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## BEYOND QUAKER SELF-REFERENTIALITY: MAURICE CREASEY'S VISION OF ECUMENISM

DAVID L. JOHNS

Ecumenism hinges upon ecclesiology. One's operative conception of the Church, the faithful community, will either open ecumenical possibilities or it will constrict them. There are gradations to be sure, but interaction with the religious other will exhibit characteristics of curiosity or hospitality or integration to the degree that one's ecclesiology so permits. Additionally, the point of reference for ecclesial understanding not only affects how Church is defined, but also one's ethical vision, because it shapes what one believes should occur with regard to the other. If this point of reference is located primarily in one's own community or the tradition in which one stands and if this self-understanding is guarded or truncated, then one's posture toward the other will likely be separatist or marked by persistent critique.

A popular self-assessment of Quakerism is that it is an ecumenically sensitive organization; the reality, however, is more complicated. A number of prominent twentieth century Friends were engaged in ecumenical efforts at various levels: Dean Freiday, Douglas Steere, Howard Brinton, Elton Trueblood, and Maurice Creasey. Nevertheless, official denominational participation has been inconsistent and at times controversial. This inconsistency, in part, is rooted in suspicion of the motives or structures of such dialogue as is evident in a passing remark from Canby Jones. In a handwritten note at the end of a Christmas letter, Jones invites Creasey to visit him in Wilmington, Ohio while he is in the United States to attend the "*World-ly* Council of Churches."<sup>1</sup> However, in other cases the hesitation has been due to membership requirements ecumenical organizations establish as conditions for inclusion or participation; for example: visible Eucharistic fellowship, commitment to the Nicene Creed or to the confession of "Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." It is often the case that this disagreement is not substantive but formal. That is, many of the faith affirmations are ones evident in various Quaker writings and with which many Friends could unite. Nevertheless, the objection is to the necessity of such requirements.

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This was Creasey's assessment following the WCC's Third Assembly in New Delhi in 1961. "The new basis [for membership] ... makes it, I fear, less likely than ever that Friends will agree to join the World Council of Churches ... [London Yearly Meeting's] objection is not primarily to the *content* of the verbal formula but to the fact that a verbal formula is employed."<sup>2</sup>

The history of Quaker involvement with ecumenical organizations and ecumenical activities is complex and not without controversy, but this is not the place to rehearse that history at length.<sup>3</sup> Suffice it to say that the complexity and controversy derive in large part from a longstanding internal disagreement concerning precisely what the position of the Religious Society of Friends is in the wider community of faith. Some Friends have contributed meaningfully to questions at the heart of ecclesiology and ecumenism and Maurice Creasey was one of the most articulate in recent history.

Creasey (1912-2004) was for twenty-three years the Director of Studies at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, England and a frequent contributor to scholarly literature concerning Friends. He is the most important theologian Quakerism *could* have if only Friends knew more about him. Throughout his years of public intellectual leadership, his ecumenical involvement was considerable extending from the national level, through the British Council of Churches, to international participation in the World Council of Church's Faith and Order Commission. It is the purpose of this essay to examine how Creasey's ecclesiology opened theological space for a generous ecumenicity by dis-locating ecumenicity from an exclusive Quaker self-referentiality. This move on his part is most evident by contrasting his efforts with the work of his contemporary, Lewis Benson.

## IMAGINING A DIFFERENT COMMUNITY

Religious movements that have a restorationist ecclesiology, as Quakers exhibit in ambitious claims such as "primitive Christianity revived," orient themselves toward an historical golden era, a time of doctrinal purity and charismatic enthusiasm. Contemporary Friends can wax nostalgic about the wisdom, clarity, and unity of "early Friends" without taking into account that "early Friends" never existed as the ideological monolith they are sometimes believed to have been.

Creasey would have none of this. He had no interest in repristinizing Quakerism, a tendency he saw within the Religious Society of Friends in general, and most particularly in the work of two contemporaries, ironically both New Jersey Quakers: Dean Freiday and Lewis Benson.

