

WQM 2019-02-02 Threshing Session
Sakre Edson clerking

Brief history of why we're here. "We're here not only to talk, but to listen." There was a called Gathering at Yearly Meeting to talk about why we were here. October Quarterly at Camp Cleowox was "iffy" at that time.

October Quarterly Meeting did happen, thanks to three Friends who put it together. We talked briefly at that Meeting about the future of all the Quarterly Meetings. At that time we were not sure that the February and May Quarterly Meetings would happen, but Friends also stepped in to make those gatherings happen.

Sakre asked the Meeting to settle into silence.

Friend from Salem Monthly Meeting spoke. "It is the responsibility of Friends to show up for Quarterly Meetings." She added: Why don't we have a business meeting at each Q Meeting? Friends say that they come for the social interaction with other Friends. Is this sufficient? What is the role that Quarterly Meetings are playing the Quarter? Do Friends feel that they need the regional gatherings? Do they feel that they need Yearly Meeting?

Friend from Multnomah Monthly Meeting: Friend told of a young woman who said that she planted seeds---seeds in the minds of her students. This led to a Meeting that became covered. This was in Guatemala, with many people present who weren't Friends. As we explore what we should do about this issue, Friends might go to Pacific Northwest Quarter. They're doing something that seems to work!

Friend from Bridge City: He talked about the Meeting there where the current problem was discussed. "Friends agreed that Friends should find a way to continue to have Quarterly Meetings."

Friend from Eugene Meeting: I find that I personally get a lot from Quarterly and Yearly Meetings. We got seven responses on our questionnaire about what happened at October Quarterly Meeting (about 50 people came.) Those who responded did say that they wanted to continue to have Quarterly Meetings.

Friend from Eugene Meeting: Spiritual nourishment is provided by Quarterly Meetings.

Friend (no Meeting given): Worship sharing is important. We hear from people who might not share as much in everyday life.

Friend from Eugene Meeting: Children aren't here today. Fewer and fewer children come to our Quarterly Meetings. That hasn't happened as much. Can we appeal to families, and make the Quarterly Meetings something that would make children, families, teenage Friends want to come? Today we are appealing mostly to older Friends. How can we extend to include more youth and families, or should we say that we switch to Quarterly Meetings in an urban setting, with people sleeping in Friends' homes? If we can't attract these groups of people, then maybe we should make the elderly Friends who do come more comfortable. [Three people said, "That Friend speaks my mind.]

Friend from Bridge City: Why do we come together at Quarterly? We pick up ideas from other Meetings to talk about ideas about how to appeal to all ages. We also come to plan future gatherings. When I tried to find out what was happening at this Quarterly Meeting, I couldn't get the information. This Meeting started at 8:00, which is a two-hour drive for some of us. Having a Clerk, having structure for each Quarterly, instead of planning shortly in advance, as we are now doing, would be helpful.

Friend from Multnomah: She agrees that starting at 8:00 is hard on many people who live far away. Last year for the Spring Gathering we did have many challenges, but this year we do have three people in charge. "We should not be asking if we should lay down Quarterly Meeting, but how can we revitalize QM?" Two people responded "that Friend speaks my mind."

Friend from Florence Group: The Quarterly is very important to us. Sometimes we have just 2 people at Worship. Even in a small Meeting, you can have disrupting people. (Laughter) So we really

need Quarterly and Yearly Meetings.

Friend from Bridge City: As Bridge City spoke of Quarterly Meeting, some people said, "I was chastised for actions I took, and I didn't like that." PNW Quarter does have successful gatherings, but most of us wouldn't want to go there. We don't have a critical mass in our Quarter. If we laid down Quarterly Meetings, how would the items that are expected of QM get done?"

Friend from Central Oregon worship group: This Quarterly Meeting is important to me and to my wife. We traveled 139 miles this morning, over Santiam Pass. In 16 years I've come to know most of you here by sight. We have formed some very close friendships out of the QM. Our worship group is small. Once our attendance dropped so drastically that we seriously considered ending our worship group. One attender asked that we not do that, because it was important to her, even though she didn't always come. In the succeeding years, sometimes it was from 1 to 4 people. We now have people coming back. It is difficult to find Friends who are necessary for a Meeting. We gave a lot of thought to this Quarterly. Our worship group says that if it is necessary to have more people doing tasks for QM, word needs to be put out long before the gathering. The idea of having others (caterers) doing some of the work doesn't set well with us. We are an extended family, and we should treat each other as family. There are those who will step forward, and we do need to keep caring for each other. I do not want to see this QM laid down.

