo, and Saga Hemmer, all active Oxford Group people, though here representing the spiritual protection of the population (A.B.S.), the youth emergency service, and the care of invalids, respectively.

Lennart Segerstråle, from his experiences at the front in the Winter War, emphasized the need for a total, national revival, and a new spirit of cooperation, while criticizing the blind Swedish faith in organization. Spiritual forces must dominate material ones, but both had to cooperate in this crusade for peace. The school principal Alva Myrdal was hoping for a new feeling of preparedness. Mrs. Myrdal and the editor F. J. Lundquist were both negative towards Segerstråle's idea of a crusade, and emphasized the need for organization and the importance of the popular movements – the trade unions, the temperance movement, and the Free churches – while Harry Blomberg found the

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<sup>479</sup> Blomberg to Annie Petrén 1948, Aug. 30 (EPC).

<sup>480</sup> L. Göthberg to E. Petrén 1941, Sept. 7; S. Linton to Petrén 1942, June 2, S. Lindqvist to Petrén 1942, June 24 (EPC). Parts of the French team had joined the Swiss at Easter.

popular movements to be monsters with feet of clay, as collective irresponsibility had replaced personal responsibility. Arvid Runestam was inspired by Segerstråle, and found that he had stated not the unnecessary of all organization, but the need for both spirit and organization. The future must be built on the faith in truth, righteousness, and love. Mrs. Saga Hemmer testified about the need for personal confidence, and the insufficiency of social care in the countries involved in the war. Elov Tengblad was positive to the national work initiated by Mrs. Myrdal and others, but stated the need for a new education, with the only safe foundation for a coming democracy being capitulation to Christ and a fellowship centred on Him. Erkki Vuoristo found that democracy in the Nordic countries was so permeated by the spirit of Christ that often it was not noticed. He further carried testimony about Fredrik Ramm's prison time, and his emphasis on the need for forgiveness. Professor Einar Tegen (philosophy) was positive towards cooperation with religious groups, but in other forms than the current testimonial meeting. Tegen referred to his English and American contacts, and to the plans and work of S.D.U. The curate Arnold Werner emphasized the continuing ecumenical work done in Geneva, and by the Nordic Ecumenical Institute at Sigtuna. The churches were in many ways occupied with plans for the rebuilding work. Finally, Segerstråle apologized for using the word 'crusade,' in spite of being previously warned against it. The people of Sweden needed to concentrate on the big task of uniting the organized help with the power that was greater than everything. Bishop Björkquist concluded by pointing to the road of active tolerance.<sup>481</sup>

After the conference, Segerstråle said that the view of reconstruction had perhaps been extended beyond the material-psychological borderline, including at least a will to more consciously take spiritual forces into the account, though Mrs. Myrdal had not been able to see the use of any Christian contribution to the reconstruction of Sweden. On the other hand, those who saw the decisive questions, had afterwards spoken only of the next step in the work for a national revival. During his work in Finland, Segerstråle tried to begin with what he called the realization of the spiritual fellowship, made complete by the joint listening for inspiration by the Holy Spirit, which was the most practical and concrete thing to do, and the only thing that worked without being counteracted by the self-will. The hardest and most important work was the inner edification of

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<sup>481</sup> 'Sammankomsten den 24 mars 1944 kring Sveriges uppgifter efter kriget' (dupl., with the author). Already in January 1944, Björkquist, in the invitation to the general assembly of the Church of Sweden, had emphasized the tasks of the coming peace time. See further Lenhammar 1977:144 ff. Segerstråle went on appealing for a 'crusade for peace' in Sweden at the Oxford Group conference at Lund, August 1944, and afterwards, as a part of his work for reconciliation and fellowship according to God's plan, with the strategy of a Christianized and strong labour movement (Segerstråle to Ernst Newman 1944, Aug. 25, Dec. 16, LUB). The Swedish organization mania had been criticized in fiction by Blomberg 1939:195.

the working teams on the road of humility and surrender to the will of God.<sup>482</sup> To the Oxford Group, the conference had hardly been a success. In emphasizing the need for unorganized, personal and spiritual forces, their terminology sounded strange and almost exotic to those thinking only in terms of commissions and organizations (including, as it seems, Arnold Werner). The pathetic testimonies from Finland seem to have had almost no immediate effect at all. The discussion, and the talk afterwards, showed that the Swedish Oxford Group men taking part agreed with Segerstråle on the need for a Swedish revival, but they – perhaps with the exception of Elov Tengblad – did not go all the way along the Oxford Group road, but separated the message from the methods in the manner of independent Group revivalism.

It is worth noting that, while emphasizing democracy as a common foundation, the Group men at the conference did not attack Communism as such. Their enemy was rather all forms of materialism.<sup>483</sup> The subsequent ideological interpretation of Moral Re-Armament was hardly noticeable in Sweden during the World War. This observation is confirmed by a totally personalistic description of old and new leadership, written by Silas Rydgård, in April 1945.<sup>484</sup> The first printed news in Swedish on the new 'ideology' came in 1944, personal reports in 1945, and what may be regarded as the first leading ecclesiastical reaction to the exclusive 'ideology' came in April 1946.<sup>485</sup> Unlike the situation in Denmark and Norway, political circumstances had not forced Swedish Oxford Group people to take a clear political stand. The critical description by Mrs. Vera Molland of the Swedish lack of understanding of the real situation, shown at the Oxford conference at Lund, 1944, may be summarized as national and political insensitivity and naïvety caused by total personalism. Thus, it shows the enormous difficulties of pursuing the vision of national change through personalistic strategies only.<sup>486</sup>

Throughout 1944, courses for the forthcoming international rebuilding camps were arranged in Småland, with the aim of training for establishing in-

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<sup>482</sup> L. Segerstråle to M. Björkquist 1944, March 30 (SIB).

<sup>483</sup> See also the complementary view on Communism in A. Tauson-Hassler to E. Petré 1945, July 2 (EPC): 'Det synes mig viktigt, att vi i detta läge inte kommer i något motsatsförhållande till kommunismen. Tvärt om, skall vi från kristet håll villigt förverkliga alla berättigade och rättfärdiga krav, som kommunismen frambär, men tillika ge vår syn på de andliga värdena.'

<sup>484</sup> Typewritten manuscript, '*Gammalt och nytt ledarskap*. Den 11/4 1945' (EPC).

<sup>485</sup> Vad gör laget i Amerika? 1944:7, 'Idékriget.' 'Personligt!' Stockholm 1945, Feb. 13 (dupl., EPC) with the Swiss diplomat, Philippe Mottu's report on the ideological war. Eidem to Runestam 1946, Apr. 26 on Runestam's suggestion that the diocese chaplain Anders Tauson-Hassler should be employed by the Central Church Board (Diakonistyrelsen). Significant of Eidem's attitude was that, while declining Runestam's suggestion, the archbishop offered 500 Swedish Crowns as his personal contribution to Tauson-Hassler's work for Moral Re-Armament in Sweden.

<sup>486</sup> E. Molland to A. Runestam 1944, Aug. 22 (Runestam Coll.I). See further Ch. III.4.2.

ternational post-war teams, in which people from the fighting countries could cooperate in rebuilding, with the Swiss and the Swedes keeping it all together.<sup>487</sup> Two travelling teams began their journeys in Lund, July 1, continuing in the southernmost parts of Sweden and in Västergötland and Småland.<sup>488</sup> In the autumn 1944, LAB published five articles on the eve of peace, including an article on the post-war programme of the Labour movement, and an article by Elov Tengblad emphasizing the need for avoiding hate and revenge after the war.<sup>489</sup> In reports and articles, the American industrial work during the war was described as leading, and the preparations for peace and post-war work were emphasized.<sup>490</sup>

After the end of the war, the Nordic interchange was renewed. A Swedish team had visited Finland (Porvoo) in January 1945, and the first cooperation on a bigger scale was the house-party in Lahtis, June 1945, arranged by two Danes, two Norwegians, and thirty-four Swedes. At the same time, a conference at Forsa emphasized the road from life-change to world change. In the summer, Nordic refugees were received, and in August a joint meeting for Nordic leaders was arranged at Noreborg, with eight Danes, six Finns, and eight Norwegians seeking guidance for the future, including the subsequent world conference at Mackinac Island in the United States. Soon, Anders Tauson-Hassler together with Sven and Rakel Fraenki voyaged to the conference, and stayed there for two months.<sup>491</sup>

In comparison with the situations in Norway and Denmark, the isolation of neutral Sweden meant much better possibilities for public Oxford Group work. As in Norway, the cultural importance was obvious, but during the later war years, cultural leaders 'changed' out of the Oxford Group work as well. The Oxford Group did not inspire such a broad Church Group revivalism as it did in Norway. A social work was built up, but not as extensively as in Denmark, and thus the tensions between Church Group revivalism and the social direction of the Oxford Group work were obvious, though not as strong as in Denmark. The Swedish development had gone from different forms of Group revivalism by way of a very short Oxford Group campaign for Moral Re-Armament into a social and personal work for spiritual preparedness, which emphasized the need for preparing oneself for the post-war situation.

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<sup>487</sup> 'Kära vän!', Lidnäs 1944, June 15 (dupl., EPC).

<sup>488</sup> 'Kära vän!', Stockholm 1944, June 21 (dupl., EPC).

<sup>489</sup> *Inför freden* 1944:33 ff., 43 f.

<sup>490</sup> S. Linton, 'Oxfordgruppen under kriget och efter' (*Kyrko-Nyheter* 1945:3, March 31; excerpts in *SvM* 1945, May 8).

<sup>491</sup> 'Kära vän!', Stockholm 1944, Dec. 21 (dupl., EPC). L. Segerstråle to A. Runestam 1945, July 5; see further Ekstrand 1993:204 ff. Forsa-konferensen 23–25 juni 1945. 'Kära vän!', Noreborg, Åmotfors 1945, July 25, 'Kära vän!' Stockholm 1945, Sept. 25 (dupl., EPC), Kerstin Rääf to Annie (née Feldin) and E. Petrén 1945, Aug. 6 (EPC). Fraenki 1979:33 ff.

# VI. GERMANY: FROM NATIONAL OXFORD GROUP REVIVALISM TO INDEPENDENT GROUP MOVEMENTS

## VI.1. A Different Situation

While the political and cultural situation in the Scandinavian countries in the 1920s and 1930s – with wide national variations – depended on similar circumstances and had a certain spiritual resemblance, the German situation was different. The treaty of Versailles, the official German guilt of having caused the First World War, the political instability and lack-lustre life in the Weimar Republic, even the new national Protestant Church system made up the conditions for a strong reaction of dissatisfaction, and a national revival.

## VI.2. The Information and Revival Groups Phase

### *VI.2.1. The Pre-Preparatory Group Friends Phase*

In Germany, a pre-preparatory phase of private parties for group-friends ends where this study begins. The subsequent information phase can hardly be separated from the revival groups phase. From the start, Group revivalism in Germany was both more closely linked to the Oxford Group and more nationally distinctive than in almost any other country in the world. A leading German group was formed not in Berlin, but at a house-party at Oxford in 1930. Still, the progress of Group work was adapted to the critical situation in Germany, and heavily affected by the fast political development. This rather exceptional combination was made possible through the personalistic attitude of the Oxford Group, and functioned largely because of Frank Buchman's deep personal interest in Germany and German affairs, and as a result of his occasional, but frequent work in Germany during the 1920s.

As early as in 1903, Buchman visited Friedrich von Bodelschwingh at Bethel bei Bielefeld, and was deeply impressed by his work. Shortly before his Keswick experience in 1908, Buchman paid another visit to von Bodelschwingh. After the latter's death in 1910, Buchman corresponded with his son, the future German Reichsbischof electus. During the war 1914–1918 he visited Germans interned in India and Japan. From 1920 he visited Germany almost every year, and inspired alternately smaller or bigger, rather private house-parties, for example in 1924, 1927 (Potsdam) and 1928.<sup>1</sup> A leading part was played by Countess Ursula Bentinck in Berlin, who worked with the Quakers, and supplied Buchman with new contacts in Germany.<sup>2</sup> In a letter from as early as 1921, Buchman's knowledge of German affairs, his empathy and his political sympathy with Germany is displayed. Here we also find one of the earliest proofs of his vision and strategy of a moral and spiritual renaissance of a nation:

I count upon you heavily to be one of the great spiritual reconstructing forces in Germany, which is her greatest need. I am grateful that there is a very hopeful chance through the influence of broad-minded statesmen to see that the Treaty of Versailles needs to be changed and the conditions were far too drastic and unjust.

H. G. Wells has brought to light the French militarism in such a way as to lead many Americans to see France in her true role. In the meantime, you and I must do all in our power to fit ourselves morally and spiritually for the new conditions which are bound to result.<sup>3</sup>

In the autumn 1928, a young theologian, Justus Ferdi(nand) Laun, encountered Buchman's work at Oxford.<sup>4</sup> At an earlier visit to Britain, Laun had got

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<sup>1</sup> Lean 1985:20, 30, 205 f. Buchman's extensive correspondence from the 1920s with his German friends is kept in the M.R.A. Archives in the NLC in Washington, D.C. Before the 1928 house-party (not mentioned by Lean), Ursula Bentinck wrote to Buchman (1928, March 15): 'We are inviting people for the house party here Friday 30 March–Monday 2 April. I do hope you will bring a strong team – we do need Eleanor & Loudon even if they don't speak German [...] We are also asking people for Monday, Tues and Wed. night 2, 3 & 4 April [...] We are keeping the work end *small*, but we wanted to know what you think about these 3 days, do you want them to be small or shall we ask all those who came last time.'

<sup>2</sup> Copy of Buchman to Miss Bentinck 1923, Oct. 8 (NLC). When J. F. Laun began to translate Begbie's book into German, he was hoping that Ursula Bentinck would write 'a pleasant chap. on the Movement in Holland & Germany,' and himself had the idea of concluding the book 'by a discussion of what the movement might mean for Germany' (Laun to Buchman, 1928, Dec. 11, NLC). Cf. Laun 1931<sup>2</sup>, Ch. 6. See further de Loor 1986:57.

<sup>3</sup> Copy of Buchman to Gerhard Heine, Berlin, 1921, Dec. 14, NLC.

<sup>4</sup> J. F. Laun (1899–1963), 'Dozent' of Church history in Gießen, was the German pioneer of Group revivalism. Vicar of Okarben in Upper Hesse (1930) 1932–1938, he devoted himself to evangelistic work according to the Oxford Group principles, and took

aquainted with the Quakers in Woodbrooke, and learnt the importance of quietness. His impression of a supernational and superconfessional loving fellowship in the Spirit of Christ was deepened, extended, and given a concrete form as an inner change and a calling to ecumenical and social activity through the Copec Conference in Birmingham in April 1924.<sup>5</sup> Laun took part in the Ecumenic World Conferences in Stockholm and Lausanne as well. In the autumn of 1928, arriving as a Rockefeller fellow at Oxford, he was requested by Frank Buchman to translate Begbie's *Life Changers* into German. During this visit to England, Laun encountered the Oxford Group at two house-parties at Wallingford and one at Matlock (1929), and he even started a group in Manchester.<sup>6</sup> When Laun, in January 1930, had been sent as acting vicar to a small parish in Upper Hesse, a small group began to meet before parish evenings for preparation through silence and prayer. When Countess Bentinck visited the parish, a female parishioner made an open confession, and this changed the situation. Soon the group began to meet regularly, every Saturday evening, in the vicarage, fighting their way to a deepening of their personal life in faith. To Laun, this seemed to realize what Luther had meant by a 'Kerngemeinde.'<sup>7</sup>

#### VI.2.2. *The German Group at Work*

Together with (approximately) eleven other Germans, Laun went to Oxford for a house-party in June 1930. Its overwhelming experience was the forming of a German Group willing to live at God's disposal without looking back at their respective age, rank, or sex. Before that, Group revivalism in Germany had not had the form of a team fellowship according to the Oxford Group working principles.<sup>8</sup> Soon after this leading group having been formed, a series

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part in many Group activities abroad. He stated that the essential parts of his theology came from Adolf Schlatter (Laun to Pastor Lassahn, Vandsburg in Poland 1937, Apr. 10; NLS, LKAS). See further Georgi 1970:15.

<sup>5</sup> Laun 1931<sup>2</sup>:134 f. On the Copec Conference (Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship), see Laun 1926.

<sup>6</sup> Laun 1931<sup>2</sup>:135–145. Laun to Buchman 1929, Oct. 15 (NLC): 'Ken may tell you of the group God has sent me to start at Manchester. It has been a fine practise for me to learn for work in Germany.'

<sup>7</sup> Laun 1931<sup>2</sup>:148 f. During this period, he wrote to Buchman (1930, Apr. 22, NLC): 'I am praying for a Revival of Germany, but I feel that I am not the man to take a greater part in it than publishing that book. Of course, I am willing to be our Lord's instrument, but my weakness & inconsistency doesn't give me much hope. And, besides, it may be God's will that I should only write the book & others do other work [...] So far, I am trying to work towards a spiritual awakening of this village which I am pastorising since Jan. 1st.'

<sup>8</sup> Laun to Buchman 1929, Nov. 10 ('[...]in Vienna where we both felt that we could help,

of group meetings were held in Berlin and in Mecklenburg, and a five day house-party was arranged at Laun's parish in Upper Hesse, with Frank Buchman also taking part for a short while.<sup>9</sup> Laun's correspondence with Buchman shows him as an independent man living according to the Oxford Group principles, strongly relying on his personal guidance, even when this guidance was contrary to Buchman's propositions.<sup>10</sup> Laun's ecumenical interest and work was activated through his new prime mover, and he reported on his impressions of the Oxford house-party as 'Ökumenische Erweckung' in *Die Christliche Welt* 1930.

One of the leading members of the German Group formed at Oxford, Herbert von Krumhaar (the chapter 'The Philosopher' in *Unter Gottes Führung*) got to know some German Group friends early in 1929, encountered the Oxford Group at a house-party at Crowborough, Sussex, in October, and went to Oxford for the house-party in the summer 1930. Later, he recalled that the first Group meeting at an estate in Mecklenburg was held on the parliamentary election day, September 14, 1930. The following night the participants heard the results on the radio: the first great victory of the National Socialist Party. It seemed as if God had heard the German people's need: He was so great that He, together with, and inseparable from the rising of the nation, gave us the victory of faith.<sup>11</sup> Compared with Laun's mixed though Church-based kind of Group character, Krumhaar represented a more exclusively German and less Church-oriented kind of Group revivalism. In his foundations for a religious

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*f* there were a fellowship in Germany or Austria. We pray that there should be one & we are willing to work for it, hoping that God will show us the way & work things out for us [...] I see the value of having the full team fellowship, though I believe that for work in Germany methods must be adapted.). Nov. 11 Laun wrote that he must 'first start personal work here & get some experience & then I shall be ready to have the full team fellowship & see the American work.' (NLC). Laun regarded this Oxford house-party as one of the spiritual group heights of Church history, like in the early Church, or with St. Francis, Luther, Calvin, Loyola, Zinzendorf, Wesley, or in the group around Keble and Newman.

<sup>9</sup> Laun 1931<sup>2</sup>:12, 151 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Laun to Buchman 1928, Dec. 12, 1929, Oct. 15, Nov. 10 ('Thank you deeply for your renewed invitation to the States. It impressed me very much & I should love to go. But that isn't what matters. I must find out God's will.'), Nov. 11 ('Guidance has come quicker than I expected and with an astounding clearness saying: No!').

<sup>11</sup> Laun & Krumhaar 1935:20 ff. 'Nun trat ein neuer Führer für die Ehre ein. Gott war so groß, daß Er in dieser Zeit, untrennbar mit dem Aufstieg der Nation verbunden, uns auch den Sieg des Glaubens gab. Mochte der Anfang noch so klein, der Boden steinig sein, der Weg zur Überwindung des Materialismus noch so hart erkämpft werden müssen: jetzt erfüllte sich Deutschlands Geschick: nach tausendjährigem Leiden, das im Sühneopfer des Krieges seinen Tiefstpunkt fand, der Welt einen neuen Völkerfrühling zu geben. Wir würden verkannt, verleumdet, mißverstanden werden, bis die Wahrheit durchbrach. Was schadete das? Wenn wir nur Gottes Stimme hörten und er mit uns blieb.'



renewal, Krumhaar in 1934 proved himself a true National Socialist, who with his new-found Christian faith coloured by Nietzscheanism regarded the fate of the Jews as a 'Gottesgericht.'<sup>12</sup> Thus, while still working for the Group, he estranged himself from its purely personalistic approach.<sup>13</sup> Krumhaar is an early example of the ideological difficulties inherent in a totally personalistic attitude to men and their views, difficulties which were to have severe political consequences.

Among sixty to eighty participants attending a greater party at Augustabad in the last week of September 1931 were Heinrich Rendtorff, Landesbischof of Mecklenburg-Schwerin 1930–1934, and Paul Le Seur, leader of the folk-high-school at Heinsteinst bei Eisenach.<sup>14</sup> Other Germans encountered the Oxford Group in German exile circles. Anneliese (Moni) von Cramon-Prittwitz recalled her first encounter with Frank Buchman in October 1931, together with his friends Mrs. Anna Jank, her son Wilhelm, Freiherr von Richthofen, and Freiherr von Maltzan, at tea in Kaiser Wilhelm II's residence at Doorn in Holland.<sup>15</sup> Ruth Bennett recalls that she, in 1931 or 1932, went with Buchman and two or three others to Berlin and Neubrandenburg to meet the German relatives and friends of the von Maltzans, while Hermann Dietzfelbinger recalls the arrival of Buchman and his team in Munich, 1931, with visits to the young

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<sup>12</sup> Krumhaar 1934:12 f. 'Für mich geschah in dieser Zeit das Wunderbare, daß ich als unbefangener, nicht absichtlich "christlicher" Mensch alle Stadien der christlichen Sakramente von neuem durchlaufen und erkennen lernen durfte: zunächst das Kreuz, das mir als Gottes Eintreten, an meiner Statt, in meine Schuld zum Brennpunkt meines praktischen Lebens wurde; dann aber ging mir in der Bedeutung des Heiligen Abendmahls – in Gottes "mystischer Ver-Mählung" – der Unio Mystica –, in Seiner Mahl- und Hoch-Zeit-Haltung mit dem Menschen ein riesiger Zusammenhang zwischen dem Sakrament der Kirche und Nietzsches Auffassung vom freiwilligen Liebestod Gottes, Seinen Freitod für uns, Seiner bis zur Selbst-Verleugnung, Seiner Eigenen Gottes-Verleugnung gehenden (in uns eingehenden) Liebe zu uns auf.'

<sup>13</sup> Krumhaar 1934:3. 'Gott ist anonym. Gott ist ein Pseudonym: für das von allem nur Persönlichen befreite, allem gleich nahe Sein in Dir und Mir – für Dich und Mich.' In 1935, Krumhaar translated Foot's *Life Began Yesterday* into German.

<sup>14</sup> Georgi 1970:15 f., *Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:87*. Georgi calls this party 'die erste Tagung der Gruppenbewegung auf deutschem Boden.' This is correct only if 'Tagung' is given a very official meaning or restricted to bigger arrangements. On Le Seur's views, see Le Seur 1934<sup>3</sup>, in which Kierkegaard, Luther, J. A. Bengel, and Rudolf Otto are quoted, in order to emphasize the importance of quietness, the identification with the sinner, and the apolitical character. The central matter was not for or against the Oxford Group, but a question of the supremacy of the Holy Ghost in the lives of men. His booklet was received by J. F. Laun with enthusiasm (Laun to Kurt Fricke 1933, March 10; NLS, LKAS). In 1933, Le Seur published a revised version of his book on the anti-Semite Christian Social pastor Adolf Stoecker as a 'Prophet des Dritten Reiches.'

<sup>15</sup> Moni von Cramon: *Experiences with Frank*, Ch. 1 (Copy with the Estate of Garth Lean, Oxford). See also Lean 1985:204.

students in the Predigerseminar as well.<sup>16</sup>

Out of Buchman's request for a translation of Begbie's *Life Changers*, came finally, in 1931, a heavily Germanized version, *Unter Gottes Führung*, edited by Laun. From Begbie's book only chapters 4, 5 and 9 were translated. The rest was taken from other sources: some came from within the Oxford Group, a great part consisted of previously unpublished German confessions, and chapters 1 and 7 from the American rector Sam. Shoemaker's *Children of the Second Birth* were translated. This mixture was typical of Laun and of his efforts to form a German Group Movement as a tool for a new way of Church evangelization according to the principles of the Oxford Group. The intertwined stamp of national and Church elements was characteristic for much of the German Group work in the early 1930s, in contrast to both the private gatherings around Frank Buchman in the 1920s, and the short Oxford Group period of 1933/34–1937. Laun had met this kind of both nationally and Church-based reception of Group revivalism in Shoemaker's successful work at Calvary Church in New York. In the German-speaking countries, Laun's book contributed to creating a special continental Group identity, with its own personal legends mixed with the Anglo-saxon ones. Since his book was widely spread and read, and soon translated into other languages (for example, into Swedish in 1934), it influenced the development of Group revivalism far outside Germany.

Laun intended to present a profiled, spiritual, Christian alternative to National Socialism, with guidance as the leading and equalizing principle, something that is obvious from the following passage in *Unter Gottes Führung*:

[...] stellen einen neuen Führertyp dar: einen Führer, der keine Anhänger sucht, sondern die Menschen zu Christus führen will. Dieser Führer ist keine Persönlichkeit im individualistischen Sinne, im Sinne des Heroenkultes. Daher fehlt auch den Hauspartien jeder Führerkult. [...] weil dahinter der wahre Führer Christus steht, in allen lebendig als der Heilige Geist. Darum ist jeder berufen zum Führer. [...] Der Führer steigt nicht herunter zur Maße, sondern alle sind zu Führer erhoben, da alle direkten Zugang haben zu der Führung des Heiligen Geistes.<sup>17</sup>

The reception in traditional, revivalistic circles, as the Dorfkirchenbewegung, before which Laun spoke in October 1931, was appreciative, though strains of Quakerism or Methodism were noted.<sup>18</sup>

Garrett Stearly, one of Frank Buchman's American fellow-workers, reported that 'the Germans in the work see the Group movement as the only answer to Bolshevism, an acute problem for them just now.'<sup>19</sup> In January 1932, Buchman

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<sup>16</sup> Ms. with the Estate of Garth Lean, Oxford. Dietzfelbinger 1985<sup>2</sup>:22.