Creasey shared a much deeper theological kinship with Freiday than he did with Benson, although he maintained lengthy correspondence with the latter about their divergent perspectives. Like Creasey, Freiday was an ecumenist who invested considerable energy in ecumenical activities with both the National and World Councils of Churches. He was perhaps the most prominent and competent interpreter of these activities for Quakers in the United States. Freiday's work was nuanced and he did not avoid critical appraisal of these organizations; he criticized the National Council of Churches, for instance, for a kind of "Christian Brahminism," that gave more public attention to the Faith and Order work of theologians and denominational executives than to those commissions entrusted with social, political, and ethical concerns.<sup>4</sup> But he also challenged Quaker misinterpretation and rejection of ecumenical work. Friends face a crisis of identity, he suggested, when they engage in ecumenical interaction with other people of faith. They are confronted with their lack of doctrinal commitment and, rather than address the issues this raises, Quakers remain entangled in sub-culturality that "has little relevance for the modern urban world, even though it may be nostalgically very attractive."<sup>5</sup>

Although Freiday's work on Robert Barclay may be seen as an invitation to reconsider and appropriate a theology from another era, Freiday did not believe Quakerism *qua* Quakerism to be the goal of ecclesial development nor did he regard ecumenicity as a pretext for denouncing other Christian bodies when they did not embrace Quaker theological understandings. Thus, like Creasey, Freiday's vision of Church was not self-referential.

More interesting and illustrative was the distinction between the other contemporaries. While Creasey and Benson respected each other deeply, as is evident in the tone of their frequent correspondence, they represented two differing trajectories in Quaker thought.<sup>6</sup> What makes the contrast between these two so fascinating is more than historical curiosity, but rather that they articulated then, better than most, what continues to differentiate various groups of Quakers today.

In *Catholic Quakerism*, Benson espouses a prophetic contrast society by calling for a return to the animating vision of George Fox. For him, Quakerism exists as a distinct and lively option, a contrast, other than either classical Protestantism or Catholicism. As such, Friends are not so much part of a larger whole, as is often an ecumenical assessment; rather, they are the intended *end* of the Church. Benson stops short of identifying the *organization* of Quakerism as the whole of the Church, as did some Friends prior to the eighteenth century, but he believed Quakers had discovered what was in fact that toward which faith was moving. Understandably, this posture affects dramatically the way one understands ecumenism and the role of the Church community in the world.

Writing to Henry Cadbury, Creasey expresses disappointment in Benson's dismissal of Creasey's ecumenical vision as "protestant" or "pietist." He accepts Benson's account of seventeenth century Friends' beliefs as accurate and a faithful rendering, "but I cannot with him regard this as ultimate truth, nor can I, as he seems to do, write off as misguided or irrelevant all the efforts of contemporary Christians to discern the meaning of the Body of Christ for our day."<sup>7</sup>

Benson regarded the Third World Conference on Faith and Order at Lund in 1952 as a defining moment in the ecumenical movement, and he was not alone in this assessment. At Lund the Council shifted its focus from comparative ecclesiology to the study of Christ and the consequences of Christ for the doctrine of the Church. He believed that if this line of thought were to be pursued rightly it would "inevitably lead to a rediscovery of the early Quaker vision." If taken seriously this study would "undoubtedly lead to a rediscovery of that 'root and ground' that was the foundation of the Quaker movement..." If Friends are to have a role in the ecumenical movement, according to Benson, it is to prophetically challenge the Church and to call it to a Quaker understanding of faith and congregational life. "George Fox's vision of the church reborn had absolutely no place in it for this kind of leadership [professionally trained clergy and institutional churches]. Catholic Quakerism offers a real alternative... a movement in which clergy would play no part."<sup>8</sup> On many levels, Benson's vision is very much in sympathy with Anabaptism, and references to them, the Mennonites in particular, punctuate many of his letters.

In contrast, in his final remarks at Woodbrooke on the occasion of his retirement, Creasey rejected repristinization. "We must make it clear that we are not simply saying that the way forward for us

today is the way back to the seventeenth century. This way is closed. We cannot do it; we should not even try to do it.”<sup>9</sup> Quakerism has a particular character that distinguishes it from other traditions, this Creasey acknowledges; however, instead of representing the *ends* of religious faith, it “embodies a distinct and significant *interpretation* of the nature and purpose of the Church.”<sup>10</sup> Friends may be a contrast community in terms of practice and theological conviction, and in this regard Creasey agrees with Benson; however, Friends are a contrast community only in an *interpretive* sense, never in an ontological or an eschatological one.

