

Orange Grove Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

RECORD

September

October



2020

Contents

- | | | | |
|---|---|----|---|
| 1 | Cover Art
<i>David Gilbert</i> | 9 | Laboring with the loyalty oath
<i>Sharon Gates</i> |
| 5 | Integrity
<i>Gary Bagwell</i> | 10 | Parsing integrity
<i>Edith M. Salisbury</i> |
| 6 | Bridging the gap
<i>Sharon Doyle</i> | 13 | The common plot
<i>Kwang-hee Park</i> |

“Now to act with integrity, according to that strength of mind and body with which our creator hath endowed each of use, appears necessary for all.”

“I find that to be a fool as to worldly wisdom, and to commit my cause to God, not fearing to offend men, who take offence at the simplicity of truth, is the only way to remain unmoved at the sentiments of others.”

John Woolman

Sharing Fund

ORANGE GROVE MEETING has a Sharing Fund. Its purpose is to assist f(F)riends who have encountered an unexpected financial setback. It is not intended for long-term support but may help in a pinch while you are figuring out Plan B or Plan C.

The Clerks Committee (Co-Clerks of the Meeting, of Pastoral Care, and of Worship & Ministry) is tasked with administering the Sharing Fund. First, the committee needs to get

a sense of the needs that f(F)riends are experiencing. If you are in difficult financial circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the “shelter-in-place” orders, and you want to apply for a sharing fund grant, please send an email to Dan Strickland or Robin DuRant that describes your situation and your unmet need. The size of the grants has not been determined, but they are likely to be three digits rather than four. ●

Get in touch

Co-clerks	Robin Durant, Dan Strickland	clerk@ogmm.org
Treasurer	Jane Krause	treasurer@ogmm.org
Archivists	Betsy Emerick, Steve Rosenbluth	archivist@ogmm.org
Database manager	Dan Strickland	admin@ogmm.org
Email announcements	Dan Strickland	announce@ogmm.org
Record editors	Mitch Cox, Zac Rigg, Ellen Weis	record@ogmm.org

For a full list of individual contacts, visit OGMM.org

Activities

After words

On the third Sunday of each month, the Worship and Ministry Committee hosts a time that we call “After words.” Bring your questions about Quakerism in general, our meeting for worship, or other subjects of interest to you. We will meet online using Zoom after the rise of Meeting, at about 12:45 pm. All are welcome. *Gary Bagwell, clerk of W&M.*

Crafty Quakers

Due to COVID-19 Crafty Quakers is now meeting via Zoom. We will be meeting the first and third Wednesdays from 7 to 9 pm. Please join us for good discussions and working on craft projects. *Contact Jane Krause for Zoom details.*

Quaker book club

Quaker book club meets the first Thursday of the month. The next book is *Bowling Alone* by Robert Putnam, which we will discuss via Zoom on December 3, at 7:30 pm. *Contact Zac Rigg for details.*

Mid-week meeting for worship

Mid-week evening meeting for worship will occur the second Wednesday of each month, from 7 to 8pm. The Zoom link will remain open until 8:30 pm for fellowship. *Gary Bagwell, clerk of W&M*

Friendly Bible study

Our Friendly Bible study meets every fourth Sunday at 9 am. For nearly two years now we have enjoyed exploring the various contexts of a given passage and relating them to personal and societal experience. It is a peer-led study and we take turns hosting. It has been fun to see how each has their own way to approach the texts. *Contact Anthony Manousos or Jochen Stack for Zoom details.*

Women’s Bible study

The women’s Bible study meets every first Wednesday from 7 to 8:30 pm. It’s like the Friendly Bible study but longer, allowing more time for sharing personal experiences. *Contact Kwang-hee Park for Zoom details.*

Adult education

Adult education classes will be held on First Days (Sundays), 10:00 am, using the same Zoom link as Meeting for Worship. Stay tuned for upcoming announcements at the rise of Meeting for Worship and via the listserv.

November 22

Worship Sharing During the Time of Zoom

November 29

Ubuntu Worship Sharing: Understanding Racism and Privilege Among Friends

Integrity

Gary Bagwell

SO MUCH MORAL BAGGAGE has been piled on the word that it reeks of sanctimonious pomposity, and I trust F(f)riends don't suspect me of that.

