

# "OXFORD GROUP" IN CONFERENCE

## Public Confession the First Principle

### CRITICS SAY IT WRECKS HOMES

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

London, Saturday.

ONE of the strangest conferences ever held even in Oxford, that home of curious gatherings, is now sitting in the beautiful hall of Rhodes's College, Oriel.

It is a meeting of the Buchmanites, or "Life Changers," or "Oxford Group," that weird religious movement started by the American clergyman, Dr. Frank Buchman.

### MOVEMENT FLOURISHING IN SOUTH AFRICA

The key to this new creed, which has had a remarkable success in America, has a devoted following at Oxford, and is reported to include among its most enthusiastic devotees some South African Rhodes Scholars, is confession.

Its members have four standards: Purity, Honesty, Unselfishness and Love.

Every day members of the group meet to have quiet talks, listening-in to divine messages and sharing their experiences and exaltations with other members.

This sharing apparently consists of publicly revealing sins and peccadilloes, even those of the most trivial character.

The Oxford conference includes delegates from 27 countries, among them being doctors, dentists, businessmen, clergymen, grocers, and unemployed miners.

Among the most active leaders are Canon Grensted, the Oriel Professor of Philosophy; Brigadier Forster, who commands the 13th Infantry Brigade; Mr. Cuthbert Cox, the Headmaster of Berkhamsted; Sir Lynden Macassey, the leader of the Parliamentary Bar; and Vice-Admiral Drury-Lowe.

#### "Hearty Middle-Class"

Women predominate and the atmosphere is "hearty middle-class." They all like to call one another by their Christian names, and the movement's critics call it "silk hat religion."

The Buchmanites seem particularly proud of the progress they are making in South Africa.

One of their proudest achievements was the conversion *en masse* of "The Mugs," a group of boys at a New York

school who had hitherto devoted their youthful ardour to high jinks, beer-drinking and late hours.

There is no doubt about the variety of the experiences being told in Oxford this week.

One American detailed what had been done in South Africa.

A small man in the early forties stated that he had come from New Zealand to Oxford solely for the purpose of attending the conference.

One enthusiast is going to Palestine to try to make peace between the Jews and the Arabs.

#### Gave All to the Poor

One Warwickshire clergyman stated that he had sold all he had and given the proceeds to the poor.

Stories are also being told about thousands of pounds being paid into the national Exchequer by tax-evaders; of husbands and wives who have patched up their differences; of cars handed over by wealthy members to poorer brethren—all the direct result of the movement.

There is, however, a curious absence of hysteria at these Oxford meetings, and Billy Sunday, Amy McPherson or even Moody and Sankey would find the friendly, restrained atmosphere uncongenial.

The only signs of hysteria in connection with the conference come from various Oxford men who are furious that Dr. Buchman should have associated the University with the movement through his description of it as "the Oxford Group movement."

The critics of the movement also allege numerous instances of homes being broken up and friendships wrecked through "indiscreet public confessions."



THE REV. DR. FRANK BUCHMAN,  
Of Pennsylvania, U.S.A., founder  
of the Oxford Group. He visited  
South Africa in 1929.