<sup>17</sup> Laun 1931<sup>2</sup>:169 f.

<sup>18</sup> Christian Balzer in *Die Christliche Welt* 1932:44.

<sup>19</sup> Mimeographed letter from G. R. Stearly, 1930 [1931], Dec. 27 (NLC).

tried to meet Adolf Hitler personally.<sup>20</sup> In June he sent a cheque for \$100 to be used by five Germans going to Oxford. They were Moni von Cramon, Wilhelm [Jank?], Herbert von Krumhaar, ‘a superintendent that Herbert wanted there’ [Hossenfelder?], and Laun – or ‘this man Hoch but be sure that he understands German.’ The publisher Leopold Klotz from Gotha was to be invited as Frank Buchman’s own guest.<sup>21</sup> In the summer 1932, Buchman took a group of young men and women to Germany, shortly before his first campaign in Canada. Sixteen from the party were invited to a Nazi banquet in Berlin, but none of them spoke publicly.<sup>22</sup>

In August 1932, a big house-party was held at Swiss Ermatingen near Konstanz, on the German border, with Frank Buchman and an international team, and with the aim of

Neubelebung der persönlichen Erfahrung des Evangeliums.

Anleitung zu diszipliniertem christlichem Leben.

Die Grundsätze des Neuen Testaments als wirksame Kraft der Gegenwart.

Neues Verständnis der Bibel.

Zeugnisse von Menschen, deren Leben unter Gottes Führung steht.

Antwort auf alle heutige Not.<sup>23</sup>

Soon, *Ermatinger Tagebuch* was published, containing various voices on the Group movement from Germany and Switzerland. The book shows the fellowship and the common mentality of German and Swiss Group revivalism, except in the distinctly different political situations in the two countries. The group was made out as the only way out of German trouble, with Jesus as the ‘Führer.’<sup>24</sup> Both a ‘Tannenbergbundler’ and a Communist testified about per-

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<sup>20</sup> Lean 1985:207. Lean reports that Buchman, on an office desk in the Brown house in Munich, saw an open telegram to Hitler’s staff from Prince August Wilhelm saying: ‘By no means allow Buchman to see the Führer.’ The interview was refused. A new attempt was made in October 1933, when Buchman’s planned audience, together with the Reichsbischof and Professor Fezer, was cancelled because of the German withdrawal from the League of Nations (Vock 1989:75).

<sup>21</sup> Copy of Buchman to F. Laun and H. v. Krumhaar 1932, June 8 (NLC). Leopold Klotz was known to be close to the circle around the principal organ of religious liberalism, *Die Christliche Welt*, Karlström 1976:25. In publishing *Die Kirche und das Dritte Reich*, Klotz ‘grenzte sich kritisch gegen den Nazismus ab [...] Volkstum, Rasse, Staat und Drittes Reich waren für ihn keine letztlich eigengesetzliche Wirklichkeiten [...]’ (Neumann 1971:24).

<sup>22</sup> Lean 1985:207.

<sup>23</sup> Persönliche Einladung zu einer Haus-Partie der Oxford-Gruppe vom 8. bis 18. August 1932 im Hotel Adler, Ermatingen, Kanton Thurgau, Schweiz (nähe Konstanz) [1932]:[3].

<sup>24</sup> Ermatinger Tagebuch 1932:76, 79. Impressions from Ermatingen also in Andrews 1933:37 ff.

sonal changes from their respective political ideologies to the Christian faith,<sup>25</sup> but nothing indicated that change, to a National Socialist, should also include abandoning his political ideology. Among the confessions was the one of Moni von Cramon, and on September 27–28, 1932, she arranged a Group party of a rather private character at Arnoldsühle near Breslau. In her invitation, she wrote about her former scepticism towards the Oxford Group, and how the Oxford house-party 1932, as well as her subsequent visit to Switzerland, had left her with very deep impressions.<sup>26</sup> In October, she went with Buchman's team to Canada.<sup>27</sup>

The German work was increased and extended. In December 1932, Laun gave a small training party at Selzerbrunnen in Okarben with about twenty-five participants from Heidelberg (Erich von Eicken and Walther Adler), Marburg, Mainz, Frankfurt, Offenbach, and the Hannover region. Several more from the neighbourhood joined. The party had a Church Group revivalistic colour, including two Sunday services as well as a Bible hour, but the programme was a genuine Oxford Group programme, including personal work with individuals, and quiet times, and avoiding all discussion – despite the protests of a lecturer from the Methodist preacher training college in Frankfurt. The demand for house-parties was increasing, especially among those who were asked to write articles on the Movement, but had no thorough personal knowledge. Laun wanted the international team – with, for example, Ken Twitchell, Sherry Day, and Sam. Shoemaker – back in Germany. He expressed his wishes to Anneliese von Cramon, who was at the time staying at Shoemaker's Calvary House in New York City.<sup>28</sup>

### VI.2.3. *Emil Brunner, Frank Buchman, and Germany*

The Swiss theologian Emil Brunner attended the Ermatingen house-party.<sup>29</sup> In his first article on the Oxford Group, in *Kirchenblatt für die reformierte Schweiz*, 1932, Brunner reported about his experiences at Ermatingen. He had come there as a critical observer,<sup>30</sup> but the close contact with the movement had

<sup>25</sup> Ermatinger Tagebuch 1932:44 ff., 55 ff. The 'Tannenbergbundler' was later to be quoted in the Gestapo report *Leitheft Die Oxford- oder Gruppenbewegung* 1936.

<sup>26</sup> Von Cramon 1932. On the Arnoldsühle house-party, see further Spoerri 1975:196 ff., from an exclusively personalistic attitude.

<sup>27</sup> See Lean 1985:192 ff.

<sup>28</sup> Copy of Laun to von Cramon 1932, Dec. 14 (NLS, LKAS), Vock 1989:68.

<sup>29</sup> See above Ch. II.2.3.2.

<sup>30</sup> Brunner 1934:5, 7. Brunner's article was printed separately in 1934. On his relations to the Oxford Group Movement, see also H. H. Brunner 1986:69 ff., 89 ff. On Brunner's critical views on 'christlicher Amerikanismus,' see Brunner as early as 1925:26 – 'den evolutionistischen Optimismus der Welterneuerung, den man auch als christlichen Amerikanismus bezeichnen kann.'

convinced him of its uncommonly strong effects, which were caused by the strong position of the cure of souls in the movement, built on the identification of the spiritual guide with the applicants, as a sinner to sinners. Where preaching turned out badly, this personal cure of souls still had undreamt of possibilities.<sup>31</sup> Brunner wanted to keep in touch with the group people, not to become an Oxfordian, but a better pastor. The Oxford Group was a trumpet blast, that could and wanted to awaken the sleeping Church in all countries, a trumpet blast, that he himself needed.<sup>32</sup>

Brunner's writings on the Group Movement were criticized by the Oxford Group because of his distanced position. He had himself for some time been critical of the German Group work. In the draft of Brunner 1932, related above (Ch. II.2.3.2), the following lines by Brunner, criticizing Ferdinand Laun, were deleted by Theophil Spoerri, and most likely not sent to Frank Buchman: 'Now this whole idea of leadership and "Hauptschriftführer" (his own expression) is absolutely contrary to the principles of the Group [...] "I would rather get drunk with rasberry [sic] syrup than have anything to do with F L" – Gogarten. This man is seriously damaging the work of the group inspite [sic] or by his great activity.' More important was Brunner's emphasis on the German doctrinal way of thinking, the Germans being 'delicate in matters of doctrine,' and that this and other 'different national individualities' were created by God. 'What is of less importance in England or America may prove of great importance in Germany or France.'<sup>33</sup> In a letter to Brunner in October 1932, Frank Buchman advised him to forget Ferdinand Laun. Brunner did not. Instead, he advised Laun, through Herbert von Krumhaar, to step aside from Group work in Germany for a while.<sup>34</sup> Laun remained in the background, primarily handling his congregational work and his correspondence. Brunner's letter of March 16 again hit Laun hard, but in April he believed that Brunner showed some confidence in him.<sup>35</sup> In their correspondence, Brunner and Laun discussed, among other things, guidance. While Brunner was critical, Laun responded with a heavy emphasis on Group guidance, in which it lost its 'schwärmerisch' stamp.

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<sup>31</sup> Brunner 1934:10 f., 13.

<sup>32</sup> Brunner 1934:31.

<sup>33</sup> Draft by Brunner and others to Buchman 1932 [before Oct. 8], ZZ. Cf. Buchman's own critical attitude, in the summer 1933, to German 'activities.' The German need for intellectual clearance was pointed out – more wisely – by T. Spoerri to Buchman 1933, June 30 (Spoerri 1975:208): 'Wir wollen nicht eine neue Theologie, ein neues System machen, aber wir glauben, daß was geschieht so durchsichtig gemacht werden muß, daß der Deutsche auch in seinem Geist getroffen wird. Der Deutsche ist eben so gemacht, daß er immer mit seinem Geist auch dabei sein muß. Auch der Weltmensch, der Industrielle, der Politiker will geistig erfaßt werden.' See also, for example, Pfortner [1934]:12 – 'Wir Deutsche suchen alles zur Doktrin zu machen, als Doktrin festzuhalten und durch Doktrin zu bekämpfen.'

<sup>34</sup> Buchman to Brunner 1932, Oct. 8 (ZZ), Laun to Brunner 1932, Nov. 11, ZZ.

<sup>35</sup> Laun to Brunner 1933, March 7, Apr. 5 (ZZ).

Anneliese von Cramon found Brunner's opinion on German organizational matters in no way authoritative, since he was neither German, nor in the Group.<sup>36</sup>

### VI.3. The 'Oxford Group' Phase

#### *VI.3.1. Introduction*

German Group leaders wanted a big Oxford Group campaign to take place in Germany, but Frank Buchman had other plans. In January 1933, he wrote to Laun and Krumhaar: 'I appreciate your thought about this important work and I wish I could be more definite but there is no question but there is a revival on in Canada and we must center our thought and action there [...] I believe we can do the same thing in Germany as has happened in Canada some day.'<sup>37</sup>

In Germany, events were developing at a high speed, and the winter 1933 meant an entirely new situation in national and political life. On January 30, Adolf Hitler was appointed Reichskanzler. In the elections, March 5, held shortly after the fire at the Reichstag, and under severe pressure, the 'Government of the National Revolution' received 52% of the votes, and on March 23, the Reichstag gave the administration unlimited power for four years. In July, the National Socialist party was declared the State party, and in the new elections in November, no other parties were allowed.

#### *VI.3.2. Buchman Challenges, and Takes the Command*

Conferring in January 1933, Laun, Klotz, and Krumhaar felt an imperative need for a 'Führerwoche,' working with the Biblical foundations of the movement being particularly necessary in Germany. Ferdinand Laun, in search of a more secure basis for the Group in its roots in the Bible and among the Reformers, wrote to Moni von Cramon about the need for a Biblical-reformatory deepening of the fundamental attitude among German Group people. She replied that giving the 'Führerschulung' one determined theme was totally against the Group character ('Gruppenart'): 'Reformation lässt sich doch nicht machen. Unterm Geist Gottes geschieht schöpferisch immer wieder Neues; damit können wir getrost rechnen!'<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> A. v. Cramon to Laun 1933, Apr. 5. (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>37</sup> Copy of Buchman to Laun and Krumhaar 1933, Jan. 12 (NLC).

<sup>38</sup> Copy of Laun to von Cramon 1933, Feb. 23, Apr. 10; von Cramon to Laun 1933, Apr. 5 (NLS, LKAS).

A big arrangement, called 'Haus-Partie der Deutschen Gruppenbewegung' with a preceding 'Führerschulung' of three days,<sup>39</sup> was held at Bad Homburg, June 9–15, 1933. The preparatory 'Führerschulung' counted forty participants, the house-party over a hundred, and the evening meetings more than 250 participants, mostly from the neighbourhood. A group of fifty carried on the local work.<sup>40</sup> The new label, Deutsche Gruppenbewegung, was explained by the confusion with the Oxford Movement of the 19th century and by the effort to exclude the strange 'anglisierende Äußerlichkeiten, die den Kern der Sache nicht betreffen.'<sup>41</sup> The rejection of the Oxford label was emphasized by J. F. Laun as well, who explained his efforts to translate the movement into German, with a focus on the German, reformatory character of its message.<sup>42</sup>

A smaller house-party was planned to take place at the same time at Deutsch-Lissa (Polish Leszno). A certain tension is noticeable between the stronger western German branch, and the smaller eastern German branch in Silesia. This tension includes a difference of strategy. In western Germany, Group work was locally connected with the Church, and established in the parishes. In Silesia, Moni von Cramon tried to reach not the pious, but the intellectual, industrial, and land-owning circles. She found the help of Count John Bentinck, who, together with Frank Buchman and Theophil Spoerri, started the work in Silesia, of the greatest importance.<sup>43</sup> Through her, the work in eastern Germany was more strongly connected with Buchman and the international team than the work in the western region.

The forthcoming plans were discussed at Bad Nauheim, June 22, with Frank Buchman, John Bentinck, Leopold Klotz, and Ferdinand Laun. A bigger house-party still was planned for Bad Homburg during ten days in September 1933, again preceded by three days of 'Führerschulung,' all under the direction of Frank Buchman. This was to be the only big German group meeting during the summer. According to Laun's report, Buchman had strongly stressed that it was possible to go on only with the strictest discipline. Freebooters and all Group 'activities' ('aller Gruppen-"Betrieb"') had to come to an end. From now on, nothing new was to be done before checking with the inner team, i.e. 'nach Frank Buchmans Bestimmung mindestens mit' John Bentinck, Leopold Klotz, Fritz Lippoldt (Bad Homburg), and Ferdinand Laun, and for questions not limited to southern and western Germany, also with Anneliese von Cramon. This discipline was compulsory for everyone: 'Wer diese Disziplin nicht einhält und selbständige Unternehmungen macht, muß in Zukunft von der Gruppe

<sup>39</sup> The necessity of a 'Führerschulungwoche' or 'School of Life' had been pointed out during a conference in Frankfurt with Laun, Moni von Cramon, Count Bentinck, and probably Herbert von Krumhaar (Laun to Brunner 1933, March 16, ZZ).

<sup>40</sup> Laun to 'Liebe Freunde!' 1933, June 23.

<sup>41</sup> Pförtner [1934]:6.

<sup>42</sup> Laun to K. L. Gross 1934, Feb. 27 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>43</sup> A. von Cramon to Laun 1933, May 15 (NLS, LKAS). On Count John van Altenburg-Bentinck and the Netherlands, see de Loor 1986:69, 72, 82 f., 199.

abgelehnt werden.' An advantageous work on a wider base could not be done until after having gained a 'wirklich durchgebildete Mannschaft.'<sup>44</sup> Considerations were made also at Eisenach in August, where Buchman met Laun, von Krumhaar, Klotz, and Count Bentinck, and the decisions from the discussions in June were confirmed.<sup>45</sup>

The house-party planned for September 1933 was postponed until January 1934, and moved to Stuttgart. Only the 'Führerschulung,' now renamed 'Rüstzeit der Arbeitsgruppe' took place September 15–25 at Bad Homburg. This 'Rüstzeit' was arranged in order to train the working team, and the invitation was not to be passed on.<sup>46</sup> Less than a month before this 'Rüstzeit,' Buchman wrote to Emil Brunner about the growing German interest in the groups ('I have been in touch with the collaborator of Gogarten [sic]<sup>47</sup> and others whose eyes are beginning to be opened to what the groups really mean').<sup>48</sup> Garth Lean, however, in his biography tells that Buchman at Bad Homburg challenged the Germans with the task of changing the Nazis, though, according to Garrett Stearly's account, he 'did not really get through to them.' They were

very intellectual, fortified behind an impregnable wall of theology. They looked down on National Socialism as something quite unrelated to the churches, and thought it would wear itself out. Frank was clear that, whether you liked it or not, it was there to stay, and that it was high time to try and win it for Christ. The clergy decided to do nothing.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Persönliche Einladung zu einer Haus-Partie der Deutschen Gruppenbewegung vom 9. bis 15. Juni 1933. J. F. Laun to 'Liebe Freunde!' 1933, June 23 (copies of this and a few other letters have generously been put to my disposal by Mr. Pierre Spoerri, Bonn; also in NLS, LKAS).

<sup>45</sup> [A. Günther] to E. von Eicken 1933, Aug. 16 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>46</sup> Persönliche Einladung. Die für die Zeit [...].

<sup>47</sup> Friedrich Gogarten, professor in Breslau, from 1935 in Göttingen, belonged – like Brunner – to the dialectical theologians. Gogarten's radical theological personalism allowed him to take a positive attitude towards the National Socialist revolution. The first notice on Gogarten and Group revivalism is found in Spoerri 1985:198 (letter from Spoerri, 1932, Oct. 1): 'Denken Sie, eben waren drei unerwartete Gäste bei mir: Prof. Brunner, Thurneysen (der Freund Karl Barths) und Gogarten. Wir haben zwei Stunden miteinander gesprochen. Ich habe viel von Breslau [the Arnoldsühle house-party] erzählt, ganz offen, auch wenn ich dabei mich und andere ein wenig preisgeben mußte... Es war eine sehr offene und herzliche Aussprache, wir waren dann merkwürdig einig.' Another notice on Gogarten in a draft of Brunner and others to Buchman 1932 [before Oct. 8] (ZZ).

<sup>48</sup> Buchman to Brunner 1933, Aug. 22 (ZZ).

<sup>49</sup> Lean 1985:207 f. Vock 1989:71 quotes Stearly from Pierre Spoerri's unprinted manuscript 'Frank Buchman und die Deutschen' (1985): 'Frommes Lutheranertum, nur Kirchenbesuch sei nicht genug [...] Es müßen ca. 150 gewesen sein, eine der frömmsten Gruppen, die ich je erlebt hatte. Es war ein Kampf, sie aufzuwecken [...] Sie waren sehr



Lean does not say whether he is alluding to the Bad Homburg house-party in June, or to the 'Rüstzeit' in September. Neither does Georgi, who does not seem to have been conscious of two separate arrangements in 1933, both taking place at Bad Homburg, or of the postponement of the house-party planned for September. However, from press reports it is obvious that the 'Rüstzeit' is intended.<sup>50</sup> This is also the case with Vock, who does not mention the house-party in June.<sup>51</sup>

The 'Rüstzeit' at Bad Homburg was attended by German theologians like Martin Rade, Rudolf Otto, Heinrich Hermelink, and leaders of different denominations, such as Johannes Vogt (Herrnhut), and Herbert Schnädelbach (Methodist), as well as by the Swiss professors Emil Brunner and Theophil Spoerri.<sup>52</sup> These had been invited as presumed 'key persons' in German spiritual life. However, the invitation had been limited to friends active in Group work or seriously occupied with it, and the meeting aimed at training the working team.<sup>53</sup> Some of the key persons had previously been engaged in independent, revivalistic groups.<sup>54</sup> To others, the question without doubt was whether, and how they might use the Group for their preconceived and differing theological, evangelizing, or political purposes,<sup>55</sup> while Frank Buchman and

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intellektuell und sagten: was Sie sagen, ist eine gute Sache, aber wo ist das Kreuz, das Blut Jesu Christi, die Heiligung; wo ist die Bibel in all dem, was Sie sagen. Wir waren ratlos, wir wußten nicht, was antworten [...]'

<sup>50</sup> Georgi 1970:16 f. speaks of a 'Haus-Partie,' but refers to printed reports from the 'Rüstzeit,' see also Rade 1933:934 f.

<sup>51</sup> Vock 1989:71. Both Lean and Vock depend on P. Spoerri's unprinted manuscript.

<sup>52</sup> Pförtner [1934]:5, 11 (Bible hours led by Brunner and Th. Spoerri), Georgi 1970:16 f.

<sup>53</sup> Persönliche Einladung. Die für die Zeit [...]: 'Diese Rüstzeit soll als Schulung der Arbeitsgruppe gelten ausschließlich den Freunden, die in der Gruppenarbeit tätig gewesen sind oder sich bisher ernsthaft damit beschäftigt haben.' There might have been other forms of invitation as well. See also [A. Günther] to E. von Eicken 1933, Aug. 16: 'eine "selective" Führerschulung in Form einer Houseparty [...] Für alle Neulinge, Interessenten etc. gilt die restlose Verschiebung der Tagung auf nächstes Frühjahr' (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>54</sup> Pförtner [1934]:4, occasionally took part in a group in Munich, staying free from too Anglo-Saxon or Methodist methods. See also Dietzfelbinger 1985<sup>2</sup>:22 on Group revivalistic work in Munich, around the Amtsgerichtsrat Alo Münch and his wife Elisabeth. In April 1934, Alo Münch was questioned by the Gestapo for two and a half hours, since he had let Christian Jews take part in the meetings, and personally belonged to a German-French pacifistic organisation (Vock 1989:74).

<sup>55</sup> A good example is given in Schnädelbach [1934]: positive to all Oxford Group practices, emphasizing their parallels in Methodism (such as sharing and the Methodist classes), even to fellowship in team-work, but with a heavy emphasis on the Group Movement as a modern revival movement. Schnädelbach's pamphlet also relates to a circular from the German Methodist Bishop J. L. Nuelsen, Sept. 4, 1933, which states: 'Die Gruppenbewegung hat nichts Neues zutage gefördert, jeder ihrer Grundzüge ist ein Stück des ursprünglichen Methodismus' (Schnädelbach 1934:4). The conception is

the German Group wanted to use them for their purposes, i.e. for a change of German spiritual life into the Oxford Group way, right across or between traditional borders. The result showed the impossibility, especially in the present situation in Germany, of combining two different groups with different purposes, and which were both theologically and politically heterogenous.<sup>56</sup> The presence of the well-known Socialists Hermelink and Rade was noted by the Nazi government, 'proving' that all socially interested theologians from 1933 onwards gathered in the Group movement.<sup>57</sup>

The fact that Frank Buchman took the ultimate command of Group work in Germany did not exclude it being Germanized – on the contrary: what Buchman found to be an obstacle was traditional, pious revivalism, as well as independent, local groups without a working fellowship with the leading German teams. It could even be said that Buchman, together with some Germans, used Germanization – often in a Church Group revivalistic form – as a tool against Group independentism.<sup>58</sup> This development may be compared to the rejected efforts of finding a national form of Group revivalism in Sweden in 1934 (Ch. V.2.4).

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similar to the one in Methodist circles in Britain. Cf. Strahm 1989, who does not mention either Schnädelbach or Nuelsen's circular.

<sup>56</sup> Martin Rade writes: 'Das Politische blieb ganz im Hintergrunde [...] Man spürte immer wieder das Verlangen der Ausländer, sich in unserem Deutschen Reich zurecht zu finden. Aber die religiöse Leidenschaft ließ kein politisches Interesse aufkommen [...],' Rade 1933:935.

<sup>57</sup> Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:87 f: 'Der erste mußte auf Grund des Berufsbeamtengesetzes nach 1933 aus seinem Amte ausscheiden und der letztere marschierte bei Straßenumzügen dicht hinter der roten Fahne, beide radikale sogenannte religiöse Sozialisten, wie ja überhaupt alle irgendwie sozial interessierten Theologen, als ihnen 1933 das Arbeitsfeld für ihre christlich-sozialistischen Ideologien verloren ging, in der Gruppenbewegung sich erneut sammelten.' In Switzerland, the Oxford Movement was discussed in *Neue Wege*, the journal of the Christian Socialists, which criticized the private character, the disclaiming of political activities, and the change of several people from anti-militarism to defence support through the Oxford Movement, see L. Ragaz 1935:122. The pacifism was further emphasized by Paul Trautvetter in a discussion between the 'Religiös-Sozialen' and the Oxford Movement in the Volkshaus in Zurich on November 15, 1935 (Trautvetter 1935:539 ff.) and by a 'member of the Oxford Group' (R. le Gras) in a letter to the editor of *Neue Wege* (1935:359 f.). Three Oxford evenings in the Volkshaus, addressing the socialist workers, were severely criticized, especially for the attitude towards unemployment, i.e. keeping the unemployed busy with life-changing (C. Ragaz 1935:492 ff.; see also the discussion between Adolf Isenschmid and Christel Ragaz in *Neue Wege* 1935:552 ff). Ragaz' views were further discussed by the Dane K. Bjerregaard 1936:3 f.

<sup>58</sup> Pförtner [1934]:13 f. ('Die Gruppenbewegung ist das beste Mittel gegen die "Grüppchen"-Bewegung, die Konventikelbildung in der Kirche [...] Gruppenbewegung ist Zellenbildung in der Kirche, nicht Sektenbildung neben der Kirche').

### VI.3.3. *German Church Politics and the Oxford Group*

The position of the German Group in relation to the National Socialist Church movement, *Deutsche Christen*, was the subject of correspondence between Ferdinand Laun and Anneliese von Cramon in May 1933. Laun's line was apolitical, presenting a purely religious movement, working towards reconciliation through the mobilization of the powers of faith. He found it desirable that representatives of different political directions worked together in the Group. Though Laun held such an exposed position that he could not attach himself unilaterally, he had no objections if Mrs. von Cramon was guided to join the *Deutsche Christen*. He ended by remarking that he was inexhaustibly working for the 'Eindeutschung' of the Group, but the representatives of the Group in Germany had to stay definitely apolitical.<sup>59</sup>

As a consequence of the German political development, difficulties rose between the international team and the German Group. In May 1933, Laun received what he found to be a very kind, but very unsympathetic letter from John Roots about the invitation of the Germans to Oxford, and about the political situation in Germany. He asked Moni von Cramon to enlighten their friends in Oxford.<sup>60</sup> In July, she reported from the Oxford house-party about the visit of Bishop Rendtorff among others.

Heinrich Rendtorff, who had visited the house-party at Augustabad in 1931, was Landesbischof in Mecklenburg-Schwerin, 1930–1934. He represented an important opinion in the Church, which combined a deep, nationalist enthusiasm with a fearless preaching of the Cross of Christ as a stumbling-block to both Jewish and pronouncedly German people.<sup>61</sup> Rendtorff worked intensely for the Volksmision through the nationalistic *Christlich-Deutsche Bewegung*.<sup>62</sup> He protested against the installation of a state commissioner as leader of the Church of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, in April 1933. On April 26, Home Secretary Frick, after hard negotiations also with Rendtorff, persuaded the prime minister of Mecklenburg to withdraw the state commissioner from the rule of Church affairs. Rendtorff was received by Adolf Hitler, who promised to guarantee the inner freedom of the Church, after which Rendtorff joined the National Socialist party. He tried hard to establish good relations with the state, the Nazi ministers, and the *Deutsche Christen*.