Acknowledging this enables Friends to more ably navigate through two extremes which Creasey identifies as characterizing Quakers from their beginning to his own time. The first extreme is the claim that “Quakerism possessed the truth of the Church in all its fullness... and that before long, all true Christians would be gathered into it.”<sup>11</sup> Although he does not name Benson directly he does locate him at this point along the spectrum. The other end of the continuum he identifies is the claim that Friends are the “smallest of all Protestant denominations.” One pole is unrestrained enthusiasm, the other is communal self-degradation. He characterizes these extremes variously: established vs. separatist, gathered vs. free churches, and perhaps most damning: empire vs. desert. Neither extreme is truthful, he suggests, and neither is capable of taking seriously the vocation of Church, nor of embodying that vocation and engaging the world in service and witness.<sup>12</sup>

## IMAGINING A WIDER VIEW

Because so much energy has been directed toward perpetuating the ends of the continuum, Quaker self-identity needs to be reconsidered. Not surprisingly, the theological junctures where this takes place are *ecclesiology* and *ecumenism*, that is, the nature and purpose of the Quaker community, and its relation to the religious other. Creasey proposes that rethinking these matters be undertaken within the wider community, a process theological polarization does not readily facilitate.<sup>13</sup> The two men diverge sharply on this point. Benson agrees that Quakerism should be reconsidered and retrieved from the extremes; but this is a task for the particularly defined Disciple Church Community, a community that is almost indistinguishable from Quakerism itself. Creasey, on the other hand, believes this conversation

to belong to the wider Christian family. If one rethinks Quakerism in this larger context, “we may well find that they [religious others] have things of enormous value and illumination to say to us, and we may even find—and I believe some of us know by experience that this is true—we have things to say which they will recognize the significance of better than we have done.”<sup>14</sup>

This is a significant point of difference. Creasey acknowledges the value of Benson’s Disciple Church model when discipleship is regarded as living obedience to Christ. But he pushes back on Benson’s unwillingness to recognize that this Church is constituted variously. He did not understand why Benson insisted this Church have “empirically observable features everywhere and always the same (e.g., absence of sacraments, or liturgical worship, rejecting all separated ministry, relative indifference to theological and philosophical thought, etc.).” He argued that discipleship has its various degrees and that that faithfulness to Christ is never complete, but always in part, and always contextually contingent. Thus, even a Disciple Church will necessarily have a multitude of empirical expressions.<sup>15</sup>

Creasey’s ecumenical vision is informed by an ecclesiology sufficiently open to the other. He challenged Friends to relate their traditional thinking to the influential thinkers of their time He named: Barth, Brunner, Bonhoeffer, Tillich, de Chardin, and the like. John A.T. Robinson impacted his own imagination and in his letters he enthusiastically commends him to Benson and to others. But in addition to an ecclesiology open to the other, his ecumenical vision is one that is willing, as he notes, to hold loose many traditional elements and forms, not only within the churches, but within Quakerism itself. It is interesting that he regards the otherwise universalizing Quaker affirmation of “that of God in everyone” as being too narrow and limited. We ought to speak less of it, he writes, and more of God as the “One in whom we live and move and have our being.”<sup>16</sup> By doing so God is not restricted to the spaciality of humankind but rather is freed to permeate the totality of creation. The future includes making sense of the meaning of one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, and learning to take Jesus seriously, but doing so *with others*, recognizing that Quakers do not see all that can be seen.

Benson thought this was abandoning the prophetic dimension of Friends in favor of denominational and sectarian thinking—a frequent criticism of his in his correspondence. However, Creasey affirms that Quakers are part of the *reforming* impulse within the Church and on

this matter the two agreed. But he conceded it to be *part*, not the whole and certainly not the intended aim of ecclesial reform.<sup>17</sup> As is clear by this point, Creasey resisted grounding either his ecumenism or his ecclesiology in self-referentiality. He is committed to imagining a contemporary reformed and reforming Quakerism but does not insist that Friends exercise a prophetic voice in every instance of difference. In response to what was almost certain to be London Yearly Meeting's rejection of membership in the World Council of Churches, Creasey wrote to Edgar Dunstan of Cambridge, "I share your regret...for though I appreciate that Friends have a witness to make concerning creedal statements, this witness does not seem to me to be the vitally important witness to make in this situation."<sup>18</sup>

Creasey and Benson exchanged quite a few letters between 1958 and 1960 wherein they identified the differing directions their thinking was leading them, particularly concerning church and ecumenism. Beginning in 1960 and into the following year the lines were drawn more dramatically and with greater urgency, although always with obvious affection for the other (Benson even notes gratefully: "You took more trouble to understand my position than any living Quaker").<sup>19</sup> Creasey would mark paragraphs in some letters—A, B, C, and so on—and reply to Benson systematically, point by point referencing the letter. For his part, Benson could be blunt: "I cannot see what causes you to put so much faith in the ecumenical process."<sup>20</sup>

One of the clearest statements both of Creasey's vision as well as his disagreement with the Disciple Church model is in a letter to Benson in August 1960.