Oh, why even bother? I don't claim it—can't claim it. I've broken vows both sacred and civil. I've lied, cheated, and stolen. I've betrayed my honor, repeatedly. I've sinned against the Spirit, which I'm told is unforgivable.

So I turn my thoughts to another sense of the word, the quality of undivided wholeness. This resonates strongly with my early love of mathematics, and our English word for a number that can be expressed without a fractional component is integer, unchanged from the original Latin for "whole."

Yet I lack wholeness. I am fractionated, divided within. Now that I've turned 68 I self describe as having four 17-year-olds locked in a power struggle inside my head as they each try to seize the controls. On bad days, it's 17 four-year-olds.

Once upon a time there was a moment when the language processor in my head shut off for a few seconds and I was able to experience the bliss of Cosmic Unity. Being One With Everything. Effing The Ineffable. Whatever You Call It. This was life changing (as of course each moment of all our existence is) but in that strangely mysterious way that some dreams that can never quite be remembered cannot be wholly forgotten either. I remember that I once was integrated, so Whoop-De-Doo! I know beyond any doubt and fear that All Is One, yet my daily experience most often reflects my forgetful ego struggling against an implacably impassive Universe Of Benign Neglect. It's a life.

Who can be whole? Sundered from the Ground Of All Being by our terminal uniqueness, we willingly accept the illusion of separation from G-d. The survival tool of individuation, bred into us through hundreds of millions of years of evolution, relentlessly compels us to deny that Unity Is. We are eternally whole, without blemish or flaw. Disbelieving this miracle that is so commonplace as to be mundane reality, we spend our lives begging to differ, trading our soul's birthright for a mess of pottage. It's evolution—we'll grow out of it. In the meantime, let's enjoy the show.

Wiser humans than I have written of integrity, and I leave thee with a thought from Lao Tzu, who crossed my path once again this week in the form of a pocket edition given me by a friend, translated by Steven Mitchell. From old number 22—a pair of ducks (22) to card players:

If you want to become whole, let yourself be partial.

If you want to become straight, let yourself be crooked.

If you want to become full, let yourself be empty.

If you want to be reborn, let yourself die.

If you want to be given everything, give everything up. ●



Friends continue to garden together, socially distanced, on the property of Pat and Gary Wolff. Plans are in motion to create a community garden at Pacific Friends School. *Contact Zac Rigg if you'd like to get involved.*



Bridging the gap

Sharon Doyle

“living with integrity requires living a life of reflection, living in consistency with our beliefs and testimonies, and doing so regardless of personal consequences. Not least, it calls for a single standard of truth.” *Pacific Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice*

I AM A BLUNT PERSON. Telling the truth and suffering the consequences (I lost more than a few script assignments that way) has always been an easy call for me. In truth, I have never really understood why people don't do it all the time. So the testimony of integrity immediately drew me to Friends. My problem with the PacYM advices on integrity (which differ, I now know, from East Coast and UK queries in how they are organized and how didactic they are) is the phrase “single standard of truth.”

I associate truth with facts that are objective. And short of basic mathematics and natural science, there are very few actual facts out there. The number of points of view describing a single event bear witness to the fact that they are difficult to describe objectively. The older I get, the more I experience truth as relative to the life experience of the speaker. But does this mean that everything is relative? That you can't step into the same river twice, as Heraclitus put it in the 500 B.C.?

The query refers to the truth of the spirit. And this spiritual truth—some nontheists might call it emotional truth, moral truth—is felt. It is a kind of unifying overwhelming sense of how things should be, which guides us as individuals, surely and steadily. The testimonies on equality and peace feel true, even though the practice evolves over time. A shared sense of truth binds our families, our friends, our meetings for worship, our communities, and our countries together. Yet, each of us experience that truth

differently. Some of us experience it with our right brain and some of us experience it with our left brain. (For me it is often when both sides of the brain are vibrating together.). But we hunger for that sense of truth—it binds us; it keeps us coming back. When way opens and we come to unity on something after wrestling with an issue, it is a palpable experience.