In May or June 1933, Hossenfelder even offered Rendtorff the office of Reichsbischof, though he declined. However, he never became a member of the *Deutsche Christen*. After his short visit to Oxford,<sup>63</sup> Rendtorff, in his 16th

<sup>59</sup> Laun to von Cramon 1933 May 13 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>60</sup> Laun to von Cramon 1933 May 24 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>61</sup> See Rendtorff 1934:187, 189, 163 (both examples from 1932).

<sup>62</sup> See Rendtorff 1932. Important aims were the creation of a faithful, fighting team, a Christian view of life, and a Christian-German cell through personal interchange.

<sup>63</sup> See K. Hee Andersen to J. Nørregaard 1933, Nov. 28, on Rendtorff's one-day visit, acting as an advocate for (moderate) *Deutsches Christentum* (Pa. 6073, RAK). See also

‘vertrauliches Rundschreiben,’ July 19, expressed himself in a mainly positive manner on the Glaubensbewegung Deutsche Christen. At the Oxford house-party, an American statesman had told him that he counted on the possibility that a new spiritual guidance for the whole world could come from Germany. But Rendtorff also criticized dangerous tendencies among the Deutsche Christen, such as politicizing, theological liberalism, and popular heresy. This was too much for the Deutsche Christen ministers. On August 11, the prime minister of Mecklenburg gave leave of absence to the bishop. On September 9, Rendtorff was back in service. But after four days, the Landessynode of the Church deprived the bishop of most of his powers, and in the autumn he was even denied to preach in the Schloßkirche. On January 6, 1934, Rendtorff gave up his office, and soon turned to the Confessing Church.<sup>64</sup>

Rendtorff’s encounter with the Oxford Group obviously made deep impressions on him, especially for the evangelizing work in the Volksmission and, later, through other channels. Though inspired by the Oxford Group, he never identified himself with the Group in Germany. There is no evidence for stating that his break with National Socialism was a consequence of his encounter with the Oxford Group. However, his impressions from Oxford probably had personal consequences encouraging him to find his own way, according to his concept of serving the spiritual needs of his people.

Professor Wilhelm Schlink of Darmstadt, writing on the German Group Movement in December 1933, was especially impressed by Group members who regarded the Group merely as the shortest and most direct way to reach people and lead them to God, but accepted other roads to God as well. Furthermore, the foreigners had won and shown great understanding for the new Germany.<sup>65</sup>

After Bad Homburg, Frank Buchman went to Berlin, where he met Professor Karl Fezer from Tübingen, who, in October 1933, together with Baron von Maltzan, Mrs. von Grone (Reichsführerin of the Frauenwerk der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche), the Oberkonsistorialrat Dr. Hans Wahl, and Pfarrer Dr. Krummacher, were invited to an Oxford Group service in St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. Fezer was so impressed that he returned to London in the company of Landesbischof Hossenfelder, with new possibilities for the German

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Strahm 1989:62, who mentions Rendtorff’s report to the Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda on his visit to Oxford (1933, July 19), but not his Rundschreiben of the same day.

<sup>64</sup> Buchheim 1953:88 ff., Schmidt 1962:380 ff., Beste 1975:50 ff., 271 ff., Rendtorff 1933. Cf. Lean 1985:210, who wrongly states that Rendtorff previously had been one of the leaders of the Deutsche Christen (also in Schjørring 1976:74), and further, wrongly, that he, after his visit to the Oxford house-party, preached a sermon against the expulsion of Christian Jews from the Church, and was demoted. See also Scholder 1977:607 on the ‘Nationale Gutgläubigkeit, politische Blindheit und vor allem jener verheerende volksmissionarische Enthusiasmus’ that was united in Rendtorff until his turning.

<sup>65</sup> Schlink 1933:798.

Volksmision in view, planning to see Adolf Hitler together with Frank Buchman as well. To Bishop Headlam of Gloucester, Buchman had described Hossenfelder as a former 'slum pastor' with great mission gifts, which was not true.<sup>66</sup> Hossenfelder, on the other hand, went on the order of the Reichsbischof, in order to reassure the English Church leaders, and to publicly declare that the German Evangelic Church had no plans to introduce the Aryan paragraph.<sup>67</sup> At first, Fezer reported that Hossenfelder was converted through the Oxford Group, then he found that Hossenfelder was lying, and finally, Fezer was excluded and excluded himself from the Deutsche Christen.<sup>68</sup>

The report by Dr. Wahl and Dr. Krummacher emphasizes the enthusiasm of the young British fellows who had been to Bad Homburg, and Buchman's possibilities to propagate the new Germany:

Die jungen Leute waren in einer für englische Verhältnisse ganz erstaunlicher Weise von den Nationalsozialismus beeindruckt. Sie betonten, daß in Deutschland ein niedergebrochenes Volk zu einem neuen Lebenswillen erwacht sei, daß hier der Geist über die Materie gesiegt habe, ganz ähnlich, wie sie es mit ihrer Bewegung erstrebten [...] Der Mitarbeiterkreis von Dr. Buchman, der selber dem neuen Deutschland gegenüber außerordentlich aufgeschlossen ist, hat Gelegenheit, aufklärend über deutsche politische und kirchliche Verhältnisse in den verschiedensten Ländern, vor allem in dem britischen Weltreich, zu wirken.<sup>69</sup>

According to Morris Martin, Buchman's secretary, Hossenfelder on November

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<sup>66</sup> Schjørring 1976:71, Bethge 1967<sup>2</sup>:411 f., 414, Hermle & Lächele & Nuding 1988:136 f. The congregation of the German Lutheran Church of St. George in London denied Hossenfelder to speak there during his visit (Bethge 1967<sup>2</sup>:387 f.). Professor Jens Nørregaard of Copenhagen reported to the Swedish rector in Berlin, Birger Forell, about Hossenfelder's failure in London, Forell passing the information on to the Swedish archbishop, Dr. Eidem (1933, Nov. 12, C I:4, EEA, ULA). Nørregaard put critical questions directly to a Danish group man like Knud Hee Andersen, who answered by comparing the case of Hossenfelder to that of Rendtorff (Hee Andersen to Nørregaard 1933, Nov. 28, Pa. 6073, RAK).

<sup>67</sup> Scholder 1977:676. Fezer's version of the story in Schäfer 1972:937. Hossenfelder's speech to the Oxford Group in England was reported in Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung 1933, Oct. 21. See further Hossenfelder and Fezer to L. Müller 1933, Dec. 11 and Oct. 8, respectively (Best. 1/A 4/38 and 1/C 4/18, EZA Berlin).

<sup>68</sup> Meier 1965:45, Meiser 1985:128 f., Bell & Koechlin 1969:82. On the confusing details of the exclusion, see Schäfer 1972:855 f., 939. Buchman kept in contact with Fezer, and visited him in Tübingen in 1935. They parted way according to the Church, since Fezer felt himself a man of the Church, whereas Buchman showed little interest in the German Evangelic Church as such (Hermle & Lächele & Nuding 1988:137).

<sup>69</sup> Bericht über die Fahrt nach London am 6.–10.X.33. Group activities in Norway, Denmark, England, and Holland were reported to German Church authorities, and Frank Buchman kept in contact with Dr. Krummacher and Bishop Heckel (Akte zur Oxford-Bewegung; Best. 5/135, EZA Berlin).

15, 1933, i.e. two days after the so-called scandal at the Sportpalast, offered to write a foreword to Baron von Maltzan's translation of *What is the Oxford Group?*, at the same time suggesting that Frank Buchman might write a foreword to the English translation of Hossenfelder's planned book on the Deutsche Christen. As late as February 20, 1934, Hossenfelder wrote to Buchman: 'Please tell your German friends of the Oxford Group that I put myself at the disposal of your work in Germany.' This shows that Hossenfelder at the time had no personal connections with the German Group.<sup>70</sup>

In July 1934, J. F. Laun reported about his meeting with Dr. Jäger in Berlin. Dr. Jäger wanted to arrange a conference with the Reichsbischof and Dr. Goebbels. Due to the lack of time, this was not realized.<sup>71</sup> In March 1937, Laun heard the Reichsbischof speak in Frankfurt, and was surprised that Müller spoke in such a Group-like way, although he did not see through the demoniacal depths of life, and the healing from the inside.<sup>72</sup> It seems that Ludwig Müller at an early stage adapted the Group method of guidance to serve his own purposes. This is clear from a report by Professor Karl Fezer, on the development of Müller's Church theses on 16 May, 1933:

Am Morgen des Mittwoch sagte der Wehrkreispfarrer Müller [...]: 'Jeder von uns geht jetzt auf sein Zimmer in die Stille, und da soll er horchen, was ihm geschenkt wird.' Es mochte noch nicht eine Stunde vergangen sein, da bat der Wehrkreispfarrer mich zu sich. Er legte mir etwas vor und sagte... 'Können Sie das unterschreiben?' Ich antwortete: 'Vom ersten bis zum letzten Wort.'<sup>73</sup>

In August 1934, Frank Buchman is reported to have met Ludwig Müller at the funeral of Reichspräsident von Hindenburg, and on September 23, he attended the inauguration ceremony of the Reichsbischof in the Berlin Cathedral. An important aim of this ceremony was to demonstrate the unity of the German Church. However, the bishops of Bavaria, Württembergia, and Hannover stayed away, as did the representatives of the ecumenical movement and the Scandinavian pastors in Berlin. Special attention was paid to the invitation of Buchman, which was mentioned together with that of the bishop of Fulham and a member of the Landessynodalvorstandes Posen. Buchman visited Müller at home too.<sup>74</sup> In the autumn 1935, J. F. Laun emphasized that Buchman, through repeated talks with the Reichsbischof, tried to influence him in a soul-caring way, like Laun himself tried to influence both the Landesbischof of Hesse and

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<sup>70</sup> Biographical research notes compiled by Morris Martin (NLC). No English translation of Hossenfelder's book was printed, but *Was ist die Oxford-Gruppe?* was published by Klotz, 1934, without any contribution by Hossenfelder.

<sup>71</sup> Laun to Hans E. Friedrich 1934, July 9 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>72</sup> Laun to O. Riecker 1937, March 19 (NLS, LKAS). On Müller, see Schneider 1993.

<sup>73</sup> Schäfer 1972:118 f.

<sup>74</sup> Schjørring 1976:72, Document in 1/A 4/31, Buchman to Müller 1934, Sept. 26 in 1/A 4/33, EZA.

the leaders of the Confessing Front.<sup>75</sup>

Among the German Groups were both Deutsche Christen and members of the Confessing Church. In the mid 1930's, the difficulties were often hardest for those who tried to work both in the Confessing Front and in Group work. The Group was accused of relying on two sources of revelation, just as the Deutsche Christen. To some of its critics, the work in the Group Movement even meant a desertion from the Confessing party. Others, working in the Group, meant that membership of the Confessing Front excluded a 100% commitment to the Group.<sup>76</sup> Ferdinand Laun tried to reconcile the fighting parties. His Landesbischof, himself a member of the Deutsche Christen, had publicly taken up and approved Laun's proposals: depolitization of the Church struggle, making the Church authorities neutral, and resumption of the discipline proceedings in the sense of compensation. A truce between the parties had thus been established.<sup>77</sup>

The relations between the Confessing Front and the German groups in 1936 are illuminated by a statement of the rural dean of Herrenberg, Theodor Haug, who agrees with the opinions of the Bruderrat of Schleswig-Holstein, though not with their conclusions. To Haug, and to Adolf Allwohn, the alternative conclusion was to bring the Church struggle out of the sphere of 'eigenen Standpunkte, Auffassungen, Absichten und Erwägungen,' to place it totally under the guidance of God.<sup>78</sup>

Professor Adolf Allwohn, editor of *Kirche im Angriff*, quoted a release by the Swiss Evangelic Press Service (Schweizer Evangelische Pressedienst) stating that 'diejenigen, die von der Gruppenbewegung erfaßt werden, sich dem Kampf, den die Kirche im Dritten Reiche zu führen hat, entfremden und sich von der Front zurückziehen.' The Swiss release was based on a 'Wort aus der Bekennenden Kirche an die Bekennende Kirche,' published in *Der Evangelische Weg*, November 1. This statement was concluded with the opinion that 'eine B.[ekennende] K.[irche], die wesentlich Glauben bekennt, ohne in gleichem Maße Sünden zu bekennen, ist keine bekennende Kirche.' A renewal could arise only out of the combination of penance and faith. Adolf Allwohn's attitude was similar to J. F. Laun's 'seelsorgerliche Haltung.' He could not understand that confessing one's own sins, instead of just punishing the sins of others, meant a withdrawal from the Church struggle: 'Wer also wirklich *kirchlich* kämpfen will, der muß in der persönlichen Buße an die vorderste Front gehen, wo er mit dem Teufel handgemein wird. Es kann sicherlich nichts schaden, wenn diese Erkenntnis in den kirchlichen Kämpfen der Gegenwart zur Geltung gebracht wird.'<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Laun to Gericke 1935, Oct. 28 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>76</sup> Gericke to Laun 1935, Jan. 22, Sept. 26 (NLS, LKAS). Cf. Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:103, which states that, while Group members came from all Church parties, the Confessing Front dominated.

<sup>77</sup> Laun to von Cramon 1934 Dec. 31 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>78</sup> Haug was referred by Allwohn 1936:226 f., from *Der evangelische Weg*.

<sup>79</sup> Allwohn 1936c:469 f.

In the summer 1936, Allwohn visited the house-party at Oxford, as did Professor D. Karl Heim, who was reported to have been totally won, placing himself under the message in humility, and prepared to publicly identify himself with the Group. In his positive, printed report, he explains the Group work as belonging to the chapter 'De spiritu sancto applicatrice.' The testimonies were founded on the atonement of Christ. The Christian start in everyday life and relations was emphasized.<sup>80</sup>

The Oxford Group attracted interest among the centre groups in the Church as well, and on December 10, 1935, the Danish primate, Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard, spoke, at the wish of Landesbischof Marahrens, before the Evangelisch-Lutherische Konferenz in Berlin, of the Oxford Group as a new road to the old Gospel. In the Group, Fuglsang-Damgaard found Luther's vision of a common priesthood realized as never before, but he wanted to remind the Group of the importance of the absolution in the soul-care. Fuglsang-Damgaard characterized the Group Movement as a movement from the periphery towards the centre. Its moral approach was to be regarded as such a move, and therefore it was irrelevant to criticize the work of the peripheral. Reports were given from the successful Group work in the Danish congregations were presented, but neither the international working fellowship nor the vision of a national and supernational revolution and renaissance were mentioned.<sup>81</sup>

According to the biographical research notes of Frank Buchman's secretary, even Roman Catholic Church leaders were contacted by individual Oxford Group men. In October 1934, Werner Sack of Düsseldorf 'opened up work' with the head of the Catholic youth movement. A Catholic layman, Dr. Ehlen, wrote in his magazine about *For Sinners Only*, and sent it to 'German Bishops and Cardinals.' In February 1935, Sack reported that Cardinal Schulte of Cologne and the prelate Wolker, leader of the German Catholic youth, would be glad to see Frank Buchman.<sup>82</sup>

#### *VI.3.4. Frank Buchman and National Socialism*

Much energy has been wasted on an attempted analysis of Frank Buchman's view on National Socialism, based only on a single sentence in one of his interviews. In *World-Telegram*, August 26, 1936, Buchman was interviewed on his return from the Olympic games in Berlin, saying: 'I thank heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler, who built a front line of defence against the anti-Christ of Communism'. Buchman's portrait was illuminated by the headline: 'Thank Heaven

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<sup>80</sup> Heim 1936:321 ff., Georgi 1970:17, J. F. Laun to Walther Helmes 1936, July 30 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>81</sup> Fuglsang-Damgaard 1936, 1936Da:18, 11, 29. On Marahrens' wish, see Vock 1989:208. See further Ch. II.2.3.3.

<sup>82</sup> Biographical research notes compiled by Morris Martin (NLC).



for a Man Like Hitler.’ When interpreting the interview, it has often been stated that Buchman said: ‘Thank God for Hitler’ – despite the obvious fact that this phrase does not appear explicitly in the printed article.<sup>83</sup> The article was noted in Scandinavian press as well, and made a confusing impression on active Oxford Group people.<sup>84</sup>

What can really be said of this interview is that it reveals the character of Buchman’s personalistic view of political leaders. His main message was: ‘But think what it would mean to the world if Hitler surrendered to the control of God. Or Mussolini. Or any dictator. Through such a man God could control a nation overnight and solve every last, bewildering problem.’ The real problem of this statement is not Buchman’s apparent admiration for Hitler – in this he did not go any further than several contemporary Anglo-American statesmen and Church leaders. The problem is his belief in changing keypersons. If a dictator was changed, he would without doubt become different, a listening and cooperating dictator, but still a dictator with unlimited powers over other people, whether they liked it or not. This raises further questions, like: Would a God-controlled nation with only one changed person – the dictator – really be God-controlled? Would the guidance of every single person in that country always be to support the God-controlled dictator? And is a God-controlled nation more important than individually changed, God-controlled men?

On one hand, Buchman’s personalistic view of dictatorship shows his lack of understanding for the need of changing structures as such. This was a natural part of practical personalism, and well known from earlier stages of the Oxford Group. On the other hand, it shows that in a hypothetical conflict between the change of nations and the change of individuals, the change of nations is given preference. This is something new, at least the change of nations as a superior aim has received a much stronger emphasis in Buchman’s vision. This becomes clear by Buchman’s answer to Emil Brunner, in June 1937, when Brunner in Holland had been criticizing the dictator countries. Buchman replied: ‘It would have been so much better if you were going to answer the question to simply

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<sup>83</sup> Lean 1985:239 f. The interview was reprinted in Driberg 1964:68 ff., discussed in Williamson 1954:156, Thornton-Duesbery 1964:62, and Spoerri 1971:126 ff., and quoted even in Bethge 1967<sup>2</sup>:609. As Schjørring 1976:75 points out, it is ‘sachlich nicht begründet’ to evaluate Buchman’s position on the Third Reich only by this statement. Cf. Boyens 1969:145, who quotes Buchman’s statement on Hitler, but does not mention either Brunner’s or Runestam’s engagement in the Oxford Group.

<sup>84</sup> E. Wikborg to H. Blomberg 1936, Sept. 4; S. Stolpe to Blomberg 1936, Sept. 14; F. Ramm to Blomberg 1936, Sept. 17 (UUB). According to some newspapers, Buchman thanked God for Mussolini as well. Stolpe was sure that Buchman had not uttered the quoted words, while Howard Blake, who had been travelling with Buchman in Germany could not understand him, if this was true, since he always had stated the opposite. Blake had even warned him against speaking about politics to journalists. Ramm emphasized that what might be Buchman’s personal political views did not concern God’s work in man, while Wikborg advocated the greatest care in evaluating politicians.

say it is the God-controlled country that ought to be the goal of every nation.<sup>85</sup>

An analysis of Buchman's views on National Socialism cannot be founded on one single statement, more or less detached from its context. It has to deal with Buchman's concrete relations with political and ecclesiastical leaders in Nazi Germany. In his intentions of changing German political leaders, Frank Buchman was working along three lines. First, he tried to reach them directly through personal channels. Good examples of this are given in Lean's accounts of Buchman's abortive attempts to meet Hitler,<sup>86</sup> and of Moni von Cramon's acquaintance with Heinrich Himmler. To escape arrest by local authorities in 1933, Mrs. von Cramon went to Berlin, saw Himmler, and talked to him about guidance.<sup>87</sup> In 1934, she had renewed opportunities, and in September, together with Frank Buchman, she had lunch with Himmler at the Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg, and repeatedly explained the guidance of God and God's absolute demands. In 1935, she spent a few days as a guest of the Himmler family in Berlin, trying to bring him closer to a change, and then worked, on the direct advice of Buchman, for six months in Hamburg, directly under Himmler, helping him 'build sound families in the SS – to train the wives to become SS wives.' Himmler had told her she had free hands, 'but the other SS people didn't allow it her. She quit and said it was impossible.'<sup>88</sup> The Danish journalist Jacob Kronika recalls that Buchman, at a lunch in Hotel Esplanade in Berlin, spoke of his invitation to Heinrich Himmler the very same afternoon, saying that since Germany had come under the dominion of frightful demons, there was urgent need for a counteraction. The conversation with Himmler was a failure, since Himmler could not – as he had planned – use the 'absolute obedience' of the Oxford Group men as political obedience.<sup>89</sup> When B. H. Streeter suggested contacting the German ambassador von Ribbentrop in London, Frank Buchman replied from the Olympic Games in Berlin:

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<sup>85</sup> Buchman to Brunner 1937, June 21 (ZZ). On Brunner in the Netherlands, see de Loor 1986:80, 173 (1934), 118 (1937). On the relations between the Oxford Group and the National Socialists in the Netherlands, see de Loor 1986:203 ff., who states that the Oxford Group was never infected by the Nazis. Only certain prominent groupers crossed over, while others were fundamentally friendly towards Fascism, since they – like Buchman himself – did not identify its evil character.

<sup>86</sup> Lean 1985:207 f.

<sup>87</sup> Lean 1985:203 f.

<sup>88</sup> Lean 1985: 233 ff., 'Interviews with Mrs. Rosi Haver, the daughter of Mrs. Moni (Anneliese) von Cramon' (Ms. with the Estate of Garth Lean, Oxford). The S.S. character of the work was omitted by Lean. Moni von Cramon was questioned by the Reichsführerin, Mrs. Scholz-Klink, as well, since she denied the absolute claim of the party and the oath to Hitler.

<sup>89</sup> [J. Kronika,] "Nazi", Flensburg Avis 1962, Jan. 2. Further Kronika 1945:91 ff., 1966:57, 84. Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:92, appoints Kronika 'Leiter der Oxford-Gruppe in Berlin.'

I have had a wonderful time here, was a guest of honour and was met at the station by the Reichsführer's Adjutant. I have just written and told him of your suggestion that you are asking the Ambassador to come to Queen's. All this makes for that fine friendly relationship between nations which is our first need.<sup>90</sup>

Buchman's acquaintances with German Church leaders are to be interpreted along the same line, though here he seems to have been acting more on his own, while his contacts with the political leaders often went through German Group members or at least in concert with them.<sup>91</sup> As has been remarked by J. H. Schjørring, Buchman initiated these activities without keeping in contact with the leaders of the Confessing Church.<sup>92</sup>

Secondly, Frank Buchman wanted to spread the message of the Oxford Group through books and pamphlets in German, with its content adapted to German circumstances. This line was successful in many ways, but it hardly reached the political leaders. The risk was obvious, too, that the adaptation was insufficient, and the books regarded as foreign propaganda.

Thirdly, he sought to reach the new Germany through its neighbouring countries. An important aim of the campaigns in Scandinavia, Holland, and Switzerland was to reach Germans with the Oxford Group way of life, couched in Germanic languages and mentalities.<sup>93</sup> Special publicity was given a Danish statement that the Oxford Group in Germany was acting in clandestinely, and that its chances would be best if the work was carried out by tall, blond Scandinavian Lutherans.<sup>94</sup> This line could also be used for influencing the families of, for example, German diplomats in the neighbouring countries.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> 1936, Aug. 14, according to biographical research notes compiled by Morris Martin (NLC).

<sup>91</sup> See, for example, Laun to A. von Cramon 1934, March 28 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>92</sup> Schjørring 1976:75.

<sup>93</sup> Copy of Buchman to C. J. Hambro 1935, May 7 (Tirley): 'The policy in striking in Scandinavia was, as you will know, that the Continent of Europe would be illumined and find a true answer through the dictatorship of the living Spirit of God.'

<sup>94</sup> Halfdan Høgsbro in an interview in Aalborg Amtstidende 1935, quoted in Junge Kirche 1935:1182 f., and in National-Socialisten 1935, Nov. 16 ('Oxford-Bevægelsen virker underjordisk i Tyskland'), with the editorial comment, that this was not in accordance with the Oxford Group idea of absolute truth. See also Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:91.

<sup>95</sup> A clear example is given by Princess Marie Elisabeth zu Wied 1981:110 ff., who tells about Frank Buchman's visit with her father, Prince Victor zu Wied, German ambassador in Stockholm, 1938, and of her own and her sister's subsequent visits to the house-parties at Visby and Interlaken. The acquaintance was brought about through Mrs. Hanfstaengl (see Lean 1985:112). On their way to Interlaken, the princesses saw Hermann Göring in Berlin. Since he had said that someone from Gestapo ought to be sent to Interlaken, the princess personally warned Frank Buchman at Interlaken. Also 'Confidentiell !' (EPC), which mentions that Howard Blake had talked with the prince zu Wied in Sweden.

Having attended the inauguration of the German Reichsbischof Ludwig Müller in the Berlin Cathedral on September 23, 1934, Buchman wrote to Müller from Geneva: 'Gott segne Ihr verantwortungsvolles Amt auf das die ganze Welt sieht, daß hier wirklich eine Kirche wird, die der Heilige Geist führt, dann kann eine Welterweckung geschehen.' Buchman's purpose is clear: through personal influence he sought to open the German Church to the guidance of God, with positive, spiritual consequences for the whole world. After visiting the family of Reichsbischof Müller at home, Buchman looked after his other German acquaintances. On Monday, he had had Reichsführer Himmler, together with Mr. and Mrs. Schacht, for dinner. The letter ends with Buchman's standard address direction to Brown's Hotel in London, and the following, surprising final phrases: 'Mit herzlicher Verehrung und Heil Hitler! Ihr aufrichtig ergebener Frank N. D. Buchman.'<sup>96</sup>

This letter shows – positively interpreted – a good example of Buchman's personalistic strategy, combined with a certain amount of political and religious naïvety. Buchman's serious use of 'Heil Hitler!' may be regarded as a personal identification beyond both political and religious principles, which thus exposes him to both political and religious criticism.<sup>97</sup>

In a report to the Swedish foreign office, the rector of the Swedish congregation in Berlin, Birger Forell, pointed to the use made by Mr. Goebbels of three small groups in the English-speaking countries, all with good international relations: the Baptists, the Oxford Group Movement, and Christian Science. Forell found that all three groups were unaware of having played and partly still playing a certain part in the 'chess game' of Mr. Goebbels. From the German, typewritten version, it is obvious that Forell's report was circulated in Germany as well:

Frank Buckman [sic!], der Führer der Oxford-Bewegung ist 14 tage beim Reichsbischof Müller und seinen Freunden zu Gast gewesen. Er hat den Eindruck gewonnen, daß Müller einen 'nice fellow' sei und von der Bekenntniskirche mißverstanden, die als hoffnungslos veraltet und ortodox, ohne Verständniß für was die neue Zeit fordert von Behandlung eines 'modernem' Menschen, dargestellt worden ist. Buckman hat Hossenfelder nach London gerufen und er sprach dort im Herbst 1934 [1933!] bei einer großen Versammlung. Buckman hat nachher Reisen in Süd-Amerika, China und anderen Teilen der Welt gemacht und seinen Freunden seine Eindrücke vom neuen Deutschland und dessen geistigen Probleme mitgeteilt. Es ist eine ausgezeichnete Propaganda für Göbbels gewesen, was selbstverständlich in keinerlei Weise Buckmans Meinung gewesen ist.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Buchman to Müller 1934, Sept. 23 and 26 (1/A 4/33, EZA).