Increasingly during the past year or so while I have been trying to study 'the Church' in the New Testament and historical perspectives, I have come to feel that your understanding of it—equating it as you do with the 'disciple church'—does not do justice to the breadth and profundity of the New Testament teaching nor to the facts of Christian history and experience. It seems to me also, to lack theological depth and grasp, and to be restricted in its love of the brethren to those who see things as you do. Nor do I find in it a large place for a sense of adoring wonder and gratitude to God, and of His infinite compassion toward all even in their weakness and blindness, and his willingness to meet them just where they are.<sup>21</sup>

Creasey's tone is respectful but direct. His contention with Benson's ecclesiology is its restricted and narrow focus, both in understanding Christian history and experience as well as its approach to wonder and love. These are serious charges and ones he did not state so daringly even one year prior. He recognizes the functional connection between a vision of Church and the scope of compassion and fraternity; accordingly, Creasey draws the circle as wide as possible, and in doing so he relativizes Quakerism; he de-centers it. "I tend to think of the truth of the Church as being something which no church at the present time adequately apprehends or embodies."<sup>22</sup> Thus, while deeply grounded in and formed by the Religious Society of Friends, Creasey's theology is not Quaker *self*-referential.

He continues in this same letter acknowledging their agreement concerning the Christocentrism of early Quakerism, a theme Creasey addresses in several of his writings.

But I cannot follow you when you seem to hold that these great positive truths necessarily carry all the corollaries that early Friends (conditioned by their historical situation) drew from them, nor do I think they commit us to a continuance of the early Friends' almost completely antagonistic or denigrating attitude to Christians not of their persuasion.<sup>23</sup>

Creasey rejects what he sees as Benson's tendency to uncritically appropriate early Quaker teachings without assessing the differing historical, social and religious contexts of the contemporary period. Likely with this conversation in mind, Creasey later wrote that while many of the first Quakers stood in opposition to their Christian contemporaries, "it would be in my judgment, a grave mistake to erect its limitations of understanding and of charity, however excusable, into a regulative principle."<sup>24</sup> It is the propensity of restorationist ecclesiologies to do precisely this, establish regulative principles based upon earlier practices or interpretive strategies particularly if these emerge from the group's allegedly pre-apostasy origins. Here Creasey echoes a point raised in the Final Report of the Third World Conference of Faith and Order at Lund: "a doctrinal protest can easily become a fixed theology," or, one might add, a fixed ecclesial practice.<sup>25</sup>

Creasey's ecumenism was not without its boundaries, of course. It is worth noting that he resisted the secularizing of British Quakerism in the 1960s and 1970s and this resulted in his gradual estrangement

from Friends.<sup>26</sup> He pressed beyond the boundaries of Benson's particularistic ecclesial vision but was unwilling to become *post-Christian*. Disagreement with other churches was not an occasion for establishing a regulative principle of opposition, yet this was not to be interpreted as apathy nor as abandonment of Christian faith; after all, early Friends challenged their contemporaries "on the ground that their gravest sin was their obscuring of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And when they came to 'Quakerism' the early Friends knew that, at last, they had entered into the secret of that gospel, not passed beyond it or by-passed it."<sup>27</sup>

What did he propose in contrast? Instead of Benson's Disciple Church Community, Creasey spoke of a *Servant Church*, many of the details are evident in comments above. This community is neither established, nor gathered, nor is it empire; it is a salvific community that seeks to save from false values, misdirected energies, and misguided hopes. It does this in order to invest itself in "costly and responsible identification with and service to the world regarded as created, sustained and redeemed by God for the fulfillment of his purpose."<sup>28</sup> Whether intentional or not, at this juncture Creasey conveys an incarnational vision of Church much like that described in *Gaudium et Spes* from the Second Vatican Council.