But still, that word, “truth” is slippery. As a fiction writer, I know that almost all villains are completely convinced that they know the truth and that it justifies their actions. The best villains believe they are doing good. In reality, some of the worst atrocities of our shared human history have come at the hands of people who believed that they alone understood the truth or, worse, that they were acting in the name of God. But in reality, in everyday life, where most of us operate, there are very few actual villains. Often we are dealing with legitimate but competing causes supported by conflicting truths. Anyone who has brought something controversial before a city council, or a business meeting for that matter, has experience of this.

A constitutional scholar I once interviewed said that in the United States, we have two foundational values, truths if you will—freedom and equality—which exist in a creative tension. So there are times when the individual accepts restraint for the common or higher good—rationing during WWII or paying taxes. There are other times when the freedom and creativity of the individual needs to be cut loose to pioneer and achieve innovation. To worship as they see fit, to live as they see fit, to claim their identity, to protest, to mobilize groups to take action.

In recent years, that creative tension has started feeling like a war, especially when it is a struggle over justice or limited resources. It is not just the bad actors who have promoted the widening gaps we are experi-

encing in this country. We have competing legitimate points of view which bad actors—whether they are Russian moles, social media, the 24-hour news cycle, or people with utter conviction of the justice of their cause—are aggravating. We must open the economy or the people will lose their homes, their jobs, businesses they have spent a lifetime building; there are already breadlines; people will starve. Versus. We must stay quarantined and shut down because, in the long run, it will shorten the pandemic and lives will be saved. The government should just write checks and support the people, as if it were wartime. On the one hand, we have: Regulation strangles the economy and the ability of the individual businessman to prosper while the wealthy use lawsuits to evade the rules. Versus. Regulation is the only way we can save our society and the planet from racism and rapacious capitalism. And then we have: Entitlements destroy creativity and undermine the individual's motive to make his or her own achievements. In the United States, a Supreme Court justice is one generation removed from an immigrant. Versus. America is neither the land of the free nor devoted to equality if 10.5 percent of its people and 20 percent of our children live below the poverty line and 8.5 percent cannot afford healthcare. Then there is always, forget the Dream of America; burn it down, start over. Versus. The Dream of America still exists in its people. Let us look to our past to prepare for our future. Versus... well, what is your version of this?

Now I know it's artificial to break these conflicts into either/or. There are so many versions of these debates, so many ideas about how to fix the world, but this is an essay not a book, so please bear with me. One part of the difficulty in having this discussion is the inability to find common ground. What has seemed to change in our national dialogue in the last generation, particularly with the rise of identity politics—which began when the civil rights legislation of the '60s was slowly expanded to include women, old people, disabled people, the LGBTQTIA community, etc—is the idea that the other side isn't just wrong, they don't have any truth at all, because their truth denies my identity.

For me, the 2020 election has been a constant exercise in trying to see the other side's point of

view in an environment which is constantly pushing me to stay on my own side. I know 10 or 15 forever-Trumpers. Unlike what the media routinely shows us, they are neither stupid, immoral, uneducated, racists, or religious fanatics. Just as most liberals are not over-educated trust-funded atheists who never did an honest day's work in their lives. And we seem to be standing on either side of a divide barking at each other.

It is this gap which I feel needs to be addressed. What has truly upset me this year, aside from having a dangerously incompetent man in the White House, is seeing well-educated liberals assume that because a person doesn't believe in abortion on demand, a nominee for the Supreme Court will violate his or her oath of office and bend the law to overturn *Roe v Wade*. Or the gay marriage decision. That because they believe in the right to life (and bear in mind, science will someday present us with an alternative to abortion that perpetuates life), they cannot be trusted to do their jobs. And possibly worse, liberals who would ask you which pronoun you prefer have engaged in a whole stream of body shaming, outraged and denigrating memes and messages that objectify the president, his wife, his family, and those who work for him and all who believe in the right to life and the rights of free Americans.