<sup>97</sup> See also the typescript 'Mein Beitrag für Marburg' by Th. Haug (NLS, LKAS) : 'Er fühlte in sich die Berufung, die Führer des neuen Deutschlands zu Christus zu rufen. Das war, glaube ich, ein echtes Anliegen. Nur war es verbunden mit einer falschen optimistischen Schau des Nationalsozialismus, ohne wirkliche Einsicht in seine Dämonie.'

<sup>98</sup> The German edition without title (Best. 5,1, Nr. 271, LKA Bielefeld). The Swedish

Buchman's personalistic strategy, and the aim to reach Germany through other countries, furthermore meant that small numbers of young Nazis from Germany went abroad to Oxford Group meetings – a representation often reported as propagating the Oxford Group, while at the same time functioning as propaganda for Nazi Germany.<sup>99</sup>

Quite a few members of the international team of mostly British young people were obviously more impressed by National Socialist propaganda than Frank Buchman himself. From the Nazi rally at Nuremberg 1934 – at a point of time when even most foreign diplomats in Germany for political reasons failed to appear<sup>100</sup> – Hallen Viney enthusiastically reported on the military discipline:

Possibly this accounts for some of the misunderstanding in the foreign press. But I, personally believe that Hitler is the first man in history to raise a voluntary army under quasi military discipline for peacefull reconstruction; to use uniform as a symbol of social equality rather than of military servitude; to mobilise for peace instead of war [...] We heard of three standards, discipline, loyalty and self-sacrifice, which being personal standards carry the implication that individual moral change is essential. But do they go far enough? [...] They may guard against disintegration but do they guard against demoralisation? [...]

May I say here that this is intended to be a confidential report. I have such an admiration for the NAZIS and such a warm symphy [sic] with so much they are doing that I would never dream of hindering their work by repeating such criticisms elsewhere [...] Possibly what I felt the message lacked was the note of Divine Guidance [...] If Hitler could see what Guided living all through the oganisation [sic] could do for the movement I feel sure he would take it [...]

But to anyone trained in the Oxford Group the great interest on Nuremberg lay in the number of points of similarity between the NAZIs and the Group. Both believe in the primary necessity for individual change, and hence both are criticised for having no social Gospel or for failing to take up their conference with detailed programmes [...] It was pathetic to note that one saw only one priest at any meeting. This is only another sign that the organised church is loosing not only present leadership but also the fu ture inspiration of the people. [...] a nation which takes to itself such standards as discipline, loyalty and self-sacrifice may

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version (UD HP 310, RA): Förtroligt. P. M. Situationen i tyska kyrkokampen och kristnas ställningstagande utom Tysklands gränser, written by Forell, was sent by the Swedish minister in Berlin, E. af Wirsén, to the Swedish foreign minister 1935, July 24. On August 2, copies were distributed from the Foreign Office to the Swedish legations in Bern, Helsinki, Copenhagen, London, Moscow, Oslo, Paris, Rome, Warsaw, Vienna, and Washington. On August 7, copies were sent to the minister for ecclesiastical affairs, Arthur Engberg (A. Engbergs familjearkiv, vol. 19, Arbetarrörelsens arkiv, Stockholm), and to Archbishop Eidem (D II cc:6, EEA, ULA).

<sup>99</sup> See, for example, Hambro 1934:9, on young Nazis from the Group in Germany walking side by side with students from Oxford and Cambridge in St. Paul's Cathedral.

<sup>100</sup> Politisk rapport från beskickningen i Berlin för tredje kvartalet 1934, signed by the Swedish Minister, E. af Wirsén, 1934, Oct. 30 (RA).

well lead the world in spiritual reconstruction [...] <sup>101</sup>

In 1935, Hallen Viney led the Oxford house-party, with the instructions not to admit any Germans who were not approved by Anneliese von Cramon. <sup>102</sup> Still in May 1939, Sven Stolpe wrote from the American campaign that he agreed with Bill Rowell that many of the boys in the international team were anti-democrats, fancying National Socialism. <sup>103</sup>

### *VI.3.5. The 'Germanization' of Group Work Through the Volksmission*

The 'Germanization' of Group work is not to be comprehended as a synonym for 'Nazification.' Though taking place parallely, they often worked as opposites.

After the 'Rüstzeit' at Bad Homburg in September 1933, a 'Gruppentagung' was held at Stuttgart January 5–7, 1934. The party was kept strictly personalistic and seen as a soul-caring break in the severe German discussions and struggles:

Es will schon etwas heißen, daß moderne Menschen aus den verschiedensten Kreisen, zum großen Teil Nichtpfarrer, 3 Tage nichts von Kirchenpolitik, Theologie, Philosophie, Rassentheorie, nichts von Geschäft und gesellschaftlichen Erlebnissen, nicht von eigenen Sorgen redeten und nicht fremde Menschen und Einrichtungen anklagten, sondern von den großen Taten Gottes in ihrem Leben sprachen. <sup>104</sup>

Still, the significant Oxford Group division between the public testimonial meetings in Gustav-Siegle-Haus, and the closed Group meetings in Hotel Herzog-Christoph, was criticized by J. F. Laun, who preferred traditional Church Group revivalistic meetings with public discourses on religious themes 'jedoch so in Geist und Form der Gruppe, daß die Menschen dadurch doch angelockt würden,' immediately followed by an after-meeting for those interested in a smaller hall, with the testimonies saved for the after-meeting. <sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *Confidential*. An impression of the NAZI rally at Nuremberg 1934 [Hallen Viney] (NLC). Frank Buchman obviously was more realistic when he, in 1935, said that the military preparations tasted of war (to A. von Cramon, see Vock 1989:76).

<sup>102</sup> A. von Cramon to Hans Stroh 1935, June 25 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>103</sup> Stolpe to H. Blomberg 1939, May 19 (UUB).

<sup>104</sup> Theodor Haug: Die Gruppentagung in Stuttgart (Kirchlicher Anzeiger für Württemberg 1934 Nr. 5:37).

<sup>105</sup> Laun to E. Brunner 1934, March 8 (ZZ). The division is clear from the scheme of the invitation, *Persönliche Einladung zu einer Gruppen-Tagung mit anschließender Rüstzeit am 6. u. 7. Januar 1934 im großen Saal des Gustav Siegle-Hauses in Stuttgart*, and from the note, 'Für solche, die der Gruppenbewegung nähertreten wollen, findet am Montag und Dienstag, den 8. und 9. Januar 1934, im "Herzog Christoph" eine Fortsetzung der Tagung statt.'

The importance of Group revivalistic gatherings in the German Church struggle is emphasized in the diary of Mrs. Marie Wurm, the wife of Landesbischof Wurm of Württembergia, in a significant way, which clearly exposes their nature as a personal inspiration in a political situation, though without political advice:

3. März. [...] und machten den Heimweg über das Rudolf-Sophien-Stift zur "Gruppe". Es war fein. Frank Buchman kam auch noch, sprach auch länger, begrüßte Vater sehr freundlich. Vater sprach auch noch zum Schluß und schloß mit kurzem Gebet. Vater bekam auch einen starken Impuls zu freimütiger Tat für die Kirche, es ist ihm vollends ganz klar geworden, was er tun muß. Er fährt mit Meiser nach Berlin.<sup>106</sup>

While Frank Buchman and others of the international team, as well as some Group people in Germany, warned against too Church-centred a profile of the Group work, J. F. Laun's work with 'Volksmissionswochen' within the Church doubtless gave much inspiration, even within the borders of the Confessional Front. As a result of such evangelizing weeks, groups were formed, for example in Butzbach bei Gießen, where about twenty-five people – among them both pastors and their wives – gathered early in 1934 in a group to carry on the work.<sup>107</sup> The position of such a group in the congregation could be a delicate matter. Hans Martin Gericke from Grüne bei Iserlohn in Westphalia saw the danger of building up a working team in the congregation, as some of the faithful would regard it as a sectarian, private circle, where the pastor gathered with his favourites. Laun answered that the team must demand so much from their members, that those not responding lost their breath.<sup>108</sup> The independence of such local teams was considerable. Laun just pointed out the necessity of a relationship with the leading team, with which guidance could be checked and experiences exchanged.<sup>109</sup> A conference with Frank Buchman revealed that a planned party at Bad Homburg was cancelled, while the Volksmission work in the Butzbach way was to be continued, thus avoiding a repetition of the mistakes from Stuttgart.<sup>110</sup> Still, several Group meetings ('Gruppentagungen') took place, for example in Bad Boll in April 1934 (164 participants), Bad Homburg, May 4–5, 1935, Schmie, October 11–17, 1936, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, New Year 1937, Schmie, March 1937, and Bad Boll, July 3–5, 1937.<sup>111</sup>

When the political development made all public campaigns impossible, the work in the Volksmission was still open to the practise of Group ideals in Church circles. Especially in the Confessing Front, where Group work often

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<sup>106</sup> Wurm 1952<sup>2</sup>:13.

<sup>107</sup> Liesel Laun to von Cramon 1934, Jan. 23, Feb. 5 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>108</sup> H. M. Gericke to Laun 1933, Nov. 6, Laun to Gericke 1933, Nov. 8 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>109</sup> Laun to Gericke 1934, March 14 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>110</sup> Laun to Alfred Günther 1934, March 13 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>111</sup> Lists in NLS, LKAS.

was regarded with suspicion, the Volksmission of the Front was an important, sometimes even the only way of spreading Group thoughts. This was noted with approval at the 2nd Confessing Synod of the Prussian Church in March 1935.<sup>112</sup> The Volksmission work of the Group was successful especially in Nassau-Hesse, Westphalia, and Württembergia. In this work, special meetings for ministers were of great help, since the personal participation and readiness to change on the part of the local ministers was necessary for a fruitful Volksmission work.<sup>113</sup>

Laun's combination of an 'Eindeutschung' of the Group with efforts to give the work towards 'Volksmission' an ecclesiastical direction, within the framework of a simplified theology in line with a liberal conception, is seen in one of his publications:

Wir brauchen also in der Kirche eine Bewegung, die der völkischen Bewegung entspricht, die also so wie diese das tiefste Wesen des deutschen Volkstums wieder lebendig werden ließ, das tiefste Wesen des Christentums wieder lebendig werden läßt. Es gilt die einfache Freudenbotschaft Jesu Christi in ganzer Schlichtheit, mit klaren Worten, aber mit der ursprünglichen Kraft ins Volk zu tragen. Dies ist die Aufgabe der Volksmission.<sup>114</sup>

Here, Laun gave a very open definition of guidance as depending on God's voice in the conscience, in the written Word, through other people allied with God, and through daily circumstances and experiences: 'wer dem ihm gesagten Wort Gottes im Glauben folgt, der lebt unter Gottes Führung.'<sup>115</sup> Through 'einer Mannschaft von Laien, die nach der Rede des Volksmissionars als Zeugen in den Versammlungen und als Seelsorger bei vielen Hausbesuchen und Einzelaussprachen mitarbeiteten,' new 'Arbeitskreise' were founded around the ministers, 'die das Gemeindeleben wie Sauerteig durchdringen,' giving the communities renewed life. Laun had also been busy travelling with the 'Reisemannschaften' of the Movement, but he did not repeat his former emphasis on the relationship between local teams and the leading one.<sup>116</sup>

Ernst zur Nieden, a vicar from Offenbach in Hesse, encountered the Group

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<sup>112</sup> Die Preußensynode zu Dahlem 1935:136 (speech by Pfarrer Heilmann from Gladbeck, 1935, March 5: 'In der Volksmission haben sich neue Formen herausgebildet, einmal im Zusammenhang mit dem Mittlinger Kreise und dann auch in Verbindung mit der Oxford-Bewegung'). On the Volksmission of the Deutsche Christen, see, for example, the exkursus 'Volksmission und Propaganda' in Rüppel 1969:127–139.

<sup>113</sup> Von Eicken 1937:104 n.174.

<sup>114</sup> Laun & Krumhaar 1935:5. Laun's untheological, personalistic attitude towards Karl Barth's rejection of the Oxford Group, 'die seelsorgerliche Haltung' (Laun 1936:324), is applicable also to the relations towards the German National Socialists.

<sup>115</sup> Laun & Krumhaar 1935:7 f.

<sup>116</sup> Laun & Krumhaar 1935:13 f. Laun was also in contact with Halfdan Høgsbro in Sønderborg, near the German border (see Laun to Høgsbro 1935, Sept. 18, Pa. 6922:B.3, RAK).



Movement through Laun's Volksmission work. Here he found the usual evangelizing 'Einzeugesystem' replaced by a 'Mannschaftssystem' realizing the idea of a common priesthood, the Bible work proceeding from the fellowship. The quiet times had brought into the Church an element of Christian mysticism, and a consciousness of the distance between God and man.<sup>117</sup>

In a report in *Kirche im Angriff*, January 1936, H. M. Gericke shows an interior from Group revivalism in the Volksmission work. After an experience of two and a half years, he had found that while the 'Gruppenbewegung' on one hand brought a new exciting enthusiasm to congregational life, on the other hand it kept the new spiritual life of people awakened by Group revivalism from dissolution and disintegration. Through the parson, the spirit of the Group Movement worked in a stimulating way on preaching, on soul-care, on education, and on the work in the small circles. Most important was the fact that the Group Movement gave the decisive help in the formation of a congregational nucleus ('Gemeindekern'). Without such a nucleus, a Volksmission effort should not be tried. This nucleus, working as a parish team, obviously lacked such a relationship to a leading team as the one previously intended by J. F. Laun. Gericke reveals himself as an independent Church Group revivalist, approving only of the methods of the Oxford Group. But he repudiates the understanding of the group as a method to enliven the congregation: the congregational nucleus could not be formed by organization. To its members, the nucleus was a school for penance, discipline, and ministering.<sup>118</sup>

The congregational nucleus could be of help in other parishes as well, and Gericke reports from such an arrangement on a Sunday afternoon:

Die Geschichte von Zachäus (Luk. 19, 1–10) soll im Mittelpunkt stehen. In der Vorbereitung machen wir uns klar, an welchen Punkten der Geschichte die einzelnen ein persönliches Zeugnis anschließen können, so daß die Geschichte nicht mehr in Jericho spielt, sondern in unserer Gemeinde und in unserer Zeit aktuell wird. Aus der Stille heraus finden wir auch, wer von den 20 Leuten zu dem einzelnen Thema zu sprechen hat. Was unklar bleibt, klärt sich von alleine in den nächsten Tagen. Dann kommen wir in kleinen Kreisen von 4–6 Menschen noch einmal zusammen, um uns in aufrichtiger Buße vor Gott zu beugen und jedes kleinste Hemmnis zwischen uns aus der Welt zu schaffen. Vor der Abfahrt nach Y. halten wir noch eine gemeinsame stille Zeit und beten gemeinsam. Durch Gottes Geist so zusammengeschmiedet kommen wir als geschlossene und disziplinierte Gruppe nach Y.

Dort lege ich zunächst die Geschichte von Zachäus aus, dann spricht Pf. X. über denselben Text. Nach einer Pause legen dann 13 aus der Gruppe im Anschluß an die Geschichte ein kurzes persönliches Zeugnis von Christus ab. Z.B. sprechen zwei über 'Heil im Hause' (V.9); zwei über 'Wiedergutmachen' (V.8);

<sup>117</sup> Zur Nieden 1935:101 f., 106, 104. After the Second World War, Nieden represented the Evangelische Männerwerk in the restoration of the Landeskirche Nas sau-Hesse, see Lueken 1963:89, 197.

<sup>118</sup> Gericke 1936:22 ff., Gericke to 'Otto' [Riecker?] 1936, Jan. 13 (NLS, LKAS).

einer über 'Verloren – gerettet' (V.10) usw. 'Gerade dieses schlichte Reden vom Wirken des heiligen Geistes unter uns Menschen von heute hat einen tiefen Eindruck gemacht', schrieb nachher jemand aus Y.

Nachher saßen wir in zwei kleineren Gruppen zusammen, und da hatten uns manche Menschen aus Y. viel zu sagen, was auf uns wiederum einen tiefen Eindruck machte, so daß ein gegenseitiges Geben und Nehmen den beiden Gemeinden geschenkt wurde.

Am Abend waren wir mit dem Helferkreis des Pf. X. zusammen und erzählten von dem Entstehen unseres Gemeindegernes unter dem Einfluß der Gruppenbewegung, auch hier in Form von persönlichem Zeugnis.<sup>119</sup>

In a subsequent article, Gericke explained the method of 'geführte Seelsorge' as something more than a method. It meant the change of the pastor from being a 'Wegweiser' into becoming a 'Führer,' a step from the second to the third article of the Creed. Methodically, it meant, for example, keeping quiet times with the confessants in several situations.<sup>120</sup> An even more exclusively personalistic attitude is found in Otto Riecker's subsequent essay on the reshaping of the Volksmission work, which emphasizes its basis in '*die totale Lebenspraxis der Mitarbeiter*'. According to Riecker, this revolution of the Volksmission was nothing but a personal, continuing revolution in the life of every fellow worker.<sup>121</sup>

The Volksmission weeks inspired by Group revivalism had the effect of recruiting for the Oxford Group work as well. The vicar Hermann Wagner from Kötzschen bei Großkorbetha came into Group work through such a week in Collma bei Halle 'nach Art der Gruppenbewegung,' and further through the Pfarrerrüstzeit in Elbingerode in August 1936. As the first conditions for a renewal, he stated the renewal of the clergyman, his wife, and his house.<sup>122</sup>

Another form of independent Group revivalism was practised by Erich Schnepel in eastern Berlin, who worked with a team in Dorfmission, and tried to form congregational nuclei, but still with discussions instead of sharing, etc.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Gericke 1936:26 f.

<sup>120</sup> Gericke 1936b:331, 333.

<sup>121</sup> Riecker 1939:13 f. – 'Diese Revolution der Volksmission ist aber nichts als eine *persönliche Revolution* im Leben eines jeden Mitarbeiters, eine fortlaufende und nie aufhörende Revolution.' Riecker had earlier emphasized the need for a change of attitude: 'Von der innerkirchlichen zur missionarischen Haltung' – 'Der Übergang von der *besitzenden zur gewinnenden und von der abwehrenden zur überwindenden Haltung* muß gefunden werden' (Riecker 1937:339, 341).

<sup>122</sup> Wagner 1936:935 f.

<sup>123</sup> J. F. Laun to H. M. Gericke 1936, Jan. 15 (NLS, LKAS). Subsequently, Laun found that Schnepel and the Group had the same aim, and, to a great extent, the same road (Laun to Fr. Muth 1936, Sept. 18; NLS, LKAS).

### VI.3.6. *National Socialist Comments*

The Volksmission inspired by Group revivalism worked in a Germanizing, though not directly Nazifying direction. However, in a master's thesis of the renewal of private confession through the Oxford Group Movement, presented to the theological faculty of Rostock, 1938, Walther Warncke tried to show that the Group Movement in Germany was not Anglo-Saxon in mentality, but inspired by German spirituality as well: the 'Überwindung der "typisch" angelsächsischen Frömmigkeit durch die Gruppenfrömmigkeit mittels der Beichte und ihrer Herkunft aus deutscher Seelsorge und Frömmigkeit.'<sup>124</sup> His efforts to synthesize the pastoral tradition of the Lutheran reformation and 19th century German revivalism with Group sharing, as well as his criticism of dialectical theology, have a political context.<sup>125</sup> Warncke's efforts are carefully worked out, but his difficulties are great, since he chooses Russell's *For sinners only* as the fundamental publication of the Oxford Group.<sup>126</sup> In a note to his final chapter, Warncke emphasizes Group confession ('Gruppenbeichte') as beneficial not only to the Evangelical Church, but also to the nation, as the Group movement was taking part in the fight against both the so-called world enemies: 'Bolschewismus und jüdischer Antichrist.' [!]<sup>127</sup>

Warncke's study may be regarded as a reaction to Alfred Rosenberg's warnings against the Oxford Group in *Protestantische Rompilger*:

Fügt man zu diesem sachverständigen Gutachten hinzu, daß die sog. Oxford-Bewegung gleichsam wie eine zweite Freimaurerei in verstreuten Gruppen und Betgemeinschaften in allen Ländern Fuß zu fassen versucht, daß ihre Vertreter in vielen Staaten offiziell empfangen werden, so entsteht für jeden Deutschen die Pflicht, sich mit den internationalen Kirchenbestrebungen vertraut zu machen.<sup>128</sup>

The racial question was heavily emphasized in the secret Gestapo report *Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung*. In the earlier report, *Leitheft. Die Oxford- oder Gruppenbewegung* (November, 1936) – only three months after Frank Buchman's positive statement on Hitler – its Scandinavian strategy, gaining entrance into Germany with the help of tall, blond Scandinavian Lutherans, was referred to, and it was stated that the movement was fighting the National Socialist race doctrine. In the later report, the supranational character of the Oxford Group meetings in Geneva revealed its 'national- und rasselosen demokratischen Menschheitscharakter.' In Oxford, white and coloured people met 'in bunter Rei-

<sup>124</sup> Warncke 1938, I. Kapitel, 2. Teil (p.43 ff.).

<sup>125</sup> Warncke 1938, I. Kapitel, 3. Teil (p.55 ff.), II. Kapitel, 1. Teil (p.65 ff.). Werkström 1963 criticizes Warncke's synthesizing tendencies without noting its historical situation and political implications.

<sup>126</sup> Warncke 1938:5. 'Alle ändern Schriften über die Gruppe sind nur gelegentlich herangezogen, da sie nichts grundsätzlich Neues bringen.'

<sup>127</sup> Warncke 1938:161, referring also to Laun & Krumhaar 1935:16, 21 f.

<sup>128</sup> Rosenberg 1937:69.

henfolge,' united through the so-called unity in Christ. Expectations of rewards for restitution are characterized as at best 'jüdische Gerissenheit.'<sup>129</sup> The idea of fellowship on the basis of sin is criticized for not being founded on the good and noble elements in man, and not on race and blood, which leads to a fellowship with members of all races, publicly exhibited in mixed assemblies. The personalistic attitude to the racial question reveals that the Oxford Group more than any other religious movement had emphasized the supranational and raceless character of Christianity.<sup>130</sup> Frank Buchman is quoted as expressing his hope for the exclusion of racial antagonism, and from Ermatingen a testimony is quoted in visioning a world in which neither nations nor races existed. The bombastic conclusion is that the Oxford Group preaches 'die geistige und geistliche Rassenschande, deren notwendige Folge auch der biologische Verfall der Völker und Rassen sein muß.'<sup>131</sup>

Guidance is rejected as blasphemous, leading to individual irresponsibility, destroying all natural and historical forms of fellowship as well as national discipline and order. Sharing and public testimony are described as 'Selbsterniedrigung, Selbstbespeieung' and useless, public 'Selbstbefleckung,' respectively.<sup>132</sup> The earlier report only described the results of the suggestive methods as sectarian, and excluding an active participation in National Socialist organizations, while sharing was regarded as a form of Catholic confession functioning as a rapprochement between Catholicism and Protestantism.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Leitheft Die Oxford- oder Gruppenbewegung 1936:10, II:3; on Buchman's positive statement on Hitler, see above Ch. VI.3.4. Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:27, 29, 45, 66. The second Gestapo report is mentioned in several documents in R 43 II/151, Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, sometimes with comments, for example in Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, 1942, July 31, to Herrn Reichsminister und Chef der Reichskanzlei Dr. Lammers: 'Die überkonfessionellen und international ausgerahtenen Bestrebungen der Oxford-Gruppenbewegung verdienen gerade zur Zeit der Auseinandersetzung mit den jüdisch-bolschewistischen Weltanschauungen besondere Beachtung.'

<sup>130</sup> Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:58 f., 61, 105. The importance of the Oxford Group for racial reconciliation in South Africa and the personalistic attitude to the racial question had been emphasized by the Swiss teacher and former Socialist Emil Bünzli (Bünzli 1936:9, 12 f., 68; on Bünzli p. 16 ff.), referred to in Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:61, 124. The positive observation of the coincidence of certain German strivings against the Christian's knowledge of sin, and the appearance of the Oxford Group, which built personal and national change on a foundation of knowledge of sin (Das evangelische Deutschland 1935:214), was used in Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:34.

<sup>131</sup> Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:62 f. Even influences from the Jewish psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud are noted (p.76), and the conclusion (p.125) is that the Oxford Group 'eine gemeinschaftsgefährdende psychopathische Erscheinung unserer Zeit ist.'

<sup>132</sup> Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:53 f., 58, 124. 'Mit dem Geist Gottes wird ein lästerliches Spiel getrieben [...] grenzenlosen Subjektivismus.'

<sup>133</sup> Leitheft Die Oxford- oder Gruppenbewegung 1936:11.