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of those of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of humans. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their God and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for everyone. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with humankind and its history by the deepest of bonds. (*GS*, 1)

This Church *serves*, but it is not silent. Tension will arise from its prophetic witness for Truth. It answers 'that of God' but recognizes 'of God' is not easily definable and so it extends far "beyond the boundaries of the empirical churches and apart from their agency."<sup>29</sup> Relating this ecclesiological understanding to the Religious Society of Friends: "form and order are given, not from 'above' through the hierarchy, nor from 'behind' through scrupulous imitation of New Testament norms, but rather 'from the midst,' from him to whom the Scriptures bear witness but whom they must never supplant."<sup>30</sup> In

these comments one may see marks of traditional Quaker confidence in the Spirit's initiative in calling forth and ordering a community of faithfulness. Creasey perceives in this the foundation of a community, openness to the religious other, and an invitation for Friends to move beyond themselves, to be referenced in Christ rather than in Quaker self-referentiality.

The Disciple Church Community that Benson ably defends roots its identity in the character of its witness, both spoken and lived. A Servant Church does not dismiss witness, on the contrary, but its witness is less concerned with doctrinal purity or with behavioral conformity. It is attentive to humanity's joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties claiming them to be their own and by being deeply invested in the world God-so-loves.

"My concern," Creasey writes, "involves recognizing *this* 'Church' as real, and seeking to be led to make, from the historical tradition to which I belong as a Friend, such contribution to it, and to learn such lessons from it, as may lead to a 'fullness' beyond all our fragmentary experiences."<sup>31</sup> Again he expresses unwillingness to regard Quakerism as the whole or the aim of ecclesial reform. Friends are one part of a larger movement of God through the many expressions of church. It would be unremarkable to make such a claim if not for the spectacular consequences of its opposite, from spiritual pride to triumphalism to withdraw from society to totalizing dismissal of the religious other. Creasey never charges Benson with something so egregious, nor Benson Creasey; although both vigorously questioned the others' assumptions and conclusions, they knew each other well enough to trust the other was motivated by good will and deep love for God.

The "fragmentary experiences" to which Creasey refers are related to the image of a prism and its refracted light which expresses for him the reality of Church from at least the Reformation through the ecumenical efforts in his own time. These are the experiences, insights, wisdom, gifts, that are multitude among the faithful but dispersed, refracted, throughout the churches. Fragments, each one legitimate in its own right, are part of the "manifold radiance of the re-discovered Christ."<sup>32</sup> This is wonderful...to certain point. The churches of the Reformation, and Creasey includes Quakers in this designation, have centered attention on the limited band of refracted light emanating from their point in the prism. When this is the case one's perception is distorted and proclamations offered from this perception are misrepresentational. Instead, these varied manifestations need to be

joined together with other fragments, related to the whole of Christian faith and experience, “if they are to be saved from exaggeration and exclusiveness.”<sup>33</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Ecumenism hinges upon ecclesiology and neither comes without implications for the other. As discussed here, Maurice Creasey offers a vision for both which places the Church decidedly *in the world* and in vigorous conversation with others who name themselves as Church. Exploring this vision alongside Lewis Benson not only provides a contrast underscoring Creasey's own position, it also illustrates distinct trajectories in the theological imagination which continue to characterize the Religious Society of Friends. Although there is no need to establish categories such as Creaseyite and Bensonite, there are family resemblances within the yearly meetings and various Quaker organizations that can be identified and clarified by examining the differing visions of these two important twentieth century thinkers.

Yet, he does more than provide an example of a theological point of view. Creasey identifies an issue, clarifies it, and then analyzes it by taking into consideration the dynamism and challenge of living context as well as the demands of faith. This is to say, he consciously accepts the vocation of theologian and approaches it with all the vigor and grace he possesses.