“The testimony of integrity calls us to wholeness; it is the whole of life open to Truth. When lives are centered in the Spirit, beliefs and actions are congruent, and words are dependable.” *Pacific Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice*

There is another definition of integrity. And that is the kind of integrity that building contractors, engineers and architects follow when they design a bridge. They look for structural integrity. And as they seek it, they must consider the whole life of the bridge—how long they want it to stand, what kind of stresses and disasters it might have to endure. You don't want your bridge to collapse in a storm, to fail because too many people are on it, to collapse on top of buildings. The bridge must have structural integrity from the page to

the first girder to the last bolt tightened.

So here it is, my blunt truth: How long and under what conditions, do we want our flawed country to stand? Our country, which Quakers helped found in the name of free speech and religious freedom (which did not used to be a right for anyone) to stand? If there is a way to bridge this gap, to bind Americans together in the truth of the Spirit, it will only come if we respect the humans on the other side of our belief gap and

actively listen to their truth. Possibly even hear the pain behind it. Are there bad actors on the other sides of these questions? Oh my, Yes. But they are not yet the majority, and I believe it is up to Friends to reach across that gap and seek common hearts, common goals, common ground, common truths. It is only then that we can be agents of true change in the world and begin the long work of bringing integrity back to the country we live in. ●

Ben Lomond Quaker Center

Quaker Center is a retreat & conference center under the care of the Religious Society of Friends. Almost every month, Quaker Center offers workshops on topics of interest to Quakers and others. These programs are open to the general public. Scholarships are available for those in need. Be sure to let the directors know about childcare needs ahead of the workshop.

Upcoming online programs

December 4 – 6 2020

11th Annual Music and Dance Retreat

Join us online as we sing, dance and make music, beginning Friday night, December 4th, Saturday afternoon/ evening and Sunday morning worship with song.

December 12, 2020 4PM (PT)

Annie Patterson & Peter Blood in concert (online)

Come join the fun on Zoom! Put your microphone on mute and sing your heart out with Annie and Peter. No one else will hear you but . . . so what! It works better than you think, especially if you can't hold a tune

December 27, 2020 – January 1, 2021

Living Into the Center: Integrity & Renewal

We welcome you to join us as we gather as Friends for worship, worship sharing, music, mini-workshops and Bible study, balanced with plenty of time for walks and reflection. Social time and activities will be available for all ages and abilities.

For more updates and program registration, visit us at www.quakercenter.org

Laboring with the loyalty oath

Sharon Gates

IN 1992, WHEN I was a graduate student at Cal Poly Pomona, I was hired as a teaching assistant for an undergraduate class in my department. When I went to sign the hiring paperwork, I was appalled to discover that I had to sign an oath to uphold the constitution of the State of California—a loyalty oath. Of course, the form said that I “swear or affirm,” but it still felt like an oath to me and I was extremely uncomfortable. I asked the clerk who was stepping me through the documents what would happen if I didn’t sign that particular one and she told me that I wouldn’t be hired. Being somewhat stunned and feeling like I had little choice, I signed. It felt terrible.

What’s the big deal about oaths? When you sign an oath, you are swearing (or affirming) that you will do something—tell the truth, uphold the Constitution, do no harm, not bring fire into the library, etc. Signing an oath says, in essence, “now I mean what I’m saying.” This implies that you may or may not have meant what you were saying before you signed. Signing an oath says that you have a variable standard for your behavior: You act one way when you’re under oath and another under “normal circumstances.” Or you might not, there’s really no way to tell. Pacific Yearly Meeting’s Faith & Practice says the “testimony of integrity calls us to wholeness; it is the whole of life open to Truth. When lives are centered in the Spirit, beliefs and actions are congruent, and words are dependable.” Signing an oath says that your words are not necessarily dependable unless you have signed an oath. It says that you do not act with integrity.

Back to my terrible feelings about signing the

oath. I wanted to talk to someone who had a greater understanding of the whole issue of loyalty oaths, so I decided to talk to Bob Vogel at Meeting the following First Day. For those who didn’t know Bob or haven’t heard about him, Bob was a long-time member of Orange Grove Meeting who had no separation between his spiritual life and his worldly life. Bob was a Quaker through and through, 24/7. Bob had been very active with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and many other organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). I was confident that Bob could educate me about loyalty oaths and help me discern what I needed to do in the face of having felt forced to sign one.

