



Western Quarterly Meeting DRAFT Minutes

2023-10-15 1:15 pm

in person at Friends Home in Kennett and via [Zoom](#)

Opening Worship

Welcome - Bob Frye, substitute clerk

Responses to the 8th Query - QUERY EIGHT

GROUNDING FOR TRANSFORMED LIVES: Integrity and Simplicity

Newark Monthly Meeting, August 27, 2023

The eighth query was considered by Margaret Badger, Annemarie Carr, Gavin Ferris, Shelley Hastings, Ariana Langford, Mike McDowell, Pascale Pmwavaga, Sally Milbury-Steen, Treba Thompson, and Wayne Thompson.

A Friend expressed appreciation for the integrity and simplicity involved with Newark Monthly Meeting's commitment to avoiding the ownership of excess property by using and supporting the Newark Center for Creative Learning, and an existing structure, the London Britain Meetinghouse. Our meeting follows its commitment to the good stewardship of resources by walking in this path.

She also finds that striving to achieve harmony between her inner and outer commitments is the most challenging part of this query. For her, listening to the still small voice is the most helpful response to this challenge.

Another Friend has struggled with time blindness, which could be compared with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). He has difficulty keeping schedules and setting priorities. However, he's found that focusing on the priority of what he calls "do what's next" works best for him.

A Friend feels fortunate that she's been able to work for organizations that believe in what she believes, which complements her integrity. However, she believes that if we only work with organizations that have similar beliefs

to our own, there is less chance for us to make a change. Nevertheless, after working for some time for an organization with differing views than her own, she finally felt that she needed to resign after continually being excluded because of her differing beliefs.

A Friend commented that “Given the situation in the world, it’s enough to be discouraging,” when considering part (c), which asks “How has our meeting considered humanity’s impact on the earth’s ecological integrity and the ways in which violence and injustice exacerbate this impact.”

Another Friend believes that the more important question to ask is how have ecological impacts affected violence and injustice in the world. He noted that on a local level we have a limited impact, but we can still address these issues as best as we can.

A Friend appreciates the wording of part (i), which asks “Am I mindful that judicial oaths imply a double standard of truth?” The wording helps explain the value of doing this.

Another Friend said she has great faith in the integrity of our meeting, where there is a good and effective interplay between simplicity and integrity. This is made easier by the smallness of our meeting.

On behalf of Newark Monthly Meeting,
respectfully submitted,

Mike McDowell

Below is a summary of responses from Kennett Friends

Grounding for Transformed Lives: Integrity and Simplicity was read.

One member stated that the silence of our worship embodies simplicity and integrity. A new member mentioned that he still receives emails from his former church and is struck with their lack of simplicity, constantly asking for more volunteers and money. He finds the simplicity of Kennett Meeting very refreshing and admirable in regards to how it handles its needs. Another member spoke that in spite of having only a few active committees, they are still able to “hold it together” in a simplistic way.

From Mill Creek

What is the interplay between simplicity and integrity in the life of our meeting? How does our meeting embody simplicity and integrity in its structures and practices? How has our meeting considered humanity's impact on the earth's ecological integrity and the ways in which violence and injustice exacerbate this impact?

We strive to do the right thing, and honor our testimonies by living in simplicity and avoiding extravagance. We don't use plastic silverware at our meetings or events, and we use a composting toilet. Everyone has a voice in decisions being made, anyone can serve on committees, and being small makes it easier to maintain simplicity. We invest in Friends Fiduciary, which invests in products which are consistent with our Quaker values and peace testimony.

from New Garden Monthly Mtg.

Integrity is the quality in a person to be honest & to have strong moral principles. These are learned skills & attitudes. It is an internal consistent lack of corruption in search of the truth. It means having a moral compass & desire to speak out against that which one knows to be wrong.

Simplicity speaks of the ability to do so in the most easily understood way.

If we hear & obey the voice of God in everything we do & say, and uphold our testimony to truthfulness we will be responding to the voice of god in each of us as individuals.

Quakers are peacemakers and as such we tend to ignore differences in order to avoid conflict, recognizing that words cannot be taken back. However, there are times when we need to become a positive life force!

Auditor's Report - Bob Frye

Report was received. There were no questions. Friends appreciated the auditor's work.

Treasurer's Report - Karen Conlan, treasurer

The report was received. There were no questions. Friends appreciated the current treasurer's work and the past treasurer's mentoring.

Letter from West Grove Monthly Meeting - re: Colora Meetinghouse

Bob Frye read the letter received from West Grove Monthly Meeting dated 10/8/2023.

A Friend from West Grove Monthly Meeting noted that the letter was signed with the maiden name of the West Grove clerk, Kathy Kirk.

Bob Frye asked if Kathy or other Friends from West Grove had anything to add.

West Grove Friends shared that Steve Balderston has maintained the Colora property for decades. He kept West Grove Meeting well informed of major work so the monthly meeting has had no actual role in care for the property.

West Grove has two meetinghouses and properties to care for and would not be able to provide adequate care for a third property and meetinghouse.

There are no longer any members of Colora Preparative Meeting but it has never been formally laid down.

*How can we lay down a preparative meeting without members?
Does that need to officially happen?*

The clerk asked if Historic Properties had anything to share with regards to Colora.