His account of Quakerism is informed by a careful reading of Friends' history and by his own confessional commitments. This is also true of Benson. In addition, although he was not the only intellectual whose thinking had been influenced by the religious diversity of the city, Creasey consciously allows the richness of Birmingham to wash over him and work its way into his theological reflection.<sup>34</sup>

Some of his contemporaries participated in many levels of ecumenical engagement and have provided valuable assessments of this work; however, Creasey is one of the few to give substantial theological attention to this involvement beyond simple reporting activities. His ecclesiology, presented briefly here, is *incarnational* both in terms of its Christological foundation and in terms of the locus of ecclesial authority. He recognized the ecumenical importance of what he affirmed about the Church. By arguing for an incarnational ecclesiology rather than a church-based ecclesiology, Quakerism was

freed to participate deeply in society, in creation, without being constricted to a sectarian, guarded community, which one suspects is at the heart of his criticism of Benson. “As I see it,” he writes, “the choice before us as a Society is whether, in pursuit of security or from a belief that we alone have the truth, we will determine to hold ourselves aloof, or whether we will recognize and act upon our involvement, with all its hazards, and at all levels, in the quest of the Christian church for renewal into unity.”<sup>35</sup>

Creasey chose the latter of these options and by doing so opened churchly interaction to the “whole inhabited earth,” and this, after all, is precisely the point of ecumenism.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Personal correspondence: T. Canby Jones to Maurice Creasey (December 20, 1963). See also the World Council of Churches issue of *Quaker Life* 36 (June 1995). The correspondence cited in this essay is from the Creasey papers at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham, England. I am grateful to Ian Jackson, Woodbrooke’s librarian, for access to these documents.
- 2 Personal correspondence: Maurice Creasey to Charles Gray (March 21, 1962). New Delhi basis: “The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” The emphasis is mine.
- 3 Examples: Dean Freiday, “Friends and the National and World Councils of Churches,” *Quaker Religious Thought* 10 (Summer 1968): 20-28; Dean Freiday, “Quakers, Ecumenism, and the WCC,” *The Ecumenical Review* 46 (October 1994): 413-419; Ferner Nuhn, *Friends and the Ecumenical Movement* (Philadelphia: Friends General Conference, 1970); London Yearly Meeting Committee on Christian Relationships, *Unity in the Spirit: Quakers on the Ecumenical Pilgrimage* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1979); Eden Grace, “A Witness Held in Trust: Perspectives on the Nature and Purpose of Friends,” address (Intermountain Yearly Meeting, 2002). Henry Cadbury was remarked, that for any ecumenical movement willing to admit them and any group they would be willing to join, the Religious Society of Friends has a “nuisance value” quite out of proportion to its size.” Quoted in Ferner Nuhn, *Friends and the Ecumenical Movement* (Philadelphia: Friends General Conference, 1970), 22.
- 4 Freiday, “Friends and the National and World Councils of Churches,” 26.
- 5 Freiday, “Friends and the National and World Councils of Churches,” 22-23.
- 6 “I am loving toward you as always but I feel that you are tragically mistaken in your view of the need of Friends in these time.” Personal correspondence: Lewis Benson to Maurice Creasey (January 17, 1961).
- 7 Personal correspondence: Maurice Creasey to Henry Cadbury (November 29, 1960).
- 8 Lewis Benson, *Catholic Quakerism: a Vision for All Men* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1968), 62. Earlier, he wrote to Creasey: “The true way of discipleship is the way of the Quaker vision.” Lewis Benson to Maurice Creasey (March 5, 1961).