When I told Bob about my experience the following First Day, I was surprised at his reaction. He laughed a little and seemed to think I was making too much of it. He summed up the history of loyalty oaths (particularly for teachers in California) in a way that led me to believe that he had been through all of this many times before. When I asked him if I should do something, file a protest, whatever, his attitude seemed to be that this ship had sailed. The fight had been fought, we don’t have to swear anymore (we can affirm), and I should focus on more important issues.

Bob’s advice was unexpected, but comforting. I felt like I was off the hook for having acted in a way that seemed to lack integrity. I learned a lesson in choosing my battles (not everything is worth a fight) and in self forgiveness. I learned the value of doing what I can and forgiving myself when I am not led to do more. ●



Friends gathered for worship in the meeting house courtyard on October 18 and Nov. 1
Photos by Claire Gorfinkel and Zac Lee Rigg

Parsing integrity

Edith M. Salisbury

INTEGRITY, WHERE DO WE BEGIN? Perhaps with Faith and Practice. “Testimonies are an expression of lives turned toward the Light, outward expressions that reflect the inward experience of divine guidance.” But what if one fails to act in accordance with this testimony? In some faith groups this is called a sin. How do Quakers view the inevitable deviations from our articles of faith? I do not know. But I have long been troubled by a particular deviation from my beliefs which have always accorded with Quaker beliefs. Did I “sin”?

In December 1957 I boarded a local bus in Jacksonville, Florida. I was a 21-year-old student at an Ivy League University. I had spent my life in a small town in upstate New York, but my parents moved in the fall of 1957. A friend of mine and I were travelling by bus to spend the holidays with them in Clearwater, Florida.

My experience with racism was limited but telling. In my hometown—Canisteo, New York—there was one minority family. Mrs. Gatewood, as she was known to everyone, taught piano lessons and played the organ in the Baptist Church. Most of us knew no more than that about her or her children and grandchildren. I was attending a university which had minuscule minority representation. And, yes, racism was part of the life experience of all who were students there. I had, however, not experienced the Southern practice of racism.

My life as a student was consumed with the work of getting an education, plus 20 hours a week working for room and board in a dormitory. While I did know about segregation and hatred of minorities, I had no awareness of the Civil Rights movement that was beginning to change the entitlement or our country’s majority-imposed racism. I do not present this as an excuse; there is no excuse for such ignorance. So, with

no knowledge of Rosa Parks’ refusal to yield her seat on a bus to a white man in December 1955, I entered the bus and proceeded directly to the back because there were no seats together in the front. I realized that the faces were no longer white and that passengers were looking at us aghast. I can still see the fear in those eyes. Nevertheless, back we went to the last seat on that bus and sank into our shared space, happy to be settled at last on one of the many legs of our journey. The bliss did not last long.

The bus driver entered the bus, turned, face a burning rageful scarlet, fists clenched and bellowed, “You two kids get in front of this bus.” There was a flash of resistance in my mind but some inner gut wisdom told me that this was over my head. We moved. Scared and humiliated we paraded back to our designated space. If I had been approached calmly and told that it was necessary for me to move because I was violating the deepest beliefs of the South that I was travelling through, I would have refused. I am convinced of that. My belief in the equality of all people would have supported me in that resistance. But, I felt threatened with violence. I was no Rosa Parks. So, how did Rosa Parks and the other Civil Rights activists have the courage to persist in the face of abuse, threats, and violence? They did not go into those places alone. Besides their beliefs, faith, and moral commitment, they were part of a community and had been trained and educated in the ways of civil disobedience and how to respond to violence. I was alone, with no support, encouragement, or training in civil disobedience. Am I guilty of a moral lapse? According to our testimony of “living in consistency with our beliefs and doing so regardless of personal consequences,” it would seem that I am guilty. Still, on page 39 of Faith and Practice a footnote tells us that Dutch Friends showed integrity when they lied to save

Jewish members of their community. It appears that in instances where the choice is between one wrong and another, integrity might depend on circumstances.

