

Pacific Yearly Meeting

Walker Creek Ranch, Petaluma, California

Sixth Month 18, 2016

Keynote Plenary

Diego Navarro, Presiding Clerk, welcomed all to the keynote plenary and introduced the two speakers and their two elders, who have been accompanying them and helping them in deepening and connecting with their ministry. He noted also their anchor and accountability committees sitting with them on the facing bench.

Darcy Stanley (San Francisco) shared an experience in a jail working with a group and how the group was able to come to holding some others in the light responding to a trauma.

Then she shared how she came to be in that group through doula work and the Birth Justice Project, which provides doulas in 2 different jails and other support to women.

What then happened? She knew she needed an anchor committee, and knew right away who the four people should be. The anchor committee and Darcy have met monthly for about 5 years.

These experiences showed her the conditions for lifting the veil. It can be sudden, and is hard work, and needs the support of others.

Several conditions have fostered her in doing this work. One was being raised in a Quaker family and in a Quaker meeting. She learned to listen and be listened to. In JYM and PYM Annual Session she learned to worship deeply. Friends told her that she was a minister before she even knew anything about that. They reflected to her observations about her changing.

The road was hard, dealing with anger was a challenge, and softening into the work has been happening.

The Friends helped her move into and stay with the work and the leadings.

She ended with the query: What conditions are needed to raise up new leadings in any of us?

Carl Magruder (Strawberry Creek)

Carl shared the words of Isaac Penington set to music.

He then described how Quakerism saved him, starting when he was put into foster care at three months old. After several placements a Quaker couple in 1969 adopted a brown baby, an action almost unknown at that time. Looking back at his experience being raised in Quakerism he realized that we are the Sufis of Christianity. He experienced the beloved community, the unconditional positive value for who he was. He was celebrated, loved and loved enough to be corrected. Out of that he had that foundation of radical acceptance.

Carl continued with sharing how in his twenties he began to live according to his own will, which did not go well. In final despair he asked for help. The response was to fall into the gospel of the earth and, with the aid of an elder to hold the way open, he was able to bring up a greater piece of the Gospel.

Through a fallow time Carl wandered, ending up at Pendle Hill, then onto the National Council of Churches in Washington, D.C., and then, following a 7 year leading, to seminary. In the first year he understood Fox's struggle with the professional churchmen. And then in a final class a professor named an ability in him. Through working in a hospital he began to discover an opening to work from the heart. The revelation was that for some people at dying time there is a sweetness that arises, a lifting of the veil of self-absorption and mundane concerns. As the dying physically decline they may spiritually grow and expand, looking toward the final unity.

Because of Quakerism's lack of dogma, it is the smallest, lightest carrier of religious experience, making us attractive to rationalists and activists. But the core of Quakerism is the heart experience leading to action.

Carl asked us: are we willing to be transformed, to be corrected, to explore discipline? Can we still carry that language in our community?

Presiding Clerk: Diego Navarro

Recording Clerks: Jim Anderson, Leslie Zondervan-Droz