- Freiday also praised the 'Post-Lund methodology.' Dean Freiday, *Nothing Without Christ*. (Newberg, OR: The Barclay Press, 1984), 115. Benson, *Catholic Quakerism*, 71, 76.
- 9 Maurice Creasey, "Rethinking Quakerism," in *Collected Essays of Maurice Creasey*, David L. Johns, editor (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2011), 399. Other citations from Creasey's writings will be given from their originating source, and then, in brackets, their location in the *Collected Essays*. "Rethinking Quakerism" was unpublished prior to this collection.
  - 10 Maurice Creasey, "The Nature of Our Religious Fellowship," 329, in *Then and Now: Quaker Essays; Historical and Contemporary* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960). [Creasey/Johns, 285] The emphasis is mine.
  - 11 Creasey, "The Nature of Our Religious Fellowship," 329 [Creasey/Johns, 285].
  - 12 Creasey, "The Nature of Our Religious Fellowship," 331 [Creasey/Johns, 288].
  - 13 Creasey, "The Nature of Our Religious Fellowship," 330 [Creasey/Johns, 287]; Maurice Creasey, *Prospect for Quakerism*, Study in Fellowship, 33 (London: Friends Home Service Committee, 1973), 13 [Creasey/Johns, 390]; Creasey, "Rethinking Quakerism," [Creasey/Johns, 409].
  - 14 Creasey, "Rethinking Quakerism," 12-3 [Creasey/Johns, 410].
  - 15 Maurice Creasey to Lewis Benson (February 8, 1961).
  - 16 Creasey, "Rethinking Quakerism," 15-16 [Creasey/Johns, 415]. Acts 17:28.
  - 17 "...I feel quite clear that the essential Christian message is one which contains within itself a dynamic which consistently breaks through these forms and criticizes them and compels men to change them. I agree with you that there have been such reforming groups and movements throughout the church's history. Like you, I see Quakerism as belonging to this general reforming tendency." Personal correspondence: Maurice Creasey to Rose Gould (February 26, 1962).
  - 18 Personal correspondence: Maurice Creasey to Edgar G. Dunstan (March 20, 1962).
  - 19 Personal correspondence: Lewis Benson to Maurice Creasey (January 17, 1961). In this letter Benson claims they initially sensed a consensus emerging in their views, "but the situation is now different."
  - 20 Personal correspondence: Lewis Benson to Maurice Creasey (July 7, 1960).
  - 21 Personal correspondence: Maurice Creasey to Lewis Benson (August 20, 1960).
  - 22 Personal correspondence: Maurice Creasey to Pat Randolph Jenks (July 6, 1960).
  - 23 Personal correspondence: Maurice Creasey to Lewis Benson (August 20, 1960).
  - 24 Maurice Creasey, "The Ecumenical Role of the Society of Friends," 50, in *No Time But This Present: Studies Preparatory to the Fourth World Conference of Friends* (Birmingham, England: n.p., 1965). [Creasey/Johns, 316]
  - 25 Lund, # 44. Lukas Vischer, ed., *A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement: 1927-1963* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1963), 98.
  - 26 Creasey/Johns, *Collected Essays of Maurice Creasey*, xvii-li.
  - 27 Maurice Creasey, "The Ecumenical Role of the Society of Friends," 51. [Creasey/Johns, 316] Unlike his contemporary Douglas Steere, Creasey's ecumenical writing was almost exclusively focused on *intra-faith* concerns, that is, within the Christian tradition. However, in a letter to Rose Gould at the Youth Hostel, Gloucester, he writes: "I hope you did not think I was wanting to suggest that Christianity alone is true and that all other religions are totally false. I believe that Christianity, like all other religions can be,

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and often has been, misinterpreted and misused and that it needs constantly to be judged by the standards of Jesus Christ. . . . Insofar as the followers of other religions are obedient to the leadings of love and truth, they are obedient to his Spirit. The purpose of God in Him was not simply I believe to impart to men a higher conception of God but to bring into existence an actual historical community of men and women bound together in love and loyalty to Jesus Christ and committed to being the organ of his Spirit's activity in the world." Personal correspondence: Maurice Creasey to Rose Gould (November 21, 1961).

- 28 Creasey, "The Nature of Our Religious Fellowship," 331-332 [Creasey/Johns, 288].
- 29 Creasey, "The Nature of Our Religious Fellowship," 332 [Creasey/Johns, 289].
- 30 Maurice Creasey, "'Form' and 'Freedom:': the Institutional and Charismatic Aspects of the Church," *Friends' Quarterly* 14 (January 1962): 16 [Creasey/Johns, 300].
- 31 Personal correspondence: Maurice Creasey to Lewis Benson (August 20, 1960). Emphasis is mine.
- 32 Maurice A. Creasey in an account of London Yearly Meeting reported in *The Friend* 118 (1960), 761.
- 33 Creasey, "The Ecumenical Role of the Society of Friends," 53 [Creasey/Johns, 320]. Benson challenges this notion of prism and indeed Creasey's entire ecumenical project as being denominational or sectarian. It is a curious turn since, in many regards, Benson's view might more readily be termed "sectarian." However, he challenges Creasey on the ecclesiological assumptions that underwrite ecumenical Church vision. Lewis Benson to Maurice Creasey (July 7, 1960).
- 34 Philosopher John Hick describes the effect that moving to Birmingham in particular had in his own work on religious pluralism in *God Has Many Names* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), 17ff.
- 35 Creasey, "The Ecumenical Role of the Society of Friends," 53-54 [Creasey/Johns, 320].