The Gestapo report of 1942 was probably the result of the strong advice of the report of 1936 to let V-men infiltrate in the Group.<sup>134</sup> Though printed only in 1942, the report was probably completed in 1939. An immediate result of its edition was Martin Bormann's prohibition for soldiers to take part in the work of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Seelsorge*.<sup>135</sup>

## VI.4. The Fundamental Isolation Phase

### VI.4.1. *Group and Church in the Church Struggle*

After the last German 'Tagung' with a foreign team was arranged in Bodenbach on the Czechoslovakian border in 1936, four Group members from southern Germany took part in the Oxford Group campaign in Utrecht in Holland at Whitsun 1937, and at Easter 1938, a student from Tübingen visited the conferences at Caux and Rheinfelden in Switzerland, with severe personal consequences.<sup>136</sup> Then came the fundamental isolation. In 1937, Dr. theol. Erich von Eicken published his book *Ausweg aus der kirchlichen Erstarrung*, which dealt with the importance of the Group Movement for the German Evangelic Church. He was inspired by the Group meetings for pastors at Westerburg (May 1936), Elbingerode (August 1936), and Schmie bei Maulbronn (October 1936).<sup>137</sup> At the Pfarrerrüstzeit at Westerburg in May 1936, thirty priests from the Confessing Church and the Centre party did penance and surrendered, with respect for each others' guidance, and found a new road through the Church struggle in the unity of positive, soul-caring work.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Leitheft. Die Oxford- oder Gruppenbewegung 1936:II.3 '2. in jedem Oberabschnitt ein V-Mann in die Oxfordbewegung geschickt wird, der die Tagungen besucht und über den Teilnehmerkreis und die Arbeit berichtet.'

<sup>135</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 168/42 vom 30.12.42; see further Zipfel 1965:208 f. In Holland, the Oxford Group was branded in April 1941 as influenced by Jews and Freemasons (see van Beuningen 1970:73).

<sup>136</sup> Georgi 1970:17 f., Ms. Siegfried Ernst: Begegnungen mit Frank Buchman (NLC).

<sup>137</sup> Von Eicken 1937:114.

<sup>138</sup> Hans-Martin Gericke: Bericht über die Pfarrer-Rüstzeit der Gruppen-Bewegung auf der Westerburg, 4.-9. Mai 1936 (dupl.); Westerburger Zeugnisse (dupl.); Otto Riecker: Von der Gruppe zur deutschen Seelsorgearbeit (NLS, LKAS). Von Eicken, who was a vicar in Marburg, had written his dissertation on 'Rechtfertigung und Heiligung bei Wesley, verglichen mit Luther und dem Luthertum,' Heidelberg 1934. The importance of the outwardly directed Group work to the Church had earlier been emphasized by Riecker 1935:413 - 'Sie ist *Mannschaftsarbeit* und sie *erreicht die Entfremdeten*.' See also Riecker to J. F. Laun 1935, March 17 (NLS, LKAS) on the importance of reaching strangers, not Christians only, even in Church work.

Von Eicken has an ecclesiastical view as regards the Group, with the problems of the Church in focus, but his view of the Church is one-sided, emphasizing the personalistic, soul-curing attitude as a solution to the problems of the Church. In von Eicken's view of the Group, on the other hand, Frank Buchman's vision of a new world order is interpreted as a Christian reaction to the 'bolschewistisch-atheistische Weltrevolution.'<sup>139</sup> The German political situation is further reflected in von Eicken's emphasis on a positive attitude, although here he represents a distinct alternative to the National Socialist ideas of a so-called 'positives Christentum.' He explained his 'positive Einstellung' as a "pneumatisch-führungsmäßige" Haltung, die nur dem "Kind Gottes" möglich ist, das vom Heiligen Geist geleitet wird.<sup>140</sup>

Von Eicken's activist and Church-based views on Group work are revealed in his definition of a Group. He emphasizes that a 'Gruppe' cannot be founded by gathering "'fromme Leute" zur Selbsterbauung,' but by two, three, or more decided Christians prepared for discipline, who commit themselves to 'hingebungsvollem Retterdienst.' That is a local group, 'die örtliche Gruppe.' The personal commitment, and no compulsory sharing is the entrance into this fellowship.<sup>141</sup> A group is a 'Stoß- und Arbeitstrupp von Seelsorgern,' and all meetings are preparations for attacking and serving, no gatherings merely for 'interessante Erbaulichkeit' are tolerated when growing out of a local group, and they have to be immediately dismissed if the whole work is not to be destroyed.<sup>142</sup>

But the 'kirchlichen Gruppen = Volksmissionen' were of great importance to channelling the victorious stream of spiritual energy into the Church, with a missionary nucleus congregation and the mobilization of the laymen as consequences, provided that the pastor opened his own life to the realization of the revivalistic message.<sup>143</sup> To von Eicken, 'Erweckung' had a positive meaning, while 'interessante Erbaulichkeit' was not at all regarded as revivalism. He was happy to report the change of attitude from traditional German revivalism towards Group revivalism, since the Deutsche Gemeinschafts-Diakonieverband, in August 1936, had opened itself to the life of the Group Movement, when a Pfarrerrüstzeit was arranged in the Mutterhaus of the Gemeinschafts-Diakonieverband Neu-Vandsburg. Personal bridges were built between individuals from traditional Pietist revivalism and Group revivalism, giving hope for a new fellowship across the frontiers in the Church struggle as well.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Von Eicken 1937:81, 62, 117.

<sup>140</sup> Von Eicken 1937:45.

<sup>141</sup> Von Eicken 1937:53, 23 – the private confession 'muß aber unter allen Umständen eine freiwillige sein,' with direct reference to Luther's words in the 8th Invocavit sermon.

<sup>142</sup> Von Eicken 1937:74 f. ('Nur sofortige Auflösung kann noch einiges retten').

<sup>143</sup> Von Eicken 1937:104 f. As encouraging examples the 'volksmissionarischen Versuche der Gruppe in Nassau-Hessen, Westfalen und Württemberg' are mentioned, with special reference to J. F. Laun.

<sup>144</sup> Von Eicken 1937:104, 61, Wagner 1936:936 f. Cf. the heavy criticism in Michaelis

Von Eicken's advice to Group members for avoiding the dangers of other revivalistic movements were:

1. der erweckte Mensch benutze regelmäßig die Gnadenmittel der Kirche [...]
2. er übe neben dem wortlosen Gebet mindestens ebenso sehr das Wortgebet [...]
3. er halte 'Stille Zeit' möglichst in Gemeinschaft mit anderen und vergleiche mit diesen die ihm geschenkten Gedanken [...]
4. er achte darauf, daß er unter der täglichen Vergebung bleibe.
5. er sei stets auf die Rettung anderer Menschen bedacht.<sup>145</sup>

Teaching a positive attitude towards foreign thinking, even foreign confessions and political systems, while searching for eternal values and truths in them, von Eicken, from an eschatological point of view, sharply criticized a national emphasis in the work of world-change (– as it at the time was preached by the Oxford Group, for example in Denmark):

Freilich muß man sehr auf der Hut sein, daß man nicht etwa durch eine auf die Massen und Nationen eingestellte Arbeit den nüchternen Boden biblischer Linien allmählich verliert und unter dem Eindruck der unverkennbaren gewaltigen Erfolge einer schwärmerischen Reich-Gottes-ideologie verfällt, als könne die Kirche oder Gruppe ein sichtbares Reich Gottes auf Erden errichten. Die christliche Welt kommt in diesem Aeon nicht unmittelbar zur Vollendung.<sup>146</sup>

His fundamental attitude to the Church struggle was dominated by soul-caring personalism: 'Es geht eben nicht an, daß man einen Kirchenkampf gewinnt, die Seelen aber verliert.'<sup>147</sup> The task was to unite the ecumenical movement, the theology of the Young Reformers, and the Group movement, and lead the way to a renewed and united ecumenical Church. As things were, the Church struggle had been the necessary first phase of the renewal of the Church. After this theological reconsideration, the present need was for personal penitence. Internal differences of opinion should be solved through long quietness before God, self-examination according to the four absolute standards, as well as mutual confession and testimony.<sup>148</sup> External problems were to be solved through the guidance of God, clearing the fronts not by pure theology, but by the living and strong Word of God. Practical advice was to pray for one's opponents in

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1937:56 ff., concerning open confession, the concealed importance given to the Word by the Cross, guidance as 'Einfallstor für Dämonisches,' etc. Other circles opening themselves to Group revivalism were the Jugendverband für entschiedenes Christentum (Christian Endeavor), several mission societies, and Baron von der Ropp's Grünheider Kreis (Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:93).

<sup>145</sup> Von Eicken 1937:72 f.

<sup>146</sup> Von Eicken 1937:45, 63

<sup>147</sup> Von Eicken 1937:113.

<sup>148</sup> Von Eicken 1937:108, 110 f.

the Church struggle, and overcome the animosity by confessing one's own guilt, and keep all theological positions and meanings 'als hätte man sie nicht.'<sup>149</sup>

In a speech at the Meißener Pastorkonferenz in 1937, Professor Alfred Dedo Müller from Leipzig presented a respectful, though critical view of the relation between the Group Movement and the Church, probably as a reaction to von Eicken's book. For her task in soul-care and mission, the Church had to listen to the Group Movement and thankfully receive what help it could give her. In these two fields, i.e. soul-care and mission, the work of the Group Movement was entirely positive. But the Church had other tasks, in theology as well as in the fields of its liturgical and judicial form. The situation would become dangerous if the Group Movement, specializing in soul-care and mission work, regarded this as everything, without noticing that it was only a part of the total task of the Church. A special danger was the 'Pädagogisierung' – to regard everything from a pedagogical angle. The Group Movement had to understand the essential necessity of the worship, jurisdiction and structure of the Church. A renewal movement should not want to be anything else than an instrument of the Church.<sup>150</sup>

However, the fact that the Oxford Group and parts of the German Group did not understand themselves as instruments of the Church, but the Church as a possible instrument of the Group's work for a national and supranational revolution, was not commented on by either Erich von Eicken or Alfred Dedo Müller.

In *Das Evangelium im Weltanschauungskampf der Gegenwart*, Professor Dr. Adolf Köberle applied a personalistic approach to the present German religious situation. There was a need for personal repentance. While both Alfred Rosenberg and the Deutsche Christen were regarded as fruits of liberal Bible critique and bad theological education, Orthodox theology, too, was criticized for its doctrinal isolation. The success of the Oxford Group Movement in Denmark and Norway was a consequence of its character as a lay movement, which preferably worked in soul-cure.<sup>151</sup>

In an article in the *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, Köberle (1937) described the Group Movement as a new consideration on the practical road of presenting the Gospel alive and close to the masses, who were alien to the Church, or – in Emil Brunner's words – preparation for preaching. The Group tried to renew the *collegia pietatis* through small circles of Christian fellowship.<sup>152</sup> He summarized the theological objections as concerning guidance, the relation between testimonies of experiences and sermons bound to the

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<sup>149</sup> Von Eicken 1937:112 f. On von Eicken's book, see further Schjørring 1976:78 f. Von Eicken's views were spread, for example, in Sweden, see Nytt Liv 1939, Nr. 7.

<sup>150</sup> Müller 1937:334 ff.

<sup>151</sup> Köberle [1935]:32 f., 35.

<sup>152</sup> Köberle 1937:710, 755 f.



Word, and, finally, the possibilities of renewed, changed men in the present shape of the world. The happiest form of Group movement was found in Switzerland, with its Bible evenings and sermons by Emil Brunner or Wilhelm Oehler, while the Anglo-American publications had too much of an 'Enthusiasmus religiöser Fortschrittsgläubigkeit,' alien to the theology of the Reformation. The shortcoming of the Group Movement was not its speaking of Biblical truths, but its exaggerated and one-sided emphasis on these truths. The New Testament gave no promises of a world-change through human good works. This eschatological dividing line was not clearly observed in the Group Movement.<sup>153</sup>

In a typewritten report on the way of the Group in Germany, July 1937, the Confessing Church man W. Spitta recognized the original ambition of a 'Volksmission' among the Deutsche Christen. They had failed firstly, because attempted compromises between Christian faith and a racial 'Weltanschauung' must lead to the victory of the latter. Secondly, the Deutsche Christen were bound to the state and the party. A Church being politicized, and determined by the racial 'Weltanschauung,' was not free to fulfil her task. While the Confessing Church had been right in its judgment of the present and future situation, a great difficulty was its dogmatism: 'Im Namen des Bekenntnisses verketzern sich die einzelnen Richtungen in der Bekennenden Kirche: Über das, was Bekenntnis ist, herrscht eine babylonische Sprachverwirrung.' Its strength was its theology, which conquered the Deutsche Christen in the congregations, but without reach of the masses, and without interest in the 'Volksmission.' The mentality of the Confessing Church was negative, the bitterness and the annoyance at the injustices outweighed the joy in the Holy Spirit. In its negativism, even the Confessing Church was in danger of being politicized. This negativism could be overcome only by penance.

In characterizing the Group as well, Spitta found its theology entirely practical, emphasizing soul-care. The theologians were right in questioning whether the wonders and changes of the Group were works of the Christ of the Biblical Word. There was a need for both theological consciousness and a soul-caring attitude. Furthermore, the Group could choose between Deutsche Christen and the Confessing Church. If it was stated that a positive attitude towards National Socialism as the opposite of Bolshevism was a prerequisite for working in the Group, then this was 'deutsch-christliche Ideologie.' A Christian could not say that he was the real National Socialist, and that the Mythos was a misunderstanding. If the Group chose the road of the Deutsche Christen, it was not missionizing for the Church, but would end up as a sect. If, on the other hand, the Group was linked to the Confessing Church, this could end in negativism and politicizing. Spitta's conclusion was that the Group must understand that the diagnosis of the Confessing Church was correct, while the negative attitude of

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<sup>153</sup> Köberle 1937:778 ff. 'Es waltet hier noch immer viel zu sehr die amerikanische Fortschrittsgläubigkeit der Vorkriegszeit mit religiös-christlichem Vorzeichen' (p.783).

the Confessing Church should be overcome by the positive, primitive Christian attitude of the Group, free from the illusionism and optimism of the Deutsche Christen, as well as the negativism and pessimism of the Confessing Church.<sup>154</sup>

#### *VI.4.2. Die Deutsche Gruppe and the Split in German Group work*

As international institutions were met with distrust in Germany, a conference at Eisenach, May 13–15, 1938, decided to separate from the international Oxford Group, adopting the name of the Deutsche Gruppe. The ‘Deutsche Gruppenbewegung’ had been used since 1933, though without its utmost consequences. Now, ‘Bewegung’ was reserved for organizations directly connected with the National Socialist Party. The foreign literature was to be substituted by German products. The Group would separate from the Church as well, and direct Group work was to be led by laymen only, while the soul-caring work was to be carried out within the Church. The Group furthermore tried to arrange its relations with state and party in such a way that any state intervention, and all doubts regarding its ideologic and political reliability, were avoided. This new attitude included total silence on the racial question as well. A report was delivered to the Gestapo.<sup>155</sup> Count John Bentinck (Düsseldorf), Ernst Büscher (Düsseldorf), Dr. Walther Helmes (Stuttgart), and Dipl. Ing. Werner Sack (Düsseldorf) were regarded as the new leaders of the Deutsche Gruppe.

The split was a consequence of an old tension between the Church Group (Laun, von Eicken, Haug) and the National Group (Bentinck, Moni von Cramon). In Garmisch-Partenkirchen, at New Year 1937, Frank Buchman tried to bind the Germans to the international team, establishing a German branch of the Oxford Group, working on the conversion of the Nazis. This was rejected by the Church Group men, but also by John Bentinck, who was suspicious of the ambitions of the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>156</sup> In Schmie, February 25–March 2, 1937,

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<sup>154</sup> [W. Spitta:] Gedanken zur Lage. Der Weg der Gruppe in Deutschland (ZZ, also in NLS, LKAS).

<sup>155</sup> Thirty laymen and three theologians (Allwohn, Ehrhardt, Laun) took part in the Eisenach conference. A report was sent to the Gestapo in June 1938, with reference to an earlier encounter 1937, Dec. 4 (Copy of report to the Geheime Staatspolizeiamt. Abteilung II B., Berlin, Dr. Baartz, 1938, June 25, signed Bentinck, Büscher, Helmes, Sack; dupl., Rundschreiben! [1939, Feb.], signed Helmes, Scheu (NLS, LKAS). See further Georgi 1970:65, Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:95 ff., in which J. F. Laun at the Gruppen-Freizeit in Schmie bei Maulbronn October 9–13, 1937, is quoted: ‘es war unklug, gerade an einem empfindlichen Teil der Auffassung des Staates und der Partei mit diesen in Konflikt zu kommen. Es ist daher gut, über die Rassenauffassung der Gruppe überhaupt nicht mehr zu sprechen [...] dabei opfert die Gruppe eigentlich nichts von ihrem Standpunkt, wenn sie eine gewisse Zeit über ein unliebsames Thema schweigt.’

<sup>156</sup> J. F. Laun to T. Haug 1942, Sept. 24 (NLS, LKAS). As brother-in-law of Ernst

John Bentinck, before eighty or a hundred participants, explained his views on Bolshevism as the enemy of Christianity. National Socialism was regarded as leading the front against the fall and dissolution of the world, while the special Christian contribution was the solution of personal Bolshevism. The sound German people kept to the Führer and let themselves be guided by God, helping the Führer in the battle for the world. This national message should not be made ecclesiastical or pious. The pastors felt themselves accused of preventing contacts with the National Socialist party. All was said in such a way that the listeners got the impression that this was the opinion of Frank Buchman as well.<sup>157</sup>

In October 1937, Count Bentinck issued an inofficial, duplicated manuscript, 'Einige grundsätzliche Gedanken der Deutschen Gruppenbewegung als Antwort auf Gegenwartsfragen in Deutschland.' In eleven theses, using both a National Socialist and a Group vocabulary, Bentinck essentially opened the way for Nazism, cutting the relations to Frank Buchman and non-German teams. The 'Gottverbundenheit' was recognized as the foundation of life, shaping life in the divine orders of family, nation (Volk), state, and race. The way to God went through hard reality, and not through confession. The four absolute standards were still emphasized, but so was the total claim of the 'Volksgemeinschaft.' The 'Volksverbundenheit' was independent of religious or confessional opinions or bonds, but founded on the natural fellowship of blood and destiny ('Bluts- und Schicksalsgemeinschaft'). The most important task was the soul-care, which was not defined or described. Dogmatism, pacifism, puritanism, individualism, liberalism, priestly dominion, etc. were rejected. Adolf Hitler was regarded as the renewer and leader of the German people, guided by God.<sup>158</sup>

This message was questioned by the Church Group men, with explicit warnings for a development where the Salvation through Christ was moved from its central position and substituted with a sort of self-salvation. Furthermore, it was emphasized that everyone needed the fellowship of a Christian circle (Gemeinschaft, Freikirche, or Landeskirche).<sup>159</sup>

According to Gestapo reports, Group leaders aimed at an avalanche-like development in 1938, when a great discussion with National Socialist leaders, which was expected to result in a miracle. Group members regarded their message and way of life as the only way out of the deadlock in the Church struggle. Tired and disappointed party members, the Nazi women, and the Hitler-Jugend were to be given special attention. The real aim was to reach the party and state

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Büscher, Laun probably had knowledge of the inner development of the circles around Bentinck.

<sup>157</sup> J. Bentinck: Zur Lage [Schmie 1937] (NLS, LKAS). Interview [with] Turner-Stroh 1976, March 2 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>158</sup> Einige grundsätzliche [...] (dupl., NLS, LKAS). Georgi 1970:26.

<sup>159</sup> Dekan Haug to [Scheu] 1938, Nov. 15 (NLS, LKAS).

circles.<sup>160</sup> However, the Gestapo recorded that international contacts were still kept, though now on a private level, and that Group and state were rivals for human beings.<sup>161</sup>

The 'official' report to Frank Buchman said nothing about a split in German Group work, but simply explained first that the Church from now on was responsible to the state for her own work, such as parsons' house-parties, 'Volksmission,' etc., while the Deutsche Gruppe was responsible only for the layman's work, and, secondly, that it was right to sever the connection with the Oxford Group, emphasizing the impossibility to check the German work with the international team. German Group leaders could take no responsibility for action that was never checked with them.<sup>162</sup> A draft by Adolf Scheu put more emphasis on God's guidance for the German Group in other tasks and on another line than the Oxford one, and that the 'weltanschaulich' and religious situation of the German people could be understood only by Germans, as well as on very firmly fixing the boundary between the Deutsche Gruppe and the Oxford Group, for example allowing the Oxford Group to invite Germans to foreign parties only through the leaders of the Deutsche Gruppe.<sup>163</sup>

In a post-war report to the military government in the North Rhine province, the separation from the international Oxford Group work was explained as due to 'the increasing manifestation of pacifistic tendencies in the Anglo-Saxon groups,' and to 'the attempts made by certain members of the English Group to work under leading National Socialists such as Himmler and others, of which procedure we could not approve.'<sup>164</sup> It could have been easy to judge this as a fabricated explanation, if we had not had other example of this most extreme political naïvety. According to Frank Buchman's secretary, Morris

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<sup>160</sup> Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:94 f., 98, with quotations from the house-party at Wilhelmsfeld, Dec. 31, 1937-Jan. 2, 1938, Adolf Allwohn, and the Vertrauensleutetagung in Heidelberg, Dec. 1, 1937. Cf. Leitheft Die Oxford- oder Gruppenbewegung, hrsg. vom Sicherheitshauptamt, November 1936, Geheim, Numeriertes Exemplar, DC, which states that since 1933 the Group was hardly advertising anymore. Taking part in the Mannschaftstagung der Deutschen Gruppenbewegung at Wartburg, Eisenach 1938, May 15, were, among others, Walther Helmes, Werner Sack, John Bentinck, Adolf Scheu, Ernst Büscher, and Arno Ehrhardt (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>161</sup> Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:96, 100, with quotations from a party at Neustrelitz April 2-28, 1939. J. F. Laun expressed at a meeting for Vertrauensleute at Heidelberg, December 1, 1937, that 'Der Staat will den totalen Menschen, wir wollen auch den totalen Menschen. Wir wissen, das wir Gegner sind', and in Neustrelitz 1939, even that 'Hitler soll machen, was er will, ich stelle mich unter das Kreuz Christi.'

<sup>162</sup> [J. Bentinck] to F. Buchman 1938, June 30 (NLS, LKAS). The unchecked German action was a 'Gruppentagung' in Heidelberg in December 1937, led by Laun, and, especially, a Group revivalistic 'Tagung' of the Confessing Church in East Prussia (see E. Büscher to W. Helmes 1937, Dec. 24; NLS, LKAS).

<sup>163</sup> A. Scheu to J. Bentinck 1938, May 17 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>164</sup> [Adolf Scheu] to the Military Government, North Rhine Province 1945, Nov. 7 (NLC).

Martin, Professor B. H. Streeter of Oxford, in September 1936, while in hospital with blood poisoning, ventured to suggest that at a planned meeting with Hitler,

1. [...] the Führer publicly invite Dr. Buchman to bring an international team of Oxford Group workers to Germany, promising them every facility. This would astonish Europe – but the Führer would not object on that account.
2. The Group would probably not begin with public meetings, but with relatively small house-parties, for business men, lawyers, civil servants, and especially Hitler Jugend.
3. I should explain the method of training groups and camps of leaders used this year, and the way it led up to the Birmingham Rally.
4. A number of potential German leaders should come over to this training week in England, and the Birmingham Rally, and if possible, at least two hundred Hitler Jugend, who, of course, would spend their preliminary week in camp.
5. The great feature of the Birmingham Rally was the pageant ‘Youth on the March for God,’ in which different contingents paraded. If there were two hundred Hitler Jugend, in their uniform, and each carrying a Swastika, these would be the first detachment, and they could march, ending with the goose-step at the appropriate stage, to the Badenthaler March. Hitler could lend the band.
6. No one in the world can march as well as the Germans, and the discipline and devotion of the Hitler Jugend, consciously God-directed, is a new contribution to the Group Movement.
7. The impression produced in England by this march of Hitler Jugend would be enormous, and if it is properly reported in the German papers, it would have an enormous effect in Germany. The notion that the Oxford Group was Anglo-Saxon would be completely wiped out. Exactly how the work was followed up in Germany after that would depend on the guidance from the Spirit which then came.
8. If the Führer decided to invite the Group, it might be well for him to explain, in an interview, that he had never been against religion, and only reliance on God had pulled him through the difficult crises of his own life. What he had objected to was religion taught by churches who seemed to him to spend their time quarrelling about questions of theology which had nothing to do with practical life, and doing little to help the ordinary man to get religion as a help and direction in practical affairs of daily life.<sup>165</sup>

An important reason for the separation from the international team was the

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<sup>165</sup> Biographical research notes compiled by Morris Martin (NLC).

edition of the *Rising Tide* magazine in German (*Steigende Flut*). In January 1938, the publisher Klotz in Gotha was anxious concerning the distribution of about 1,000 copies from Switzerland into Germany. In October, 'F.' [Laun?] had written that he wanted Germans to contribute to the translation in Switzerland, while John Bentinck on principle rejected all German cooperation, and emphasized how harmful such propaganda would be in Germany. To Bentinck, this foreign propaganda meant running foul of the German Group Movement. Would he, together with Walter Helmes, Werner Sack, and Ernst Büscher, as signatories of the eleven theses, now stand as liars to the Gestapo?<sup>166</sup>

From 1938, the soul-caring work was growing, while the Deutsche Gruppe decreased. Its direction towards the laity only was impractical, and its views theoretical. In February 1939, the leadership of Bentinck, Büscher, Helmes and Sack was substituted with the combination of only Helmes and Adolf Scheu (Naunhof bei Leipzig). The work was concentrated to Sachsen and Württembergia. As early as in August 1940, Adolf Scheu declared, to the Mitarbeitertagung of the AGS at Schloß Kranzbach, that the Deutsche Gruppe as a special, separately working circle had ceased to exist.<sup>167</sup>

The Deutsche Gruppe continued the efforts from the first years after the National Socialist revolution to place political life under the moral demands of the Group, as explained by Paul Jaeger in 1935:

Aber wenn das politische Leben unter die Forderung der Gruppenbewegung, unter die Forderung schlechthiniger Aufrichtigkeit, Reinheit, Selbstlosigkeit und Güte gestellt wird – ist das nicht die Atmosphäre, in der gerade die neue Aufgabe am wirksamsten angefaßt und durchgeführt werden könnte? Ist nicht gerade diese Atmosphäre die unerläßliche Vorbedingung des Gelingens?<sup>168</sup>

The unrealistic nature of any efforts of combining Christian faith and National Socialism are exposed by Dr. Siegfried Ernst, who explains that 'unsere Forderung als junge Studenten an die NS-Führerschaft lautete deshalb: Deutschland braucht Führer, die sich von Gott führen lassen! Das aber empfanden viele NS-Führer als stärkere Herausforderung, als die reine Antihaltung und Sabotage reaktionärer Ideologien oder Konfessionen.'<sup>169</sup> This means that some of the Group students did not understand the totalitarian character and

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<sup>166</sup> John Bentinck to W. Helmes, W. Sack, and E. Büscher 1938, Jan. 20 (NLS, LKAS). Moni von Cramon was to be informed in a separate letter. According to the undated 'Gedanken zur augenblicklichen Situation der Gruppe in Deutschland,' by Margarete Reyss, no German or Swiss-German propositions for changes in the magazine were accepted by Frank Buchman (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>167</sup> Theodor Haug: Mein Beitrag für Marburg, 1946, Feb. 5 (NLS, LKAS). Rundschreiben! [dupl., 1939, Feb.], signed Helmes, Scheu. (NLS, LKAS). A. Scheu to Arbeitstagung Schloß Kranzbach (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>168</sup> Jaeger 1935b:1036.