We have a testimony with a high bar for choosing moral behavior. And yet, it takes into account the various situations that life presents to us. Where are our Talmudic scholars? Our 10 good men and true? We do have clearness committees, but that involves advance planning. What if, in the moment, one must make choices between options any one of which

would lead to a violation of our beliefs? I know that I act with integrity sometimes. Sometimes I do not. The rest of the time I try to do the best I can under the circumstances.

Reading what I have written here, I think that something is missing. It is needing more depth and breadth. Perhaps I have written an introduction to a book. Dear, gentle reader, perhaps you will be the one who writes that book. •

“*...my convictions led me to adhere to the sufficiency of the light within us, resting on truth as authority, rather than ‘taking authority for truth.’*”

Lucretia Mott

Ministry in Silence

The conviction that we can communicate directly with God's Eternal Spirit through the silence is the basis of our worship. Deeper than words is the presence of the Spirit. Spoken messages should deepen the sense of this presence. It is hard for us to attain this, since we are so used to speaking for many other purposes. The following suggestions may help us to increase the times when we are genuinely moved in the Spirit.

1. Messages should speak close to our condition. It is helpful to be aware of the needs of the Meeting and individuals in it.
2. Messages should speak from the heart to the heart. Prepared discourses and readings are seldom in keeping with the silence.
3. Messages that are briefly spoken are more likely to deepen the quality of silence.
4. Silence after each message allows for that deepening.
5. Preparation throughout the week through reading, meditation and right living helps us to come to Meeting with the sense of calm which allows full participation in the silence.
6. Those of us who find that we speak easily should exercise restraint. Those of us who find great difficulty in speaking should feel encouraged to respond more easily to the inner urge.
7. Other occasions are provided for introductions, for matters of business, and for economic and political discussions. Our words should indicate not a spirit of controversy, but an openness to the presence.
8. Those who come late to Meeting disturb the silence of those who are gathered. We need a full hour to worship together.

April, 1949
Reprinted 5/54

Committee of Ministry and Counsel
Orange Grove Friends Meeting

The common plot

Kwang-hee Park

“All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again.”

Ecclesiastes 3:20 (King James version)

HELEN WAS A LONG-TIME MEMBER of her Quaker Meeting. She lived to be 85 years old.

When she moved on, Olivia, a friend of Helen, heard that there would be a burial service for Helen. Olivia wanted to say a goodbye to Helen and invited her husband, Jeffrey, to accompany her to the burial.

While they were driving to the burial site, they talked about cremation and different burial ceremonies in the Christian tradition, and what they liked and what they didn't like. They didn't really know what they would want for themselves. They were curious about how Quakers buried friends in their religious community.

At the cemetery, Olivia's attention was caught by words written on the wall in one corner: “The Common Plot.” It marked the site where the ashes of Quakers were put in the ground who chose to have no marker placed or even name written. It was the common plot—everyone together.

It had rained in the morning, and it was still cloudy in the afternoon. Olivia and Jeffrey walked around the cemetery until the ceremony began. They returned to the common plot.

The clerk of the burial committee had dug a hole two feet deep. He pulled out a bag from a small container in which Helen's ashes were kept. Olivia remembered the words of Ecclesiastes: “You are dust and will return to the dust.” She was deeply touched.

The clerk, bending over to make the hole bigger, sang in a soft voice, “Nobody knows the troubles I have seen; nobody knows but Jesus.”

Then the burial ceremony began. Twelve guests

gathered, forming a circle around the hole. They held silence.

After some time, one by one, friends shared memories about Helen. Helen was a passionate Democrat and feminist. She had a very tough childhood, but she was able to let go and influence many people's lives. One of Helen's friends said, “She helped so many. The way that she helped to improve the lives of the poor was amazing.”

Olivia remembered that Helen had adopted a girl from China. Helen loved classical music. Her daughter became a professional violinist. Helen supported many music students at a local university. She didn't have biological children of her own and she never married. As a political science professor, she saw herself as a spokesperson for the poor and the powerless in Mexico and the United States.

Another friend of Helen shared that Helen had a very strong life energy. She was able to fight back aggressive cancer. Even her doctors were surprised that she lived as long as she did.

Olivia thought that Helen fought a good fight. She overcame her own troubled childhood and committed herself to social justice.

