

"I have no name:  
I am but two days old."



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No. 1

DORKING

January 1968

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MINDING OUR OWN BUSINESS

At Preparative Meeting on Sunday 7th January we accepted the suggestions for collections during 1968. These will be shown on the notice board. We also minuted our Human Rights Day Vigil, the marriage of Callum Iain MacLeod and Claire Margaret Phillips, and thanks to those who organised our Christmas Party on Saturday 6th January.

\* Fred Phillips had prepared a report of our discussions on the  
\* pamphlet 'In Essentials Unity', a study of Friends and the ecumenical  
\* movement. It was decided that the report should be reproduced in this  
\* newsletter so that all members could read it. The report will be discussed  
again at February Preparative Meeting. It will then be sent to March Monthly Meeting, when the reports from Preparative Meetings will be considered. If you will not be at next Preparative Meeting and wish to make any comment on the report please let me have it before 4th February.

Margaret Kohler told us she had thought for some time that it might be a good idea for the Meeting to have its own news letter. Freda Barker was willing to be the Editor and the duplicating could be arranged. The suggestion was warmly welcomed by Friends and it was agreed that the cost should come out of Preparative Meeting funds; anyone who wished could give Norah Webb a small extra contribution but no collector would be appointed.

Jack and Kathleen Jannaway are our representatives to January MM at Ifield.

MARGARET HOPPER

\* Below is the report prepared for inclusion in the discussion at March  
\* Monthly Meeting. Any comments to Margaret Hopper by 4th February please.

CHURCH UNITY - THE QUAKER APPROACH

Report of Dorking Preparative Meeting

The pamphlet 'In Essentials Unity' has been the subject of three sessions of our study group, and this report is made after consideration of the matter in Preparative Meeting.

In our view the present difficulty facing the Society of Friends stems from the conflict between two important principles. There is on the one hand the intense desire of forward looking members of the churches that

Christianity should make the maximum impact upon the secular world in which we live. In order that this may come about the churches must be seen to be united. The spectacle of the different churches each proclaiming that its own peculiar version of Christian belief and practice is the only one acceptable to God must provoke dismay among true seekers and derision among the worldly. It is important, therefore, that the churches should reconcile their differences, learn of one another and from their new-found unity feel the quickening of the spirit within them. They hope that they will be emboldened to proclaim the Christian message with greater urgency and meaning to a world which at present largely disbelieves or ignores it. With the forward looking movement Friends must sympathise, and they have, indeed, been among its earliest supporters. The question at issue is whether the Christian religion is to make any significant impact upon the thinking and actions of the world in the years immediately ahead. The importance of this is self-evident.

The difficulty that faces Friends, however, arises from the fact that the other churches appear to be conditioned to thinking of unity in terms of unity of doctrine and of ecclesiastical organisation. Friends, on the other hand, attach more importance to freedom of belief, and consider that an ecclesiastical superstructure can be more of a burden than a blessing. We therefore feel that the way forward does not lie in the direction of seeking some formulation of Christian belief to which all churches can subscribe, nor in imposing on existing churches some overarching hierarchical structure. If the church is the expression of God's spirit we cannot press that spirit into a mould, nor can we limit its freedom of expression by codifying it in terms of doctrine. The greatest need for today, as we see it, is that the spirit of God shall live, and for that it needs freedom and room for spontaneity and imagination. We fear that to impose a form of structural unity and agreed dogma would tend to quench the spirit and kill the life. We are unable, therefore, to share the professed objectives of the other Christian churches.

We would not, however, wish it to be thought that our approach to this matter is negative. We feel that the true unity of all Christian believers is to be found at a deeper level than that of belief or organisation. Now and in the immediate future our efforts should be directed towards working together with members of other churches in forms of practical action which express our love of our neighbours. From such joint action we confidently believe that Christians will come to know the value of one another in the deeper things of life, and will thus learn to love one another truly. In this way true Christian unity will grow naturally. If at a later stage it seems right to present to the secular world some formal declaration of Christian unity, this will then do no more than give expression to an existing state of true unity which all Christians will feel deep within their own hearts.

We thus conclude that we cannot share with the other churches their desire to adopt a form of organic unity by a target date. In our experience this is not the way in which the spirit of God works. It grows slowly and in secret, and the attempt by men to prescribe in advance the form that it must take is doomed to failure.

We endorse the words of Thomas Story, in 1737. "The unity of Christians never did nor ever will or can stand in uniformity of thought or opinion, but in Christian love only."

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## HOME NEWS

Eighteen people took part in the Vigil on a bitterly cold Human Rights Day - 10th December. All held posters explaining their mission.

Our Annual Party was missed by some owing to influenza, but about eighty enjoyed the games, entertainments - and of course, the tea.

### THE Event of 1967 ?

The wedding, of course!

All those happy people, and a splendid Meeting. And the flowers, whose winter sunshine still lightened our front hall in the New Year. And the dignity and the wonder of the piping - what other sassenach Meeting has ever had bagpipes at a wedding?

One young lady, formerly determined on a beautiful wedding in a church, is quite ready now to settle for a Scotsman in a Meeting.

We are glad to know that good news is reaching Dorking from Claire and Callum MacLeod in Zambia.

## NEWS FROM AFAR

Laura and Eric Savage send loving greetings to us all. We echo their wish that they could slip in quietly to worship with us and to talk afterwards: even in present wintry conditions the welcome would be very warm. They sent a sunny photo of themselves to Jessie Cheston, and this is now on the notice board.

Our loving thoughts go also to Wyn Sweatman who is still incapacitated having broken her leg in two places early in November: she writes that Walter is a great help and comfort to her. They now have seven grandchildren! John Sweatman, now a research worker with a science degree, has a delightful wife and a two-year-old son, Winston.

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Outside the station the dark girl hesitated then, in the shy soft voice common to her race, asked the way to the hospital. Rather than explain the route, I knew it would be more satisfactory to accompany her to the bus stop. We had about ten minutes together, not long for real conversation, but as the bus came in sight she began to thank me for what she called my great kindness. I interrupted, saying how much I had enjoyed meeting her and as the bus drew up she began, "We have a saying 'Mountains cannot meet...' I pushed her gently towards the bus " ...men can" she called from the step, and as the bus moved away her final words floated back and echoed as I turned

towards home " . . . if they will, if they will."

This new venture should give us more opportunities to meet; to learn news of each other (especially of those who are unable to be with us), to exchange ideas, to bring forward our concerns. It can be part of our worship. But there's a condition - men can meet IF THEY WILL. This experiment, like so many other things, depends on your co-operation: it cannot succeed unless YOU help with news items, reports, problems, what you will.

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PRIZE-LESS COMPETITION

If you approve this new venture perhaps you know what it should be called. Any suggestions to the Editor, please.

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