<sup>169</sup> Ernst 1982:138.

the un-Christian nature of National Socialist ideology, as they were entirely directed towards personalistic thinking founded on the practice of guidance. Only when the Nazis rejected their efforts of personal change did they turn away from National Socialism. Thus, the difference was much clearer to the Nazis, like when a secret report by the security service in February 1938 said: 'Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung stellt einen neuen Versuch des internationalen Christentums dar, den Totalitätsanspruch Christi auf allen Lebensgebieten zum Durchbruch zu bringen.'<sup>170</sup>

The historical background was explained by Dr. Ernst in a contemporary report to the authorities, and in his subsequent recollections. Having become a member of the National Socialist party in 1933, at the age of 18, he visited a house-party in Oxford together with a fellow student from Tübingen, and understood that without the experience of the Cross, the national renaissance in Germany was built on the sands. When the 'Kameradschaft Langemarck,' planned as an ideal for all National Socialist student fellowships in Greater Germany, in 1937–38 turned away from the ideas of Alfred Rosenberg to those of Frank Buchman, he was severely criticized for having taken part in two conferences of the Oxford Group at Caux and Rheinfelden in Switzerland, and declared unworthy of office ('Amtsunwürdig'). In his report to the authorities, Ernst tried to connect the Swiss conferences with the official German view on the racial question by stating that the common task of the different races in Switzerland was emphasized, as well as the respective characters and the differences of the races. At Rheinfelden, he testified in a positive way about German conditions and about how he had changed from a negative to a positive attitude towards the National Socialist party.<sup>171</sup>

Another effort to combine Christian faith and National Socialism is demonstrated by Jacob Kronika. At a party rally in Nuremberg before the war, he became acquainted with Mrs. Augustini and her husband, who held a high rank in the S.S. (Totenkopf-Verbände). Both declared themselves as faithful Nazis, and faithful Christians. During the war, the couple joined the resistance, and Augustini was killed in a sabotage action.<sup>172</sup>

#### *VI.4.3. Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Seelsorge*

Both before and after the split in the German Group work, the Church Group

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<sup>170</sup> Arbeitsanweisungen 1937–38 für II 113 des SD-Hauptamtes, mitgeteilt durch Verfügung des SD-Oberabschnitts Süd-West an die SD-Unterabschnitte Württemberg, Baden, Pfalz, Saar (Boberach 1971:908, 921 f.).

<sup>171</sup> S. Ernst to Aussenamt der Studentenföhrung Tübingen 1938, May 3 (NLS, LKAS), Ms. Siegfried Ernst: Begegnungen mit Frank Buchman (NLC).

<sup>172</sup> Kronika 1966:84, diary notes from 1942, July 28. Mrs. Augustini further asked for help for a young half-Jewish relative.

revivalism according to J. F. Laun continued, emphasizing the Germanization of the work and the rejection of the Oxford label, presenting its growth as one of its own, following the special guidance of God, although it was grateful for the revival brought to German thinking and experience by Frank Buchman. Laun explained his attitude towards the state and the party as positive in the spirit of Rom. 13, and 1 Cor. 13.<sup>173</sup>

After the split, the division according to the Eisenach agreement became a delicate matter. In May 1938, Laun, Th. Haug, Hans Stroh, and Fritz from Stuttgart took part in a 'Gruppentagung' at Bad Niedernau in Württembergia. The party was more sophisticated, freer and more lively than the 'Rüstzeiten' within the Church, but the priests felt at home, and joined in the work. In August, Laun arranged a Group evening for the Church circle of Mrs. Hasselblatt, and invited Group laymen, still using the old name, 'Gruppenbewegung.' In a circular for a non-Church 'Tagung' for central Germany, not less than eleven names of people active in Church work appeared, and among the expected leaders were Laun, Haug, and von Eicken. Count Bentinck emphasized that the Eisenach agreement was not a manoeuvre to mislead the authorities. In the present confusion, the question was rather what they would think of Christian honesty.<sup>174</sup> These and other experiences made it clear to the Church Group men, that their work needed a name, since they would otherwise be constantly tempted to violate the Eisenach agreement. All use of 'Gruppe' was to be avoided. Since the development of their work started at the 'Pfarrer-Rüstzeiten' at Westerburg bei Limburg an der Lahn in the spring 1935 and 1936, the 'Westerburger Kreis (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Seelsorge und Volksmission)' was suggested as a new designation for the work, with the aim of renewing the Church through soul-care. The direction from Westerburg towards overcoming the Church struggle was further emphasized.<sup>175</sup>

The plans were questioned by Theodor Haug, who emphasized that the

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<sup>173</sup> Laun to D. Walter Michaelis 1937, March 23 and Dorothea Matzat 1937, May 7, respectively (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>174</sup> J. F. Laun to 'Liebe Freunde!' 1938, Aug. 11 (dupl., NLS, LKAS). [John Bentinck] to Frau Reyher 1938, Sept. 14 (NLS, LKAS). The lack of a Church revivalistic organization in the interval between the split and the founding of the AGS is clear from contemporary documents, for example a Rundschreiben – Entwurf by Adolf Scheu 1938, Nov. 5 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>175</sup> Adolf Allwohn, Arno Ehrhardt, Ferdi Laun, Otto Riecker to 'Liebe Freunde!' 1938, Oct. 15 (NLS, LKAS). On the 'Rüstzeit' at Westerburg, see further Hans-Martin Gericke's Bericht über die Pfarrer-Rüstzeit der Gruppen-Bewegung auf der Westerburg, 4.–9. Mai 1936, and Gericke in Westerburger Zeugnisse (dupl., NLS, LKAS). Among other arrangements in 1938 were 'Rüstzeiten' at Herrenalb (Baden), Colborn (Hannover), Hilchenbach (Westphalia), Kaub (Nassau-Hesse) in May, at Elbingerode August 20–25 (100 participants), Rathen (Sachsen), and Neukirchen (Schleswig-Holstein) in September, and two Pfarrerrüstzeiten for Nassau-Hesse in October (J. F. Laun to 'Liebe Freunde!' 1938, Aug. 11; NLS, LKAS).



Westerburg meeting had been of almost no importance to Württembergia, and that the suggested name consequently was a totally strange one. Haug, himself a participant at Westerburg, felt himself to be not a 'Westerburger,' but a Group man. He could not understand the ecclesiastical, political, personal or factual reasons for the proposed organization. It is obvious that Haug did wish to overcome the split between the Deutsche Gruppe and the soul-caring work. According to his opinion, the Eisenach agreement ought to be revised, especially as the Deutsche Gruppe was so inactive. The problem of Eisenach was not the Group, but John Bentinck, i.e. his theology. Rather than becoming a 'Westerburger,' Haug would like to be placed under the Group leader of southern Germany, Walter Helmes.<sup>176</sup>

On December 30, 1938, the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Seelsorge* was constituted in Frankfurt. The road of the supranational Oxford Group was described as impossible to follow in Germany. The formal organization was motivated as one to bring clarity to the work directed outwards, to help the people already reached in a better way, and to get a financial foundation for the work.<sup>177</sup> On February 2, 1939 in Heidelberg, a clear line was drawn between the Deutsche Gruppe and the Arbeitsgemeinschaft, according to their differing tasks, following the Eisenach agreement, the AGS working on an inner Church renewal, the Deutsche Gruppe in the independent laymen's work. The emphasis on 'frei' [independent] in the Deutsche Gruppe reveals a new kind of Group Independency, unique in its un-revivalistic direction.<sup>178</sup> Dr. Siegfried Ernst subsequently described the events as the Deutsche Gruppe taking the easiest way, weakening the Christian message, dismantling it – without the Cross – to 'einem bloßen Gottglauben,' and drawing a line against the clergy. The consequence was to state that the Führer, too, was guided by God. On the other hand, the AGS gave up the direction of social personalism towards the world, the nations, and their leaders, keeping to revivalistic personalism, i.e. personal

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<sup>176</sup> Th. Haug to 'Liebe Freunde!' 1938, Oct. 21 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>177</sup> 'Die am 29. und 30. Dezember 1938 in *Frankfurt (Main)* versammelten [...]' (NLS, LKAS). Signing were J. F. Laun, Adolf Allwohn, Otto Riecker, Theo Haug, Hans Stroh, H. M. Gericke, Fr. Allinger, Ludwig Heinemeyer, Ernst Eystenstein, Otto Kühnemund, Arno Ehrhardt, Herbert Fuchs, Walter Adler, Paulus Scharpff, Erich von Eicken, Hans Bruns, and Arthur Demuth.

<sup>178</sup> The information document, 'Mitteilung' (dupl., NLS, LKAS), February 2, 1939, was signed by J. Bentinck, W. Helmes, and Adolf Scheu (Deutsche Gruppe), and by J. F. Laun, Adolf Allwohn, and Otto Riecker (AGS). Cf. Scharpff 1980:308: 'Einige Gruppenleute ließen sich von nationalsozialistischen Ideen blenden [this was true!], indem sie die Ideologie der "moralischen Aufrüstung" annahmen [which they did not] und die biblische evangelistische Botschaft vernachlässigten [which is partly true from a confessional or evangelical viewpoint, but not as a result of National Socialist ideas].' Scharpff obviously confuses Frank Buchman's 1934 vision of a revolution aiming at a new social order under the dictatorship of the Spirit of God with the 1938 vision of a moral rearmament.

life-change only.<sup>179</sup> Together with the isolated situation and the separation from the international Oxford Group, the German split prevented the vision of a moral rearmament from breaking through in German Group circles until they were re-formed after the Second World War.

At New Year 1939, Adolf Allwohn's magazine, *Kirche im Angriff*, was re-named *Seelsorge*. This was explained as neither a change of attitude nor of programme, but an attempt to make its purpose still clearer, as 'die Wendung zum missionarischen Handeln.'<sup>180</sup> The change of name was connected with the founding of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Seelsorge (AGS) in Frankfurt am Main, in December 1938. This meant a confirmation of the split in German Group work, but a declaration of independence as well, since it meant that Church Group revivalism was not identical with the Church as such. The AGS was founded by 'die Träger der schon seit einigen Jahren durch geführten seelsorgerlichen Volksmissionen und Rüstzeiten,' directed by J. F. Laun, Otto Riecker, and Adolf Allwohn. The following courses were planned for 1939 as 'Rüstzeiten' for both pastors and laymen, with the following receivers of registration:

April 11–17: Herrenalb – Pfarrer Dr. Otto Riecker, Heidelberg,

April 17–22: Eppstein (Taunus) – Professor Lic. Dr. Adolf Allwohn, Frankfurt a.M.,

April 17–22: Dreierbergen (Oldenburg) – Pastor Heinemeyer in Firrel (Ostfriesland),

April 24–28: Neustrelitz – Pastor Hansen in Wanzka (Mecklenburg),

May 8–13: Auerbach an der Bergstraße – Allwohn,

July 1–11: Marburg a.d.Lahn – Pfarrer Dr. Erich von Eicken in Marburg a.d.Lahn,

July 3–9: Potsdam – Pfarrer Arno Ehrhardt in Gollma, Post Landsberg bei Halle,

July 31–Aug. 9: Bethel – Pfarrer H. M. Gericke in Grüne bei Iserlohn (Westphalia),

August 14–24: Elbingerode (Harz) – Pfarrer Hans Bruns in Marburg a.d.Lahn ('unter voraussichtlichem Mitwirkung von Prof. Dr. Köberle – Basel'),

September 4–14: Rathen bei Dresden – Bruns ('unter voraussichtlichen Mitwirkung von Prof. D. Karl Heim – Tübingen').<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Ms. Siegfried Ernst: Begegnungen mit Frank Buchman (NLC). Though Ernst in his post-war manuscript interprets the development of the AGS as giving up the 'ideology,' we have not used this word, thus avoiding terminological anachronism.

<sup>180</sup> Allwohn 1939:1.

<sup>181</sup> Allwohn 1939c:100 f., [Invitation] [...] zu einer Rüstzeit für Seelsorge die vom 4. bis 14. September 1939 stattfinden soll [...] im Diakonissenheim 'Felsengrund,' Rathen. These arrangements were located to all 'traditional' Group areas in Germany, with the remarkable exception of Silesia (and, perhaps, southern Bavaria). Among other meetings listed in NLS, LKAS, were a 'Pfarrer-Freizeit' at Elbingerode August 10–20, 1937 (95 participants), a 'Tagung der Deutschen Gruppe' at Bad Niedernau bei Tübingen May

One of the British full-timers in Sweden, being present at the 'Rüstzeit' in Potsdam, reported that it was led by 'a fine young fellow, Confessional parson, with priests in the Party on the team.' They told him that the group was 'the common platform where confessional and German Christians can meet. They have planned three more houseparties this year, so heavily applied for that they have expanded to five'. But 'it would harm the work in Germany to talk or write about it yet.'<sup>182</sup>

The AGS was a consequence of the strivings for a Germanization and a Church-based direction of the work. It is probably the clearest example of organized Church Group revivalism anywhere,<sup>183</sup> continuing with an open attitude towards those alien to traditional Church life, and aiming at a renewal of the latter:

Die Weite der Arbeit muß erhalten und bewußt angestrebt werden. Der Blick auf die große Aufgabe macht uns von Einseitigkeiten frei. Die zurechthelfende Arbeit seelsorgerlicher Erweckungsart an Fernstehenden und die Erneuerung und Neugestaltung des religiösen und christlichen Raumes lassen sich nicht trennen. Der Versuch, ganz für uns zu arbeiten, bedeutet Sektenschicksal. Eine Beschränkung auf den kirchlichen Raum brächte Verkirchlichung.<sup>184</sup>

The AGS kept open international contacts up till the outbreak of the war, though primarily on the level of soul-care and improvised testimony, like when some English students in June 1939 visited the Daimler-Werke in Stuttgart, and in the Evening had 'noch eine Art group-meeting; Prof. Fezer hatte einen der Gruppe nahestehenden Direktor bei Daimler gebeten, einige Angestellte aus Stuttgarter Fabriken zu versammeln; diese sprachen dann kurz im Sinn des

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27–29, 1938 (88 participants), a 'Pfarrertagung' in the Diakonissenhaus Lindhardt January 2–6, 1939 (50 participants), a week-end at the Rudolph-Sophienstift in Stuttgart February 18–19, 1939, a 'Tagung' at Bad Boll May 19–21, 1939, and another one in the same place, January 1940; further AGS in Tübingen March 27–31, 1940 (117 participants), Wimpfen, May 1940, AGS Gallnenkirchen, August 1940, AGS Tübingen August 26–29, 1940 (123 participants), Kochenhof July, 1941 (142 participants), 'AGS-Rüstzeit für Mitarbeiter' in Schmie, January 4–6, 1942 (58 participants), Kochenhof April 11–12, 1942 (100 participants and 52 fellow workers), Kochenhof July 4–5, 1942 (223 participants).

<sup>182</sup> Copy of S. Linton to H. Blake, E. Goulding, J. Morrison, and 'Scandinavians all' 1939, July 28 (DWC). Linton had also had lunch with Schmidt, Hitler's interpreter, and talked about listening to God, personally and even in international talks. 'He saw what it meant, and said he is doing what he can.'

<sup>183</sup> Haug 1948<sup>2</sup>:173 – 'Da der nationalsozialistische Staat freie christliche Arbeit in wachsendem Maß beschneidet, war der Zusammenhang der Gruppenarbeit mit der Kirche von Anfang an viel enger als in anderen Ländern. Zuletzt geschah Seelsorge im Sinn der Gruppe ganz unter Schutz und Verantwortung der Kirche.' The continuity from early Group work in Germany to the AGS is further emphasized by Dietzfelbinger 1985<sup>2</sup>:22.

<sup>184</sup> Arbeitsbrief 1940, Apr. 24 (quoted from Georgi 1970:66).

Zeugnisses für den christlichen Glauben.<sup>185</sup> Among the decisions made by the Deutsche Gruppe in 1938 was that the foreign literature was to be substituted with German products. However, the spirit of the products published by Klotz in Gotha, for example the *Ermatinger Tagebuch*, was criticized as aesthetic, individualistic, and sentimental, instead of the fighting spirit needed among post-revolutionary Germans.<sup>186</sup> In reality, the Anglo-Saxon literature was substituted with Swiss products by Brunner, Oehler, Spoerri, etc.<sup>187</sup>

At a 'Mitarbeitertagung' at Schloß Kranzbach in September 1940, a draft by Adolf Allwohn was finished, and Adolf Scheu was authorized to give it its final form. Arno Ehrhardt and J. F. Laun promised to write some more practical advice like 'Was jeder Mitarbeiter von der AGS wissen muß.' Instead, a new draft was written by Scheu, Ehrhardt, and Theo Haug.<sup>188</sup> The 'Arbeitslinien der AGS' of December 1940 emphasized soul-care, and aimed at a relation to God, who would send His power into man, restoring his life according to the four absolute standards. The experience of the last years was that even people from non-Christian circles had sought the soul-caring help of the AGS. While the AGS had received soul-caring inspiration from abroad, it had no relations with other countries, and the German work had never been dependent on foreign countries. The organization was led by three or more people (at present, as decided at Schloß Kranzbach, Arno Ehrhardt, Theo Haug, and Adolf Scheu, previously J. F. Laun, Adolf Allwohn, and Otto Riecker), and by a circle of twenty to twenty-five responsible fellow workers. The local work was organized in an 'Arbeitskreis.' Furthermore, the AGS had a wider circle of friends who received the circulars. The meetings were either 'Tagungen,' planned together with the leaders of the AGS, week-end arrangements, planned together with the local responsible fellow workers, or afternoon or evening arrangements, led by an 'Arbeitskreis' authorized by a responsible fellow worker. The AGS was interdenominational, but prepared to cooperate with Church circles when given the opportunity to work on soul-care in its own manner. Emphasizing the experiences of faith, doctrinal differences were stated not to be a reason for struggles. Finally, the cooperation in the AGS demanded a powerful effort in order to build up the German people.<sup>189</sup>

In the early war years, circumstances were made difficult for those AGS people, who were known to the authorities already by their work in the Oxford Group. In September 1942, J. F. Laun found that for two years he had been described as a politically suspect person. He had been suggested for some (unidentified) post, but was instead called up as a soldier, at the same time as the

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<sup>185</sup> Lächele 1990:416.

<sup>186</sup> O. Riecker to J. F. Laun 1936, Nov. 27 (NLS, LKAS).

<sup>187</sup> See Georgi 1970:28.

<sup>188</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 1 (dupl., NLS, LKAS).

<sup>189</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 1, 2; Arbeitslinien der AGS. 1940, Dec. 8 (dupl., NLS, LKAS), Arbeitslinien der AGS [print].

colleague suggesting his promotion was dismissed.<sup>190</sup>

In January 1943, it was decided to dissolve the AGS, from December 31, 1942, thus avoiding the formal and total prohibition expected after the prohibition for soldiers and party members to join.<sup>191</sup> Within the Church, the work continued in an informal way, especially in Württembergia (protected by Landesbischof Wurm) and in Wuppertal (by Adolf Scheu), until October 1944.<sup>192</sup> This continuous, informal Group work within the Church was criticized, for example by the student pastor Helmut Thielicke, who wanted to reach farther than forming an isolated group. Hans Stroh was at the time called up.<sup>193</sup> Even in Berlin people gathered, according to the humorous verse:

Der Ox ist fort,  
die Gruppe ist uns schnuppe,  
die Bewegung ist verboten,  
und die Sache lebt doch!<sup>194</sup>

In Germany, the relations between the international Oxford Group and Group revivalism were much more complex than in any other country. The political naïvety shown by some Anglo-Saxons in the Group as regarded German politics was at times unbounded. The Germanization of Group work led in two directions: the mainstream through the Volksmission work to the Church-cooperating, soul-caring personalism of the AGS, the other to the Deutsche Gruppe, open to National Socialism, but unable to express its un-revivalistic Group independentism. The development had gone from a national Oxford Group revivalism to independent Group movements within or outside the Church. The post-war development in Germany showed renewed differences of opinion to such an extent that they led to the division into an Oxford Group work for

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<sup>190</sup> Laun to Theodor Haug 1942, Sept. 24 (NLS, LKAS). In the first Gestapo report, *Leitheft Die Oxford- oder Gruppenbewegung 1936:10*, Laun was named as the leader of the movement in Germany.

<sup>191</sup> 'Den verantwortlichen Mitarbeitern und Freunden' 1943, Jan. 13 (dupl., NLS, LKAS).

<sup>192</sup> Theodor Haug: *Mein Beitrag für Marburg*. 1946, Feb. 2 (NLS, LKAS). Georgi 1970:29. See, for example, the invitation from *Evangelische Frauenhilfe für Württ.* to a 'seelsorgerliche Rüstzeit' for parsons' wives at Schmie bei Maulbronn 1943, February 2–5 (dupl., NLS, LKAS).

<sup>193</sup> Thielicke to Oberkirchenrat Wilhelm Pressel 1944, Apr. 1 (Akten des Württembergischen Oberkirchenrats 342:I, LKA): 'Zunächst: Das kleine geistliche Wehwechen, daß die Stroh-gruppe mir gegenüber empfindet – vielleicht! –, ist in keiner Weise Anlaß gewesen. daß ich die Bitte nach meiner Entlastung ausgesprochen habe. Denn es handelt sich hierbei um eine Gruppe von etwa 5 Leutchen, von denen 2 obendrein Nicht-Studenten und etwas exaltierte junge Oxford-Damen sind, die ich nur aus Gnade und Barmherzigkeit aus dem Strohkreis mitgeerbt habe.'

<sup>194</sup> *Kronika* 1945:91,

Moral Re-Armament, closely linked to the international Group, and the so-called Marburger Kreis, which worked according to the traditions of the AGS.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> See Georgi 1970, whose entire view of the history of the Oxford Group is coloured by the later situation.

## VII. COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS

An important aim with our study of the Oxford Group, Group revivalism, and the Churches in Northern Europe, 1930–1945, was to answer the question whether the Oxford Group came to an end or a more or less sudden change through the proclamation of Moral Re-Armament (M.R.A.) in 1938. We have displayed that it did not. It did continue during the Second World War. However, the development during the war of chiefly the American work became decisive for the interpretation of M.R.A. as an ideology. Unlike what is commonly believed, the use of Moral Re-Armament as a designation for the fellowship, network, or organization around it, is of much later origin than 1938. As late as in 1939, *the Oxford Group* obtained legal incorporation, and in his ‘authorized’ account of the principles and growth of its work, 1947, Julian Thornton–Duesbery still uses *the Oxford Group* as the summarizing term.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1930s, the Oxford Group changed emphasis from revivalistic personalism to social personalism on a national or supranational level, presenting a utopian alternative to National Socialism and Communism, expressed in 1938 as a strategy of moral rearmament. In social personalism the emphasis shifted from personal problems to the national and universal ones, which were still met with a personalistic attitude or method. From 1943 the strategy of moral rearmament was interpreted as a democratic ideology (ideological personalism), developing into a mixed structure of personalistic mentality and democratic ideology.

This shifting of emphasis – not a change of doctrine – is easily observed, for instance, in Frank Buchman’s speech at Visby, Sweden, in 1938 (‘Revival – Revolution – Renaissance’), with its explicit criticisms of those who wanted to remain at the stage of revivalism. The local teams showed various reactions to this shifting, and some groups – thus losing themselves from the Oxford Group – continued their work during the war, exclusively on the level of personal revival.

Our hypothesis was that the establishment of Group revivalism in Scandinavia and Germany followed in rough outline – as in the Netherlands and Switzerland – the same pattern in the different countries. After an opening stage of information, when no groups were formed, a revival groups phase

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<sup>1</sup> A clarifying example is given in the invitation to the International House–party at Interlaken, Sept. 2–12, 1938, arranged by the Oxford Group on the theme ‘Moral rearmament of the Nations’. Cf. ‘Oxford Group’ (The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church 1977<sup>2</sup>:1019), ‘Moralische Aufrüstung’ (Andresen & Denzler 1984<sup>2</sup>:412). One of the very few correct descriptions is given in Molland 1972<sup>3</sup>:86.

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<sup>1</sup> A clarifying example is given in the invitation to the International House–party at Interlaken, Sept. 2–12, 1938, arranged by the Oxford Group on the theme ‘Moral rearmament of the Nations’. Cf. ‘Oxford Group’ (The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church 1977<sup>2</sup>:1019), ‘Moralische Aufrüstung’ (Andresen & Denzler 1984<sup>2</sup>:412). One of the very few correct descriptions is given in Molland 1972<sup>3</sup>:86.



followed. These groups were founded by single individuals, who had personally met the Oxford Group in England, or read about some Group movement, trying to practise in their home countries what they understood as the principles of the Group movement. These new groups were independent of the Oxford Group, speaking of the necessity of a national conception of the Group movement in their respective countries, and, though inspired primarily by the Oxford Group, in function they often worked more in the revivalistic way of, for example, the Cambridge Group Movement. Especially in the literarily inspired Group work of this phase, Frank Buchman's strategy – often without his visions – was placed into varying national and confessional contexts. The development also varied widely between the different countries, depending, for instance, on the length of the actual revival groups phase.

The subsequent Oxford Group phase was characterized by the presence and work of an international Oxford Group team, leading to the dismantling of previously established groups or to a reconstruction of these groups into working teams in fellowship with the Oxford Group. Mostly due to the unusual length of the revival groups phase in Sweden, the influence on these groups of the simultaneous Oxford Group phase in the neighbouring Scandinavian countries established a dependence and a fellowship of that kind already towards the end of the revival groups phase.