When the sharing of memories had come to a close, the clerk of the burial committee grabbed a small hand shovel, took some of the ashes from the plastic bag, and poured them into the hole.

One by one, every guest in the circle took the shovel and placed ashes from the bag into the hole. Now it was Olivia's turn. She poured ashes and she said very quietly, “Helen, I love you.” The next person poured ashes into the hole and mixed in a little grass and green leaves. Then Jeffrey did it with a solemn face.

Finally, it was time to fill in the hole with dirt.

Everyone participated.

After the ceremony was over, some friends of Helen remained and talked more about Helen. It was a while before people scattered.

Back in their car, Jeffrey said to Olivia, “What a beautiful and meaningful ceremony. So communal. Everyone participated. What an experience it was to grab that shovel, take Helen’s ashes, and pour them into the hole, and then to pass the shovel on to the next friend.”

Olivia said, “Yes, I am glad that Helen was buried in the common plot, together with her friends who loved her and shared her life of faith.” ●

*Kwang-hee has written a book, *Stories of Spiritual Healing—Becoming Well*, with 41 stories of ordinary people who pursued divine guidance in their lives. The story printed here, *The Common Plot*, describes an experience at an Orange Grove Meeting burial. Names have been changed. The book will be published in 2021.*

Orange Grove cemetery

In 1913, a member of Orange Grove Meeting purchased and donated a small burial ground at 2400 North Fair Oaks Ave. in Altadena, adjoining Mountain View Cemetery. There is space here for over a hundred body burials and for many more cremated remains.

The cemetery is available for burial of members of Orange Grove Meeting. Burial of others requires the approval of Meeting. The Meeting retains its name title to the cemetery property and charges no fee for its use. Donations are welcome.

To indicate your wishes for final arrangements, please print and submit the [Final Arrangements Form](#).

Please contact Cliff Lester (burial committee) or Jochen Strack (pastoral care committee) for more information.

USE OF A CONVENTIONAL LOT

Conventional lots are available and simple flat markers are permitted. Bodies or cremated remains may be interred in these lots.

USE OF THE COMMON PLOT

One plot, Number 81, has been set aside for a common place for cremated remains. Remains are buried without containers and there are no individual grave, vault, niche, or identification markers. Those who plan to use the common plot should make their wishes quite clear to family or heirs and in their wills because remains will not be able to be identified, reclaimed, or exhumed.

How do I...

Make an announcement?

Write it down and put it in the announcement basket before meeting starts. The announcement basket is either on the table in front of the fireplace or in the library. There are often helpful blank forms. If your announcement is not meeting related, it will be announced at the discretion of the announcement clerk.

Get something out on the email list?

If you are a clerk or a representative, you can submit on your own. If you aren't a clerk, ask a clerk to do it for you. If the concern is appropriate for the email list, the clerk may list it for you. The list of clerks is on page 23. Submit announcements to the database clerk.

Get reimbursed for a Meeting expense?

Look for the file box in the Library. In the treasurer's folder are blank forms which you can fill out and leave in the treasurer's folder with the receipts. In general, the treasurer needs to know who has authorized the expense—the committee and the clerk. The treasurer can also email you a form.

Get something in the Record?

Contact the editors or send an email to record@ogmm.org with an idea or an article. The Record comes out every two months.

Find out how to join Meeting?

Talk to any member of Pastoral Care or Worship and Ministry or email the committee. Read the pamphlet on membership in the pamphlet rack next to the back door. The easiest way to begin: Write a letter to the clerk and say, "I want to join Orange Grove Meeting." It is a three month process generally.

Find out how to join a Committee?

Talk to any member of the nominating committee or email the nominating committee, or talk to the members of the committee. Some committees have open policies on joining them; some require a process.

Contribute to Meeting?

Meeting is always trying to raise its budget. You can drop a check in the announcement basket, in the wooden box in the Fellowship Room. The most painless way to donate is to go to our website and arrange for a PayPal donation—\$20 a month really adds up.

Request a clearness committee?

Speak to the clerk of Pastoral Care or ask any member of Meeting to find out if a clearness committee is appropriate to help you make a decision or solve a problem.