Historic Properties planned to meet with Steve Balderston in September and had to postpone that meeting due to a funeral service. We have determined a discernment process to guide us through major decisions about property. That process is outlined in the correspondence from Dick Logan read during the meeting:

"Since we expect West Grove Meeting to formally ask WQM to assume responsibility for Colora and that the committee on Historic Properties will be called on to present the case to WQM as a whole, I suggest the CHP prepare a report encompassing at least these elements and incorporating hard data:

Status of ownership - both legal responsibility and actual effective control

Financial assets

Description and condition of the property, including:

Meetinghouse

Burial ground

Nature of the terrain

Accessibility

History of major events leading to current conditions

Identity of stakeholders and their interest level in the future of the property

Why WQM needs to plan for future disposition of the property

The CHP has reviewed a variety of information, insights and opinions about the Colora property, but it lacks specific facts needed to enable WQM to make an enlightened decision about assuming responsibility for it. The only hard data the CHP has are found in the initial report by Mark Myers et al., and those were minimal with respect to Colora. What I'm suggesting requires a great deal of research and volunteer time; even defining the details of the elements I've cited will prove challenging. Yet the matter and WQM's necessary involvement won't go away, although at least we could focus on solving one problem rather than spreading attention over six.

We can also hope others in WQM with enthusiasm for such research can be recruited to tackle pieces of the project.

Friends concurred that the process outlined above should meet the quarter's needs to ascertain future disposition of the property.

Friends felt a need for clear sense of who had legal and effective control of the property and financial assets set up to maintain it.

Steve Balderston is not planning to move and is willing to engage with us in the beginning of this discernment.

Survey and deeds are available through Cecil County records. An LLC is listed as owner on some records available online.

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www.westernquarterquakers.org

Kennett Friends Meetinghouse
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610-444-1012

The coordinator will be sharing histories and photos of Colora in the coming months via the newsletter.

We are not ready in this moment to say what Western Quarterly Meeting would do with the property. That is a key question to be addressed.

Western Quarter requested a minute from West Grove Monthly Meeting laying down Colora Preparative Meeting.

A Friend suggested that fees for surveys and deed acquisition, etc. would be covered by the monies that Western Quarter agreed be used for historic properties. These funds were not to be used to physically maintain a building but to assess buildings, properties, and cover legal needs with regards to care.

Historic Properties Committee - coordinator and committee

In addition to the work noted above, Historic Properties noted that a group from Historic Properties visited Colora in May 2022. Two were able to meet with Steve Balderston at that time.

It is a lovely site and was part of the 300th anniversary tour of Western Quarter in 2014.

Historic Properties notes that all our meetings should know where boundaries and key legal documents are; every meeting needs to have more than one knowledge/record keeper/record location for each meeting.

We have begun to do some research of records available at Friends Historical Library on Colora Meeting. Margaret Moore is the key receiver and sorter of those documents. She and the coordinator plan to set up a shared folder of sorted records.

2023-07-16 Joint Quarterly Meeting Thank You minutes - Deb Wood, coordinator

For Kennett Monthly Meeting

Western Quarter minutes its appreciation to Kennett Monthly Meeting for standing in the breach and sharing their meetinghouse, helping with dishwashing and technology and quietly aiding London Grove Meeting to host Western Quarter in a meetinghouse that wasn't their own. We were in Kennett meetinghouse with London Grove hosting because of ceiling repair in the London Grove meetinghouse. Kennett's hospitality was a gift that enabled London Grove to host the joint gathering of Western and Concord Quarters. Approximately 100 gathered in person from across the two quarters.

Friends Approved.

For London Grove Monthly Meeting

Western Quarter minutes its appreciation to London Grove Monthly Meeting for its hosting of the joint gathering of Western and Concord Quarters in 7th month 2023. We were joyfully if sogily greeted on a morning that featured heavy rains and downed trees on the routes many took to the Kennett Meetinghouse that morning. Hot drinks and homemade coffee cake were welcome sustenance. Our worship together was deep, and the program with Christie Duncan-Tessmer generated lively sharing, lunch with the homemade rolls was a delicious repast, and the children's programming by Kim Brosnan-Myers engaged our lively and thoughtful youngsters.

Minute of Appreciation for the life of the London Grove Oak Tree
Western Quarter minutes its appreciation of the life of the London Grove Oak Tree. For centuries it provided friends with shade, play, and spiritual nurture. Standing when William Penn visited London Grove Meeting, it has long connected Friends in the present and to our past, and Friends past. It came down on, September 19, 2023, a quiet end-of-summer-day, between 9:30-10:00 am.

Closing worship

Upcoming Quarterly Meeting Schedule

2024-01-21 WQM hosted by Hockessin Friends Meeting - 12th Query

2024-03-10 WQM Support Committee - online 3pm

2024-04-21 WQM hosted by West Grove Friends Meeting - 3rd Query

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2024-06-09 WQM Support Committee - online 3pm

2024-07-21 WQM - Joint with Concord Quarter - WQ host is Kennett
Friends Meeting – 6th Query

2024-09-08 WQM Support Committee - online 3pm

2024-10-19 3rd SATURDAY WQM hosted by Kendal Friends Meeting - 9th
Query

Please share dates and details of holiday worship and programs for sharing
among friends.

Shared in chat during morning program from friend David Nuttall:

<https://politicalresearch.org/2012/07/24/colonizing-african-values>

https://politicalresearch.org/2009/12/01/globalizing-culture-wars#The_African_Context