In Denmark, the Oxford Group campaign did not inspire such a wide Church Group revivalism as it did in Norway. This was due to a different theological and spiritual climate, to the impressions made by independent, pre-Oxford Group revivalism on the Danish Church, and to the reactions against this revivalism from the Oxford Group, which resulted in a dismantling of this work and a more forceful thrust in the social direction, as well as a stronger launch of the programme for a moral rearmament than in Norway. While the Norwegian development had gone from an Oxford Group revival, earlier and stronger than in the other Scandinavian countries, to an integrated Church Group revivalism of some political and cultural importance to the post-war situation, the Danish development went from an independent Group revivalism by way of a short Oxford Group revival to a national rearmament on a broader scale than in the other Scandinavian countries, but with strong tensions between Church Group revivalism and Moral Re-Armament.

The Swedish development went from different forms of Group revivalism by way of a very short Oxford Group campaign for Moral Re-Armament into a social and personal work for spiritual preparedness, which emphasized the need for preparing oneself for the post-war situation rather than the need for a moral rearmament. The Oxford Group did not inspire such a broad Church Group revivalism as it did in Norway. A social work was built up, but not as extensively as in Denmark, and thus the tensions between Church Group revivalism and the social direction of the Oxford Group work were obvious, though not as strong as in Denmark. In comparison with the situations in Norway, Denmark, and Finland, the isolation of neutral Sweden meant much better possibilities for

public Oxford Group work, to a large extent in cooperation with the authorities. As in Norway, the cultural importance was obvious, but during the later war years, cultural leaders 'changed' out of the Oxford Group work as well.

In all the Scandinavian countries, the Oxford Group phase was interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War. However, the successive isolation phase was of different character in the different countries. The isolation was more partial in neutral Sweden than in occupied Norway or Denmark. From Sixten Ekstrand's study of the Oxford Group and Moral Re-Armament in Finland, it is clear that the early years of Group revivalism there show many similarities with Sweden, though developing at a slower pace, the first big house-party taking place as late as in January 1939 at Aulanko (Karlberg). Despite this slower pace of development, due to the fact that the World War reached Finland before any other Nordic country, the isolation phase began at an earlier date than in the other countries.

As the Anglo-American writers did not produce any 'Oxford' novels written from the inside, the 'Oxford' novel developed into a significant Scandinavian genre. The great Oxford Group writers in Scandinavia – Ronald Fangen, Sven Stolpe, Harry Blomberg, and Bertil Malmberg – had reflected seriously on art and the problems of writing long before their changing experiences. As they all left the Oxford Group during or after the World War, their Group experience was an important, but passing stage in their development. The new genre of special Oxford Group songs, introduced at the Danish Ollerup party at Easter 1936, functioned as an inspiration for the international Oxford Group work as well.

To the Oxford Group, the Scandinavian countries played an important part in reaching Germany: 'Von hier aus sollte unter Berücksichtigung der neuen politischen und weltanschaulichen Verhältnisse in Deutschland der Angriff der Gruppenmissionare auf das Reich langsam und vorsichtig vorgetragen werden.'<sup>2</sup> In Germany, however, the development followed a pattern of growing dissimilarities. A pre-preparatory phase of private parties for group friends ended where this study starts. A leading German group was formed at a house-party in Oxford in 1930. The information phase can hardly be separated from the revival groups phase. German Group revivalism was, from the very beginning, both linked to the Oxford Group and nationally adapted to the critical situation in the country. This was due much to Frank Buchman's old and deep personal interest in Germany and German affairs. The revival groups phase was succeeded by an Oxford Group phase, lacking the big, extrovert campaigns of this phase in Scandinavia, the Netherlands, or Switzerland, but with Frank Buchman himself taking command of the movement in 1933. Soon the political development necessitated a toning down of the Oxford stamp. This led to a phase of fundamental isolation, beginning already in 1937, when

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<sup>2</sup> Die Oxford-Gruppenbewegung 1942:18.

the *Deutsche Gruppe* officially was made totally independent of the international team. Towards the end of 1938 the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Seelsorge* was constituted, and in 1939 a clear line was drawn between the independent, social *Deutsche Gruppe* and the ecclesiastical *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, according to their differing tasks. In 1942, all groups were finally prohibited, though meetings in the spirit of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Seelsorge* were arranged as late as in 1944. The emphasis on 'frei' [independent] in the *Deutsche Gruppe* reveals a new kind of Group Independentism, unique in its un-revivalistic direction, open to National Socialism, and without direct connections to Moral Re-Armament, which was not launched in Germany until after the world war. The development had gone from a national Oxford Group revivalism to independent Group movements within or outside the Church.

We may conclude that our hypothesis has been confirmed – though with wide variations – by our study of the development in the Scandinavian countries, while it has been contradicted by the German development.

Our study has had the further aim of contributing to the theory of Church history by emphasizing both the importance and the limits of the human person in the history of the Christian Church. As elements of material, ideal, or structural character cannot be isolated from the concrete individuals (as in the political -isms of the 1930s), neither can they be reduced to matters of personal relations (as in the Oxford Group in the 1930s), but must always be regarded as involved in, and dependent on personal reactions and relations. Church history is the encounter and interaction of the Christian Church in its many historical variations with the real men and women of different ages, in different political, economical, and social contexts, including the ideas, forces, and structures generated or inspired by that encounter. This is confirmed by our study of the Oxford Group and Group revivalism as part of the Christian Church, in interaction with different Churches and denominations, and in the encounter with the human beings of a period limited in time.

## Appendix Nr. 1

### SCANDINAVIAN GROUP IN NEW YORK FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT (M.R.A. Archives 343, NLC)

- Axel Adlercreutz*, law student, Lund, nephew of Count Hugo Hamilton, head of the Swedish pavilion at New York World's Fair.
- Else Margrethe Alfsen*, daughter of Nicolai Alfsen, engineer in Oslo.
- Mrs. Gertrud Alfthan*, concert singer, Helsingfors.
- Howard Blake* of Stockholm, who, with his family, has been pioneering for Moral Re-Armament in Scandinavia during the past four years.
- Miss Annelene Bruhn*, teacher, Abenraa, member of the German minority in Denmark.
- Miss Inger Bugge*, daughter of Christian Bugge, engineer in Oslo.
- Miss Theodora Bugge*, Oslo.
- Baron Lars Carpelan*, editor of Svenska Pressen, Helsingfors.
- Bertil Edgardh*, student at Uppsala.
- Miss Gudrun Egebjerg*, special writer for Berlingske Tidende, Copenhagen.
- Miss Mary Gaddie*, Stockholm.
- Edward Goulding*, Stockholm.
- Mrs. Ella Grönroos*, interior decorator, Helsingfors.
- Birger Holm-Hansen*, inventor, engineer and business man, Oslo.
- Count Palle Holstein*, Copenhagen.
- Lauritz Johnson*, Norwegian state radio, Oslo.
- Mrs. Lauritz Johnson*, Oslo.
- Jens Carl Just*, business man, Copenhagen.
- Vilfred Kjær*, orchestra leader and composer, Copenhagen.
- Mrs. Vilfred Kjær*, Copenhagen.
- Wollert Krohn*, medical student, Oslo.
- Miss Karin Laurell*, teacher, Stockholm.
- Mrs. Mølle Lauritsen*, wife of business man, Oslo.
- Laurits Laustsen*, sawmill worker, Denmark.
- Miss Signe Lund*, daughter of manufacturer, Oslo.
- Sture Mattsson*, editor, Smålands Allehanda, Jönköping, Sweden.
- Mrs. Märta Molin*, doctor's wife, Karlstad, Sweden.
- Count Aage Moltke*, former Chief Danish border police, Tønder.
- John Morrison*, Stockholm.
- Per Mønsted*, president Students' Representative Council at University of Copenhagen, 1934–35, member of the Danish Government University Commission.
- Helge Nyström*, steel worker, Borlänge, Sweden.
- Miss Kerstin Olsson*, student nurse, Falun, Sweden.
- Mrs. Sigrid Olsen*, wife of engineer, Bergen, Norway.
- Miss Laura Paulsrud*, Oslo.
- Miss Krista Petersen*, Spentrup, Denmark.

*Willy Rentzmann*, sportsman, Copenhagen.

*Ernest Roos*, steel worker, Borlänge, Sweden.

*Mrs. Kaisu Snellman*, granddaughter of J. V. Snellman, founder of Finnish national culture, Helsingfors.

*Miss Birgitta Stenberg*, secretary, Stockholm.

*Dr. Sven Stolpe*, author and newspaper writer, Sweden.

*Mrs. Sven Stolpe*.

*Jens Tvede*, business man, Copenhagen.

*Yngvar Vold*, teacher, Bergen.

*Erkki Vuoristo*, executive in the Boy Scouts and a Finnish nationalist youth leader, Helsingfors.

*Niels Petty Wedege*, insurance man, Oslo.

*Conne Widen*, engineer, Bofors, Sweden.

## Appendix Nr. 2

### *FORTEGNELSE OVER OXFORDGRUPPENS MEDARBEJDERE VED SAMMENKOMSTERNE 11' OG 12' JANUAR 1935*

(Institut for kirkehistorie, København)

Barker Jean	Miss	Kentucky USA
Buchman Frank	Dr., Gruppens leder	USA
Crawford Julie	Miss	New York
Fangen Ronald	Forf	Oslo
Faure Roger	Arkitekt	Paris
Goulding Edward	Student	Oxford
Goulding	Mrs.	London
Holme Reginald	Student	Oxford
Jones Olive	Miss	
Lee Ella	Miss	Edinburgh
Machin Joyce	Miss	Oxford
Mackay Donald	Gruppeleder i East End,	London
Morris Elisabeth	Miss	USA
Murcott Hugh	Student	Oxford
Ramm Frederik	Redaktør af Morgenbladet	Oslo
Stearly Garrett	Søn af Biskop G.	New York
Wikborg Erling	Højesteretsadvokat	Oslo
Wishardt Sciff	Gruppeleder	New York
Wood, Georg	Gruppeleder	Aberdeen, Scotland

## Appendix Nr. 3

*Förteckning å deltagare i teammötet i Karlstad 3 – 5 mars 1939.*

Adlercreutz, Axel, jur.stud. Lund  
Aldén, Ragnar, Åmål  
Aldén, Signe, fru Åmål  
Abrahamsson, Ing-Mari frk. Åmål  
Appleyard, Margot, frk. England  
Andersson, Johan, folkskoll. Munkfors  
Andersson, Greta frk Årjäng  
Andersson, Olof Årjäng  
Andersson, Frits Årjäng  
Andersson, Lydia, fru Tretjärn  
Andersson, Adolf

Bentz, Margit, fru, Våxtorp  
Belfrage, Gösta, Stockholm  
Borchgrevink, Christoffer, Oslo  
Bugge, Sten, Oslo  
Bugge, Katarina, fru, Oslo  
Bugge, Inger, frk Oslo  
Bugge, Christian Oslo  
Blake, Howard, Djursholm  
Blake, Peggy, fru  
Blake, Alice, frk  
Bodemar, Gösta, Komminister, Lund  
Boysen, Eskil, Disponent, Göteborg  
Boysen, Blenda, fru Göteborg  
Brodersen, Paul, Stiftsprovst, Danm.  
Bruhn, Anne-Lene frk, Danmark  
Bernström, Knut, stud. Uppsala

Carlsson, Ruth, stud. Uppsala  
Croné, Majan, frk, Årjäng  
Clausen, Torkild, stud. Köpenhamn  
Cochran-Patrick, Kathleen, Skotland  
Cuff, Birgit, fru, England  
Carpeelan, Lasse, Red. Finland

Dahlén, Sven, Guldsmed, Åmål  
Dührkop, Joh. Konstnär, Danmark

Ellström, Jens, Folkskoll. Åmål  
Ekberg, Roland, Folkskoll. Karlskoga  
Ekberg, Greta Karlskoga  
Ekenstam, Bokhandlare, Nässjö  
Elofsson, Viola frk Åtorp

Franke, Karin, fru, Kil  
Frändberg, Elof, Ingeniör, Göteborg  
Fraenki, Sven, Lärov.adj. Kristinehamn  
Fries, Richard, Stockholm  
Feldin, Annie, frk. Arvika

Gummell, Anna, frk Kristinehamn  
Goulding, Edward, England  
Grimshaw, David England

Henninge, Dorrit, Lärarinna, Sthlm  
Hedberg, Rolf, Göteborg  
Hansen, Hans, Överstelöjtnant, Danmark  
Hellqvist, Sven, Folkskoll. Munkfors  
Holmgren, Frans, Kyrkoherde, Lungsund  
Hamrin, Yngve, Redaktör, Jönköping  
Helling, Olle, Ingeniör, Karlskoga  
Harbe, Daniel, Komminister, Hidingebro  
Hedin, Edit, Rektor, Göteborg  
Hägg, Alfons, Forshem  
Hemmer, Saga, Finland  
Herrlin, Anna, Finland

Jansson, Helge, Banarbetare, Borås  
Johansson, Hans, Konstnär, Stockholm  
Jacobsson, Sofia, frk, Göteborg  
Jansson, Stina, frk. Kristinehamn  
Jonsson, Direktör, Norrköping

Kullgren, Rakel, Lärov.adj. Jönköping  
Kjellberg, Olga, fru, Stockholm  
Kron, Signe, fru, Oslo  
Kron, Wollert, Med.stud. Norge  
Karlman, Nils, stud. Uppsala  
Koren, Elsa-Marie, frk. Oslo

Lindén, Fritz, Pastor, Åmål  
Löfcrantz, Vigo, Stockholm  
Linton, Sydney, England  
Lyth, Philip, Agronom, England  
Laurell, Karin, Frk. Stockholm  
Linders, Julia, frk Kristinehamn



Lindahl, Ragnar Svetsare, Karlskoga  
Ljungberg, Mimi, fru, Hälsingborg  
Lindroth, Professor, Göteborg  
Lindroth, fru, Göteborg  
Lundberg, Bertil, Sekr. Örebro  
Lindberg, Märta, frk Forshem  
Lövgren, Stig, Ing. Borås  
Lund, Signe, Frk. Norge  
Lundvall, Maja, Förest. Alingsås  
Lindqvist-Petersson, Anna Fru

Magnus, Jens, Norge  
Möller-Christensen, Grethe, frk. Säffle  
Månsson, Bert-Inga, Kontorist, Karlskoga  
Malmberg, Greta, Fru, Stockholm  
Malmberg, Bertil, Diktare, Stockholm  
Mosesson, Gunlög, frk. Stockholm  
Mönsted, Per, Cand.fil. Köpenhamn  
Mattsson, Sture, Red. Jönköping  
Morrison, John, Skotland  
Mila, Joel, Konstnär, Göteborg  
Malmgren, Börje, stud. Uppsala  
Macnicol, Roy, stud. Uppsala

Nyström, Martha, Fru, Säffle  
Nyström, Helge, järnverksarb. Borlänge

Olsson, Filip Ingeniör, Falun  
Olsson, Judith, fru, Falun  
Olsson, Kerstin, frk Falun  
Olsson, Lilly, Finland

Park, Rune, Stud, Kristinehamn  
Penell, Sigurd, Kontorist, Karlskoga  
Petersen, Rickard, Stud. Köpenhamn  
Pallin, Erik, Kyrkoherde, Rudskoga  
Prytz, Nina, fru, Oslo  
Papparigopoulo, Dimitri, Köpenhamn  
Petersen, Krista, Frk. Danmark

Quick, Bertil, Komminister, Karlskoga

Roos, Ernst, Borlänge  
Roos, Manne, Borlänge  
Ramm, Fredrik, Red. Oslo  
Räaf, Kerstin, frk. Stockholm  
Rangne, Ragnar, Stud.  
Ringner, Ingrid, Frk

Reinholdsson, David, Urmak. Årjäng

Salminen, Sally, Finland  
Storjohann, Aagot, Säffle  
Smith, Göran, Stockholm  
Stenbo, Erik, Folkskoll.  
Svedelius, Lise, Professorska  
Stenberg, Birgitta, Frk  
Stake, Jakob, Kyrkoherde, Holmedal  
Stolpe, Sven, Dr. Degerfors  
Stolpe, Karin, Fru Degerfors  
Skard, Öyvind, Lärare, Oslo  
Sciortino, Ian, Stud. Oxford  
Strang, Andrew, Skotland  
Svanegård, Aina, Frk.

Tengroth, Karl Erik, Notarie, Alingsås  
Termenius, Birgitta, Frk, Stockholm  
Tvede, Jens, Köpenhamn  
Tauson-Hassler, Anders, Uppsala

Widén, Conné, Ing. Karlskoga  
Wohlin, Margit, Fru  
Welin-Berger, Kamrer, Stockholm  
Welin-Berger, Sven, Stud. Stockholm  
Wikborg, Erling, Oslo  
Winkler, Andree, Frk. Djursholm  
Winroth, Karl Arvid, Stockholm  
Winroth, Arla, fru, Stockholm  
Wetterlind, Märta, Fru, Stockholm  
Wuoristo, Erkki, Ekonom, Finland  
Wanre, Ingrid, Frk. Hidingebro  
Winbladh, Anna, Fru, Falun  
Wollebaek, Aslaug, Frk, Oslo  
Westlund, Gösta, Stud. Uppsala  
Westerberg, Jan, Stud. Uppsala  
Wük-Hansen, Harald, Oslo  
Widén, Allan, Åtorp

Zandén, Margot, Frk. Forshem

Österlund, Herbert, Norrköping

## Appendix Nr. 4

### *Svenska laget (EPC)*

(The list is shown in its original, typewritten state, without its hand-written additions and deletions.)

#### *Stockholm*

Arbin Erik och Ölle  
Linton Karin o Sydney  
Carlsson Ruth  
Persson Laila  
Edgardh Bertil  
Tengroth Karl Erik  
Wohlin Sixten  
Larsson Elsa  
Göthberg Lennart  
Warodell Lennart  
Seger Olof och E.  
Bodemar Gösta och  
Dagny  
Ahlberg Martha  
Wohlin Margit  
Linnros Gust.  
Herthelius Gösta  
Welin-Bergers  
Ronnebäck Anna  
Olofsson Bertha  
Kullgren Joel och Lydia  
Wallenqvist Arvid  
Sundelin Gust  
Nygren Åke o Cajs M  
Zetterberg Åke och A-L  
Wermcrantz Ingrid  
Wiklund Dan m fru  
Kettners Richard o Nan  
Edenholm  
v Euler Beth  
Wetterlind Märta  
v Scürer Ruth  
Bergqvist Stina  
Kjellberg Olga  
Hagelin Nils  
Löwcrantz Wiggo

Rydgård Silas  
Sjögren Lennart  
Danielson Åke  
Tengsjö Inga  
Eklund Allan  
Thermenius Birgitta  
Edlund Lars  
Wiklund David  
Bröms Folke  
Gabrielsson Märta  
Bäck Sven Erik

#### *Östergötland*

Embring Ville o Mia  
Ydregård Anna Lisa

#### *Västergötland*

Nunstedt Torsten  
Johansson Britta  
Lindahl Karl  
Evers Ulla  
Hjordt Dagmar  
Gustafsson Sven  
Löfgren Stig och Ingeborg  
Grefberg Bertil

#### *Norrland*

Liliehök Sten o Kerstin  
Holmgren Valborg  
Mosesson Gunlög  
Strömstedt Anders  
Ljunggren Maj

Kullgren Gösta

#### *Dalarna*

Blomberg Harry  
Wetterfors Paul och Bengta  
Winbladh Anna  
Kjellenberg Erik o Edith  
Nyström Helge  
Ros Ernst  
Oskarsson Thure  
Nore o Ada

#### *Gävle*

Johansson Ruth  
Hellström Bertil

#### *Västerås*

Bergenfalk Axel  
Benzer Hedvig  
Blomdahl Gunnel

#### *Uppsala*

Malmgren Börje  
Robach Claes  
Svedelius Gullan  
Lyttekens Hampus  
Olsson Filip o Judith  
Elofsson Signe  
Lindström Harald o Inga Br  
Lindqvist Sigvard

Olsson Bertil  
Grimshaw David  
Ander Gunnar  
Boberg Gunnar  
Magnusson Karl Magnus

*Halland*

Benz Ebba  
Lorentzon Valdemar

*Skåne*

Petrén Erik  
Schlyter Herman  
Starfeldt Erik  
Blomqvist Per  
Bolin Svensson Svea  
Mårtensson Folke o Inga  
Helander Olle  
Ljungberg Georg

*Värmland*

Runestam Arvid  
Molin Märta o Moje  
Wiklund Hjalm o Valborg  
Tengblad Elov  
Malmeström Gunnar o  
Ruth  
Ernevi Harald  
Strandlund Filip  
Johansson Erland  
Fränki Sven  
Tauson-Hassler Anders  
Stolpe Sven o Karin  
Gumell Anna  
Jansson Stina  
Helling Olle o Svea  
Lindahl Ragnar  
Ekberg Roland  
Feldin Annie  
Olsson Rune  
Nanfheldt Kjell  
Reinholdsson David

Bröms Klas  
Stake Jacob  
Storjohann Aagot  
Schotte Gösta  
Holmgren Frans  
Gerdes Gustaf o Elsa

*Sörmland*

Sjöden Holger  
Månsson Bertinga  
Laurell Stina  
Yden Margit

*Småland*

Kullgren Rakel  
Mattsson Sture o Marg:a  
Hamrin Yngve  
Karlman Nils  
Thorsen Karl M o Gun  
Elmer Greta  
Rääf Kerstin  
Frykman Nils o Britta  
Bjurulf Hjalm  
Vitus Lars o Lydia  
Therner Sigbrit  
Filipsson David  
E[stborn] David

*Göteborg*

Lindroth Hjalm o Stina  
Manne Greta  
Wieselgren Gunnar  
Vestling Sten o Elin  
Stadler Stina  
Danielsson Rut  
Kroner Valdemar

## Appendix Nr. 5

*Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Seelsorge. (NLS, LKAS; Street addresses are omitted here)*

### I. Bezirksverantwortliche.

- 1) Dekan Haug in Herrenberg, Württemberg für Württemberg, Bayern und Ostmark.
- 2) Pfarrer Herbert Fuchs in Grötzingen bei Karlsruhe für Baden, Pfalz und Elsaß-Lothringen
- 3) Pfarrer Lic. Dr. Kurt Eylenstein in Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe, für Hessen
- 4) Pfarrer Gericke in Grüne bei Iserlohn (zur Zeit im Heeresdienst, deshalb vertreten durch Nr. 5) für Rheinland u. Westfalen
- 5) Pastor Heinemeyer in Firrel, Ostfriesland für Hannover, Oldenburg, Bremen
- 6) Pastor Cornils in Weddingstedt bei Heide für Schleswig-Holstein
- 7) Pastor Erwin Paehl in Zapel bei Schwerin für Mecklenburg
- 8) Kaufmann Adolf Scheu in Naunhof bei Leipzig, für Sachsen, prov. Sachen [sic], Schlesien, Thüringen, Sudetenland
- 9) Hauptmann Allwohn, Heereswaffenmeisterschule Berlin S.O.36 für Brandenburg, Pommern, Berlin

### II. Leiter örtlicher Arbeitskreise.

- 1) Pfarrer Hans Dopplinger, Gmunden/Oberdonau
- 2) Fabrikant Richard Stroh, Wien 114,
- 3) Amtsgerichtsrat Dr. Alo Münch, München
- 4) Frl. Elisabeth Nägelsbach, Nürnberg
- 5) Stadtpfarrer Fritz Bauer, Kempten, Allgäu
- 6) Stadtpfarrer Richard Fritz, Stuttgart N
- 7) Regierungs-Amtmann Paul Bausch, Kontal bei Stuttgart
- 8) Dekan Sautter, Ulm a. D.
- 9) Professor Dr. Adolf Köberle, Tübingen
- 10) Pfarrer Eichin, Hasel bei Schopfheim, Baden
- 11) Pfarrer Oscar Müller, Laufenburg, Baden
- 12) Pfarrer Dr. Otto Riecker, Heidelberg
- 13) Studienrat Fritz Risch, Speyer/Rhein
- 14) Dr. Fikentscher, Ludwigshafen/Rhein
- 15) Direktor Dipl. Ing. Alwin Schneevoigt
- 16) Dozent Dr. Paul Scharpff, Frankfurt a. M.
- 17) Pastor Hans Bruns, Marburg/Lahn
- 18) Diakon Alfred Fild, Köln
- 19) Pfarrer Gerhard Kinzel, Leverkusen-Wiesdorf
- 20) Pfarrer Klatt, Hannover
- 21) Pastor Hermann Kruse, Bremen-Hemelingen

- 22) Pastor Erich Wahl, Dortmund-Wellinghofen
- 23) Pastor Hermann Klemeyer, Bad Gandersheim/Harz
- 24) Pfarrer Otto Laackmann, Hamburg-Gr. Flottbeck
- 25) Pfarrer Fritz von der Heydt, Potsdam
- 26) Superintendent Dr. Paul Lutze, Könnern/Saale
- 27) Wirtschaftsprüfer Hermann Nicklaus, Dresden
- 28) Prof. Julius Bach, Chemnitz
- 29) Oberingenieur Otto Zimmermann, Pölitz bei Stettin
- 30) Pfarrer Fritz Jaeckel, Klein Schönfeld
- 31) Prediger Herbert Schnädelbach, Breslau

## 1. Unprinted Sources

### *Interviews*

with Anders Frostenson

### *Archives*

- Berlin BERLIN DOCUMENT CENTER (BDC)  
Copy of Leitheft Die Oxford- oder Gruppenbewegung  
EVANGELISCHES ZENTRALARCHIV IN BERLIN  
(EZA)  
Bestand 1/A, 1/C, 5
- Bielefeld LANDESKIRCHLICHES ARCHIV BIELEFELD  
(Evangelische Kirche von Westfalen)  
Best. 5,1
- Bonn With PIERRE SPOERRI  
'Frank Buchman und die Deutschen'. 1985, Copies and  
invitations
- Caux-sur-Montreux CAUX ARCHIVES  
Various Oxford Group manuscripts, duplicated material,  
etc,  
Copy of Mestral 1939
- Gävle ERIK PETRÉN COLLECTION (EPC)  
Letters, manuscripts, duplicates, copies, and invitations
- Göteborg GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITETSBIBLIOTEK (GUB)  
Letters to Alf Ahlberg (H 1991:3),  
Barbro Alving (A 96),  
Elis Malmeström (H 1965:57),  
Okat.samling O. Nystedt  
LANDSARKIVET I GÖTEBORG (GLA)  
Gustaf och Saga Wallis arkiv (A 600)  
WITH THE AUTHOR:  
Copy of Vock 1989,  
Duplicated material,  
Letters to the author from Asta Hee Andersen, Arthur  
Enander, Bror Jonzon, Bengt Sundkler
- Helsinki (Helsingfors) RIKSARKIVET (RAH)  
Elis Gulins samling,  
Aleksi Lehtonens samling
- Karlstad ESTATE OF MONICA HASSLER (Runestam Coll.II)  
Letters to A. Runestam
- Koblenz BUNDESARCHIV  
Documents to the report Die Oxfordgruppenbewegung