Friend from Eugene Meeting: We have a terrific set of experiences from the past. This past October four Friends and one paid employee put together the Quarterly Meeting in Florence. [He cites good experiences from that Meeting.] We have the opportunity to take the grunge work and pay others to do it. Turn the planning into opportunity.

Friend from Bridge City: We're under pressure of time. We could change the structure of QM. as a Friend said. A Query came to me, and it hasn't left. Nominating Committees have a hard job. The query is: "How is the Spirit with thee, Friend?"

Friend, a former attendee from Bridge City: When I went to Meeting, I had to step into a small box, which I had to stay in. The box snapped into place. We need to be able to get out of the box and connect with Friends, as I was able to do with some people. But I have never felt that sense of connection that I need in that Meeting.

Friend from Eugene Meeting: How many have cell phones? (all) How many have computers? (all) I wasn't going to come today, but I felt a need to come. Experience with Hodads when there was no question that one would come to work, and do the the work. In the question of what shall we do about our Quarterly Meeting, could we do some business by computer? As a community, sometimes we do need to be face to face, but we can also use our computers and other technology to do some business. Step outside of the box, and let the Spirit rise. (one person: that Friend speaks my mind)

Friend from Bridge City: I have agreed with almost everything I have heard this morning. I started coming to Quarterly Meetings last year. It's good to have the support of people who are not in one's own Meeting. We need to have some feeling of community. But Quarterly Meetings have a function. Friends sometimes talk and talk a lot, but don't do. We need to invite people to do things with us. I heard the expression about "the box", and think that there are things we ought to do, but we don't need to make doing these things as difficult as it sometimes is now. We're trying to do too much. We don't need reports, etc. We need each other.

Friend from Bridge City: I come with fresh eyes, the latest member of my Meeting. At Oct Quarterly Meeting, my wife got a motel. I couldn't have slept on the floor. We didn't get to the breakfast, and so missed your fellowship. Be more clear about what will take place at a Q M. I probably would not ask someone else to come to Q M.

Friend of Multnomah and also an Isolated Quaker, living on the coast: I am glad to come to this gathering and talk with Friends from different Meetings. Inspired by T-Shirt "Quakers are more inspiring than you think." At home, I use my computer to help plan Quarterly Meetings. I want to share a quote from Alice Waters. She read the quote.

Friend from Bridge City: Friends began as a community, in George Fox's time. I struggle with being a bit different from other people. Lived in logging community. With Quakers, I didn't have to join a faction, or worry about what I might have said or done. I hope that we can continue to have Quarterly Meetings. (one whispered, "that Friend speaks my mind.")

Friend from Bridge City: What's the purpose of Quarterly Meeting? I come to such gatherings for transformation. Going forward, I'd like for us to ask "what is the purpose?" What does transformation mean to you? When you go into the Wild, you don't know what will happen. It's going to be scary, lost, you won't know what to do. If we go into the Wild, it might transform us.

Friend from Eugene Meeting: She has a message from a Friend who couldn't be here, but wants to remain anonymous. "My suggestion is that we think together about paring down."

Friend from Bridge City: I got the feeling (the Word) that I was supposed to be here today. If you know why, let me know. The order that we are still living in was created by people who we aren't. When Quakers 350 years ago planned the order that we're still doing, they all lived together. We don't. Why it's difficult for us to do things: there are not enough people who are interested in putting together all the actions that are necessary. Good way to put your soul in order is to participate in the life of the Meeting. It may not be a friendly place. We triangulate. "We don't do that" is our motto. We are not faithful to the Faith and Practice. If you can't say something strong to someone in the Meeting, you aren't trusting enough. We need connections for our well-being. This order was set up in the pre-industrial world. We don't live in that world, and we are not those people.

Jane reads comment from South Mountain. (see their written comment)

Friend from Multnomah: I am now on the planning committee for the next W Q M. I am amazed, grateful, and hopeful.