- (R 43 II/151)
- København DET KONGELIGE BIBLIOTEK (KBK)  
 Ny Kgl. Samling 3736-4<sup>o</sup> (Letters to H. O. Lange)  
 INSTITUT FOR KIRKEHISTORIE  
 Duplicated material  
 RIGSARKIVET (RAK)  
 Pa.5034 (Knud Hee Andersen),  
 Pa.5108 (Aage Bentzen),  
 Pa.6073 (Jens Skouboe Nørregaard),  
 Pa.6480 (Henry Ussing),  
 Pa.6922 (Halfdan Høgsbro),  
 Pa.6997 (Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard)
- London LAMBETH PALACE LIBRARY (LPL)  
 Bell Papers
- Lund LUNDS UNIVERSITETS KYRKOHISTORISKA  
 ARKIV (LUKA)  
 Ehrenström Papers  
 LUNDS UNIVERSITETS BIBLIOTEK (LUB)  
 Okat.saml. G. Aulén,  
 Letters to E. M. Billing,  
 E. C. Newman,  
 E. L. Norlind
- New York City, N.Y. BURKE LIBRARY (Union Theological Seminary)  
 Copy of Harris 1934
- Oslo MENIGHETSFAKULTETETS BIBLIOTEK  
 Copy of Isene 1990  
 RIKSARKIVET (RAO)  
 Pa.320 (Eivind Berggrav)  
 UNIVERSITETS BIBLIOTEKET I OSLO (UBO)  
 Copy of Johnson 1971  
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 R. Fangen,  
 S. Fangen,  
 E. Skard,  
 V. Quisling,  
 [copies of letter from R. Fangen]
- Oxford BODLEIAN LIBRARY  
 Copy of Belden 1976  
 ESTATE OF GARTH LEAN  
 Moni von Cramon: Experiences with Frank, Ms. of Ruth  
 Bennet,  
 Copy of letter from Howard Blake,  
 Interviews with Mrs. Rosi Haver, the daughter of Mrs.  
 Moni (Anneliese) von Cramon
- Sigtuna SIGTUNASTIFTELSENS BIBLIOTEK (SIB)  
 Manfred Björkquists arkiv
- Skövde With JAN NUNSTEDT  
 The scrap-book of Thorsten Nunstedt



Stockholm	ARBETARRÖRELSENS ARKIV Arthur Engbergs familjearkiv KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET (KB) Bertil Malmbergs papper, Vilhelm Mobergs papper RIKSARKIVET (RA) UD HP 20, 310, Sven Hedins arkiv ESTATE OF DAVID WIKLUND David Wiklund Collection (DWC): manuscripts, copies of letters VILLA ALNÄS' ARKIV Minutes, various Oxford Group manuscripts, duplicated material, printed invitations, etc.
Stuttgart	LANDESKIRCHLICHES ARCHIV STUTTGART (LKAS) Akten des Württembergischen Oberkirchenrats, Nachlaß Hans Stroh (and Walter Helmes; NLS)
Tarporley (Chesh.)	THE OXFORD GROUP AND MORAL RE- ARMAMENT ARCHIVES AT TIRLEY GARTH (Tirley) Morris Martin Manuscripts, Various Oxford Group manuscripts, duplicated material, etc.
Turku (Åbo)	ÅBO AKADEMIS BIBLIOTEK (ÅAB) Letters to Max von Bonsdorff, Jarl Hemmer, Saga Hemmer
Uppsala	LANDSARKIVET I UPPSALA (ULA) Erling Eidems arkiv (EEA) UPPSALA UNIVERSITETSbibliOTEK (UUB) Okat. saml. H. Blomberg, Okat. saml. Runestam (Staffan Runestam), Okat. saml. Söderblom, Letters to Tor Andræ, Harry Blomberg With STAFFAN RUNESTAM (Runestam Coll.I) Letters to A. Runestam
Vänersborg	ESTATE OF OSCAR HEDLUND Letters to Hjalmar Holmquist
Västerås	VÄSTERÅS' DOMKAPITELS ARKIV (VDA) Biskop John Cullbergs brevväxling
Visby	LANDSARKIVET I VISBY Biskopsämbetets arkiv
Washington, D.C.	NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (NLC) M.R.A. Archives
Zürich	ZENTRALBIBLIOTHEK ZÜRICH (ZZ) Nachlaß Emil Brunner

## 2. Duplicated Material

'Liebe Freunde!' Okarben 1933, June 2, signed by J. Ferdinand Laun

over Deltagerne i Sammenkomsten med Oxfordgruppens ledere paa Sct. Annæ Plads 3, FREDAG AFTEN den 11' Jan. 1935

Fortegnelse over Oxfordgruppens Medarbejdere ved Sammenkomsterne 11' og 12' Januar 1935

Speeches at a luncheon given by Dr. Eduard Benes [...] and members of the Oxford Group International Team at the Hotel des Bergues, Geneva on September 23rd. 1935' (The Oxford Group, North London)

Hans-Martin Gericke: Bericht über die Pfarrer-Rüstzeit der Gruppen-Bewegung auf der Westerburg, 4.-9. Mai 1936

Westerburger Zeugnisse. Stimmen deutscher Pfarrer aus der Gruppenbewegung. July, 1936

Deltagare i nordiskt ekumeniskt möte i Sigtuna 1936

Edvard Jørstad to 'Kjære kollega' 1936, Oct. 2

Till Oxford-kamraterna i Sverige 'Kära vänner!' Karlstad 1936, Dec. 10, signed by Harry Blomberg, Filip Olsson, Elov Tengblad

Fredrik Ramm to 'Kjære venn' [several letters], 1936-1941

P. M. rörande programmet för Nordiska Studentmötet i Lund den 6-11 juli 1937

Einige grundsätzliche Gedanken der Deutschen Gruppe, signed 1937, Oct. 26, by J. Graf Bentinck

Estonian broadcast 1938, July 28

F. Laun to 'Liebe Freunde!' 1938, Aug. 11

'Liebe Freunde!', Frankfurt (Main) 1938, Oct. 15, signed by Adolf Allwohn, Arno Ehrhardt, Ferdi Laun, Otto Riecker

Fredrik Ramm to [friends in Sweden] 1938, Dec. 5

Rundschreiben! [1939, Feb.], signed by Helmes, Scheu

Mitteilung. Heidelberg 1939, Feb. 2, signed by J. Bentinck, W. Helmes, Adolf Scheu, J. F. Laun, Adolf Allwohn, Otto Riecker

'Käre vän. Visbymötet blev en vändpunkt [...] ett möte i Karlstad den 3-5 nästkommande mars', signed by Howard och Peggy Blake, Sven och Karin Stolpe, John Morrison, Wally Landergren, Folke Hellqvist, Märta och Moje Molin, Isa och Elov Tengblad

Förteckning å deltagare i teammötet i Karlstad 3–5 mars 1939

'Käre vän!' [Karlstad 1939, March 7], signed by Elov och Isa Tengblad and eight other persons

Vänd Strömmen [...] 'Kära vänner o. kamrater' Den 1:a april 1939, signed by Vigo Löfcrantz, Kerstin Rääf, Andrew Strang, Sydney Linton

Yrkesteam [Gothenburg 1939]

Konfidentiellt. UNDERSÅKER Nordisk samling för moralisk upprustning. [1939]

Konfidentiellt. UNDERSÅKER II. [1939]

The new type of man. Moral Re-armament through Education. Undersaker, Easter 1939

'Kära vän!' Stockholm den 20. maj 1939

Nysetra sommeren 1939

P. M. Ljungskile I [1939]

Prolegomena 1. Ljungskile, Sweden. 22nd June, 1939.

Konfidentiellt. Får ej tryckas. P. M. Ljungskile II [1939]

Vänd Strömmen [...] 'Käre vän!' Stockholm den 25 juli 1939, signed by Sven Fraenki, Nils Karlman, David Grimshaw

Vänd Strömmen [...] Den 25.8.1939. 'Kära vänner!', signed by Olof Seger, Anders Tauson-Hassler, Philip Lyth, Kerstin Rääf, Nils Karlman

Hurdals Verk 15–25/9 1939, signed by Sten Bugge, Edward Goulding, Erling Wikborg

'Kära Vän! Hurdals Verk den 25/9 1939', signed by Karin Laurell, Howard Blake, Margareta Ödquist

Moral Re-armament in Scandinavia since the outbreak of war

Lund den 9/10 1939. 'Kära vänner!', signed by Axel Adlercreutz, Olle Gnosselius, Erik Petré, Bengt Ödquist

Jönköping den 10 oktober 1939. 'Kära vänner!', signed by Hjalle Bjurulf, Olle Helander, and eight other persons

'Käre vänner! Genom dem, som voro i Hurdal' [Oct., 1939], signed by Dagny och Gösta Bodemar, Thomas Edhe, Bengt Hägglund, Elsa Nelson, Mårten Werner

*Studentappellen*. [1939], signed by Axel Adlercreutz, Olle Gnosselius, Erik Petré, Bengt Ödquist

Till Sveriges kvinnor [1939], signed by 33 women (Hildur Alvé, Anna Blomberg, Elsa Beskow, Pauline Brunius, etc.)

'Käre Vän! Lördagen den 4 och söndagen den 5 november anordnas en weekend-sammankomst i Säffle', signed by Aagot Storjohann, Elov Tengblad, Åke Sahlin

Lund 10/12 1939. 'Käre vän!', signed by Svea Bohlin-Svensson, Rut Schlyter

- Stockholm den 14 december 1939. 'Kära Vän!', signed by Karin Laurell, Margit Wohlin, Kerstin Rääf
- Vänd Strömmen [...] Den 16/12 1939. 'Kära', signed by Filip Olsson, Kerstin Rääf, Sture Mattsson, Philip Lyth
- Vänd Strömmen [...] Den 19. 1. 40. 'Kära vänner landet runt,', signed by Nils Hagelin, Karin Laurell, Kerstin Rääf, Margit Wohlin
- Stockholm den 23. 2. 1940. 'Kära Vänner', signed by Erik Arbin and Åke Zetterberg
- 'Kära Kamrat!' Karlstad den 5 mars 1940, signed by Elov Tengblad, Hjalmar Wiklund, Sven Fraenki, Folke Mårtensson, and Karin Laurell
- Översättning av norskt teambrev. 'Kära vän!', Oslo den 15 feburari 1940, signed by Astri Boehlke, Kathrine Bugge, Cathrine Holter, Signe Krohn, Nina Prytz, Asny Stoltenberg, Aslaug Wollebæk, contrasigned Stockholm och Karlstad den 18 mars 1940, by Olga Kjellberg and Karin Laurell
- 'Mitt i denna allvarstid får Sveriges lärarkår plötsligt fritt från sitt arbete tre veckor i mars [...]', signed by Elov Tengblad, Sven Frænki, Hjalmar Wiklund, Karin Laurell
- Blasieholmmsg. 3 'Kära vän!', signed by Karin Laurell, Laila Persson, Kerstin Rääf
- Blasieholmsgatan 3 [...] Den 5 april 1940. 'Världsfronten', signed by Karin Laurell, Kerstin Rääf, Anders Tauson-Hassler
- Stockholm den 15. 4. 1940 '[...] Vi samlas därför till nattvardsgång i Stefanskyrkan [...]', signed by Erik Arbin, Robert Lilja, Kerstin Rääf, Margit Wohlin
- Vänd Strömmen [...] 'Den 26 april 1940. Kära vänner,'
- Rundskrivelse till Pastorsämbeten, frikyrkosamfund, sociala institutioner m.fl., signed Göteborg den 18 juli 1940, by J. Julén, Hjalmar Lindroth, Elsa Thilander
- Upplysningar och instruktion.* , signed J. Julén, Hjalmar Lindroth, Elsa Tilander
- Det andliga hemvärdet i Göteborg.*
- Stockholm den 9 september 1940. 'Käre vän!', signed by Albin Arvidsson, Bertil Grefberg, Nils Hagelin, Sven Wetterberg, Erik Carlsson, Philip Lyth, Gustav Sundelin, Clas af Ugglas
- Historiens största revolution, varigenom Kristi kors skall förvandla världen, inkallar människor till tjänst i dag. Stockholmsveckan 6–13 okt. 1940
- A G S [...] Rundschreiben Nr. 1 Den 10. November 1940, signed by Arno Ehrhardt, Theo Haug, Adolf Scheu
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- A G S [...] Rundschreiben Nr. 2. Naunhof bei Leipzig 1940, Dec. 8, signed by Arno Ehrhardt, Theo Haug, Adolf Scheu
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KONFIDENTIELLT. 'I Sverige nuvarande läge' [undated and unsigned]

Stockholm den 29 mars 1941. 'Käre vän', signed by Inbjudarna

Första P. M. för påsken 1941, signed by Ruth Carlsson, Bertil Edgardh, Lennart Göthberg, Sten Lilliehöök, Börje Malmgren, Gunlög Mosesson, Birgitta Olsson, Erik Petrén, Kerstin Rääf, Karl-Erik Tengroth

Andra P. M. för påsken 1941

Ungdomskonferens i Sigtuna [1941], signed by Lennart Göthberg, Bertil Edgardh, Sten Lilliehöök, Kerstin Rääf, Ruth Carlson, Anders Tauson-Hassler, Birgitta Thermaenius, Gunlög Mosesson, Börje Malmgren

Konferensen i Sigtuna 7–14 april 1941. Rapport från universitets- och högskolegruppen, signed by Olof Carlgren, Åke Danielson, Hampus Lyttkens, Karin Moberger, Gunlög Mosesson, Marianne Rising, Silas Rydgård, Gunnar Wieselgren

Konfidentiellt. Den 3 maj 1941 Sverige-Finland

Vänd Strömmen [...] Den 9 maj 1941 'Kära vän!', signed by Gösta Kullgren, Assar Olsson, Laila Persson, Kerstin Rääf, Olof Seger

'Hej kära vänner!' 1941, July 9, signed by Erik Carlsson, Erik Petrén, Elsa Larsson, Gunnar Wieselgren

Riktlinjer för: Skördefrämjandet – ungdomens arbetsberedskap –

*Förslag till resolution.* 'Vid överläggningar torsdagen den 27 november 1941...'

P. M. angående vissa riktlinjer för: "Sveriges ungdomsberedskap" [1941]

P. M. till sammanträde med ungdomens riksorganisationer m.fl. rörande bildandet av ett samarbetsorgan för effektivt utnyttjande av ungdomens arbetsvilja till landets och folkets bästa [1941]

Stockholm den 4 december 1941. Härmed bedja vi få inbuda Eder till en samling, *tisdagen den 9 december 1941 kl.19,30 ...*

Vänd Strömmen [...] Torsdagen den 29. 1. 42. 'Kära vän!', signed by Olof Seger, Laila Persson, Kerstin Rääf, Anders Tauson-Hassler

Stockholm den 31 jan. 1942, signed by Harry Björk, Åke Danielson, Lennart Göthberg, May Lindhé, Oscar v. Malmborg, Silas Rydgård, Lennart Sjögren, Inga Tyvall

Vänd Strömmen [...] Torsdagen den 12. 3. 1942 'Kära vän!', signed by Olof Seger, Laila Persson, Elsa Larsson, Anders Tauson-Hassler

P. M. för påsken i Stockholm Tisdagen den 24 mars 1942

P. M. II. Påksamlingen i Stockholm. 1942, March 28

'Kära Vän!' 1942, Apr. 21, signed by Signe och Bertil Grefberg, Elin och Sten Westling, Kerstin Börjeson

Vänd Strömmen [...] Måndagen den 27. 4. 1942 'Kära vän!', signed by Joel Kullgren, Laila Persson, Kerstin Rääf, Olof Seger, Anders Tauson-Hassler

Erfarenheter från studiesamarbete praktiserat vid Stockholms Högskola v. t. 1942, signed by Ingrid Carlsson, Barbro Gillmar, Måns Grundström, Thore Grönqvist, Olov Höлке, Sture Jacobson, Gunnar Larsson, Ove Möller, Gunnar Nilsson, Sven Nyman, Silas Rydgård, Inga Tyvall

Stockholm den 15 juni 1942. 'Kära vän!', signed by Erik Arbin, Olof Seger, Åke Zetterberg

Strängnäs, juni, 1942 'Kära vän!', signed by Erik Arbin, Gösta Bodemar, Ernst Haking, Gösta Herthelius, Joel Kullgren, Elis Malmeström, Bertha Olofsson, Daniel Wiklund, Åke Zetterberg

P. M. angående Strängnäs konferensen

'Vi, några lärare och studenter [...]', signed by Sven Hallbäck, Gunnar Wieselgren (Gothenburg), Erik Petrén (Lund), Börje Malmgren, Gunhild Svedelius, Hampus Lyttkens (Uppsala), Åke Danielson, Silas Rydgård, Inga Tyvall resp. Karl Welin-Berger and Harry Björk, Henrik Edenholm (Stockholm)

Uppsala den 25 september 1942 'Kära vän!', signed by Judit o. Filip Olsson, Bertil Olsson, Martin Ahlström

Vänd Strömmen [...] Stockholm den 5 december 1942. 'Kära Vän!' signed by Annie Feldin, Gustaf Linnros, Laila Persson, Olof Seger

Adr. Persson [...] Stockholm den 28 december 1942. 'Kära vän! Välkommen till Viggbyholm den 2-6 Januari!'

*Landsförbundet för arbetslöshetens bekämpande – L A B – Stockholm. Verksamhetsberättelse för tiden 4/10 1941 – 31/12 1942*

Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Seelsorge [...] Herrenberg, 13. 1. 43. 'Den verantwortlichen Mitarbeitern und Freunden', signed by Theo Haug, Adolf Scheu

(Konfidentiellt!) 14. 1. 43 [...] signed by Karin, Peter och Sydney Linton

Evangelische Frauenhilfe für Württ. '[...] eine seelsorgerliche Rüstzeit für Pfarrfrauen und Pfarrbräute', 1943, Jan. 18, signed by Dekan Haug, Gräfin I. Degenfeld, G. Thomä

Vänd Strömmen [...] Stockholm den 21. 1. 43. 'Kära vän!', signed by Annie Feldin, Bertil Edgardh

Borås den 21/3 1943 'Kära vän,', signed by Stig och Ingeborg Löfgren, and 12 other persons

Mullsjö den 26 mars 1943. 'Kära vän!', signed by Sven Fraenki, Rakel Kullgren, Sten Westling, Sigbritt Therner

Umeå i maj 1943. 'Kära kamrat! Visionen om en större framstöt i Norrland [...]', signed by Emil Lagerkvist, Therese Niemelä, Signe Lagergren, Harald Lundgren

Stockholm i juni 1943. 'Kära Lagkamrat!', signed by Annie, Laila Teodorus, Sydney, Pontus, Anders

Rundskrivelse till Pastorsämbeten, frikyrkosamfund, sociala institutioner m.fl. [...] Göteborg den 18 juli 1943, signed by J. Julén, Hjalmar Lindroth, Elsa Tilander

Upplysningar och instruktion [signed by the same persons]

Vänd Strömmen [...] Lycksele den 21 juli 1943. 'Kära Vän!', signed by Astrid Berg, Annie Feldin, Olof Seger

Göteborg den 20 sept. 1943. 'Kära vänner,' signed by Petrus Envall, Bertil och Signe Grefberg, and nine other persons

Det andliga hemvärdet i Göteborg

'Ett Gott Nytt År på Guds Stridsfront', signed Vänd Strömmen den 29/12-43, by Erik och Öllegård Arbin, Gösta och Dagny Bodemar, Annie Feldin, Joel och Lydia Kullgren, Karin och Sydney Linton, Carin Loftman, Laila Persson, Kerstin Rääf, Olof och Elinor Seger, Karl Welin-Berger, David Wiklund, Margit Wohlin, Åke och Ann-Louise Zetterberg

Vänd Strömmen [...] Fredagen den 25 februari 1944. 'Kära Vän!', signed by Kerstin Rääf, Laila Persson, Olof Seger, Aggan Zetterholm, Ingrid Settervik, Gunnel Törnblom, Olle Bäck

Sammankomsten den 24 mars 1944 kring Sveriges uppgifter efter kriget

'Konfidentiellt i högsta grad!' 1944, May 19 [signed by twenty-six persons]

'Kära vän!', Lidnäs 1944, June 15, signed by Gun Almsäter, Kjell Nanfeldt, Inga-Lisa Westin

'Kära vän!', Stockholm 1944, June 21, signed by Sydney Linton, Laila Persson, Herman Schlyter, Silas Rydgård, Olof Seger, Åke Zetterberg

'Kära Vän!', Lund 1944, June 21, signed by Elisabeth Adlercreutz, Signe Gometz, Inger och Olle Gnospelius, Axel Fors, Per Olsson, Sven Richardsson, Ingrid Ryderberg, Rut och Herman Schlyter

Norge-brev, signed by Märta Wetterlind, Laila Persson, Gjerulf Pedersen, Silas Rydgård, Olof Seger

Göteborg den 10/9 1944 Till Andrew Strangs vänner i Sverige, signed by Agnes Dawson, Inger Rhedin, Elof Frändberg, Stina Stadler, Maja Frändberg, Sten Westling

'Till alla deltagare i Lundakonferensen!' Stockholm 1944, Nov. 3

'Kjære venner!' Uppsala, Gotttröra, Stockholm 1944, Dec. 12

'Kära vän!' Stockholm 1944, Dec. 21

Personligt! Stockholm 1945, Feb. 13, signed by Silas Rydgård, Kerstin Rääf, David Wiklund

Vänd Strömmen [...] 'Kära vän!' Stockholm 1945, Feb. 23, signed by Ingeborg och Stig Löfgren, Laila Persson, Karl Welin-Berger

'Kära vän!' Stockholm 1945, Feb. 23, signed by Greta och Helmer Eneberg and 10 further persons

Malmö och Lund den 13 mars 1945. 'Väl mött allesammans i Skånelaget!', signed by Richard Cedergren, Einar Magnusson, Annie och Erik Petrén, Rut och Herman Schlyter

P. M. för påsksamlingen i Malmö 1945

'Kära vänner i Skåne och Blekinge!' Lund och Malmö 1945, Apr. 21, signed by Richard Cedergren, Einar Magnusson, Per Olsson, Annie Petré, Herman Schlyter, Eva Steiner

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Karlstad den 15. 9. 1945 'Kära Vänner!', signed by Elov o. Isa Tengblad, Hjalmar o. Valborg Wiklund, Börje Malmgren, Per Olsson

'Kära vän!' 1945, Nov. 10 from Laila Persson

Sydney Linton: Ett sätt att läsa Bibeln [undated]

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Major, Svend: Et kristent samfunnsbilde

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1940 Falun
- Inbjudan till konferens för Moralisk Upprustning genom uppfostran i Hem och Skola  
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1939
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1940
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1941
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1941
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1942
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## Abbreviations

ÅAB	Åbo Akademis bibliotek
AB	Aftonbladet
ABS	Andliga Befolkningsskyddet
AGS	Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Seelsorge
Alnäs	Villa Alnäs' arkiv (Stockholm)
BA	Berlingske Aftenavis
BDC	Berlin Document Center
BLM	Bonniers Litterära Magasin
BeT	Berlingske Tidende
CICCU	Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union
DBL	Dansk Biografisk Leksikon
DN	Dagens Nyheter
Dupl.	Duplicated material
DWC	David Wiklund Collection
EEA	Erling Eidems arkiv
EFS	Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen
EPC	Erik Petré Collection
EZA	Evangelisches Zentralarchiv
FCCF	First Century Christian Fellowship
GLA	Landsarkivet i Göteborg
GP	Göteborgs-Posten
GST	Göteborgs Stifts-Tidning
GUB	Göteborgs Universitetsbibliotek
JulhS	Julhälsningar till församlingarna från präster i Skara stift
JP	Jönköpings-Posten
KÅ	Kyrkohistorisk årsskrift
KB	Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm
KBK	Det Kongelige Bibliotek, København
KD	Kristeligt Dagblad
KFUM	Kristliga föreningen av unga män/Kristlig Forening af ?
KG	Kristen Gemenskap
KiA	Kirche im Angriff
KoK	Kirke og kultur
L.A.B.	Landsforeningen til Arbejdsløshedens Bekæmpelse
LAB	Landsförbundet för arbetslöshetens bekämpande
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
LK	Luthersk Kirketidende
LKA	Landeskirchliches Archiv
LTV	Länstidningen i Vänersborg. Från Oxfordgruppens front
LUB	Lunds Universitetsbibliotek
LUKA	Lunds Universitets Kyrkohistoriska Arkiv

MRA	Moral Re-Armament
NDA	Nya Dagligt Allehanda
NLC	National Library of Congress
NLS	Nachlaß Hans Stroh
Pa	Privatarkiv
PrB	Præsteforeningens Blad
RA	Riksarkivet, Stockholm
RAH	Riksarkivet, Helsinki (Helsingfors)
RAK	Rigsarkivet, København
RAO	Riksarkivet, Oslo
SD	Sicherheits-Dienst
SDS	Sydsvenska Dagbladet
SF	Svensk Filmindustri
SIB	Sigtunastiftelsens bibliotek
SKÅ	Svenska Kyrkans Årsbok
SKDB	Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag
SocD	Social-Demokraten
SOU	Statens Offentliga Utredningar
STK	Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift
StTD	Stockholms-Tidningen – Stockholms Dagblad
SvD	Svenska Dagbladet
SvM	Svenska Morgonbladet
Tirley	The Oxford Group and Moral Re-armament Archives at Tirley Garth
TT	Tidens Tegn
TTK	Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke
UBO	Universitetsbiblioteket i Oslo
ULA	Landsarkivet i Uppsala
UUB	Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek
VDA	Västerås Domkapitels arkiv
VJ	Vecko-Journalen
VL	Vår Lösen
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
ZZ	Zentralbibliothek Zürich

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