Friend from Multnomah: I'm sad that I can't do the things I used to do. But I will spend 5 hours on the phone for you. You have all these old people here, and they need to do the jobs in small bits. I don't go to Meeting for Worship because I can't sit through it. I will do what I can.

Friend from Eugene: I feel a lot of love in this room, which is the best motivater for anything. Guilt is a terrible motivater. When I feel guilt, I'm apt to say "NO!" But motivated by love, I'm apt to say YES!

Friend from Eugene: I am glad to have Jehovah's Witness people and Mormans knock on my door. I love to discuss theology with them, and they help me clarify my own beliefs. I continue to go to Quaker Meeting, but we don't talk theology. Something I said prompted a Friend to say, "That comment of yours might be invalidating." But if we have a real conversation, we may make comments that others find upsetting. I want to be part of a group where I can say, "As any fool can see. . ."

Friend from Corvallis: We have a lot of "God-fearing" people in our Meeting, who don't want to hear about God, Jesus, and the rest. Their concept of Quarterly Meeting is that it is a lot of people who want to tell the rest of us what they should do. What we don't do very well is make Quakerism clear to people. What makes people feel safe is to tell them what the rules are. I don't like to do that. Maybe we need to be more clear, in a non-threatening way, about what we do in Quarterly and Yearly Meetings, as well as in our local Meeting.

Friend from Corvallis: When I heard that we were going to do this Q M, I felt like it might be a lot of work. When I went to Montana Meeting, I saw children and a lot of togetherness. When I hear about paring down, we've tried to do that in our Meeting. Contact and personal togetherness are what gets me going.

Friend from Corvallis: An example: A pastor-less Meeting learned to do the tasks that were necessary. One way of finding out what we need is to lay down the Meeting for a year. You can then tell what needs to come next.

Friend from Eugene: Quakers and Quakerism are important to the world. Some younger people are said not to go to church anymore. The churches seem too rigid. But Quakers aren't rule-bound. Eugene Meeting has Buddhists, Christian, non-Christians. We're looking at LGBT, race. When people come together, we carry Light. A\If there is any way that we can keep these things going, we should do it.

Friend from Bridge City: A group of us got together to read the queries in the *Faith and Practice*, to find queries we could use. We found that we didn't agree on what the queries meant, and couldn't complete our self-appointed task. We went with it to Worship and Ministry. We need to be able to disagree on how we conduct Quaker gatherings, and how we view the meanings of words we use.

Friend from Eugene: Some of my really good friends are because I've been on a committee with them. It's a collective effort, and very satisfying.

Friend, not from Bridge City: Zen saying. "In your quest for religious fulfillment, the bus will only take you so far." Fill in your own words for what this means.

Friend: The early Quakers, with George Fox leading, laid the foundations that still support us today. If they hadn't done that, we

Friend from Central Oregon Worship Group: "I spent my early years associating religion with memorizing things and learning rules, and hearing things that were impossible to believe. Then my husband brought me to a Meeting, where a woman extended her hand, and said, "Welcome, how do you do?" The woman said that her daughter had divorced her husband, but the woman did not. He was still part of her family. This Friend had done the same thing, so she felt better about going to church. Her worship group is now very important to her. "I need you, this woman said of her Quaker people, and several people said, "That Friend speaks my mind."

Friend from Bridge City says that her sense is that we are not ready to lay this Meeting down.

Friend from Eugene: She lists tasks she would do, and some that she wouldn't. How about Threshing Sessions by people who want to do various tasks in the Meeting and in the wider Quaker community, where people can find out where the Spirit might lead us.

Friend from Bridge City: She has copies of a history of Willamette Quarterly Meeting.

Friend: Silent worship was originally called "waiting worship." People of that time decided that they couldn't discern how God wished to be worshiped, so they sat in silence. George Fox thought that was a good idea, and incorporated it into Friends' practice.

Friend from Eugene: Re: Oregon Friends Committee on Public Policy. The committee was laid down, but is coming back to life.

Friend from a Worship Group: A nuts and bolts idea. I heard "paring down." I heard "why we come here." I heard "revitalizing." John Etter is on both Planning Committees, because he's committed to Quarterly Meetings. What about one planning committee? We might be more effective. [This Friend speaks my mind.]

A song by Gary Hubbe was led by Ellen Hubbe. "Angels on my shoulder. . ."