

SPOKANEWORD

July
2020



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Humility

by Jeremy Ashworth

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:1-5

Like much of the New Testament, the book of Philippians is someone else's mail. Not only that, it's jail mail, written by the apostle Paul when he was imprisoned for the gospel.

Philippians 2:1-11 is dazzling. It culminates with a cosmic vision of an exalted Christ, where every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus is the name about every name. This is a universal, worshipful realization that Jesus was and is and always will be every blessed thing he said he was. We would do well to read, reread, even re-reread verses 9-11, to be still in the light of that glory.

But before the glory comes the humility. Jesus the living Word becomes physically embodied, made flesh, Emmanuel, God-with-us. The mysterious, pre-existent God climbs down and crawls inside a simple earthly existence. Eternity enters time. The Creator slips quietly into creation, tiny and soft, alive and kicking in the womb of Mary. How could God possibly come closer? This is no distant deity.

The God who chooses a human life also chooses a human death. And not just any human death; Jesus died on a cross. To grasp the significance of this, we 21st century believers need to be re-sensitized to the cross. We need an unsanitized understanding of the cross.

The original cross wasn't jewelry; it was naked public torture. More than just a method of execution, crucifixion was a gruesome advertisement, a bloody, humiliating PSA that made an example of an enemy: "Don't mess with us. Don't mess with our interests. Don't mess with our power. This can happen to you." The cross sent a message.

It is one thing to choose the limitations and frailties of a human life. It is another thing entirely to fully embrace the cross. It is one thing to "put yourself out there" and risk possible rejection. It is another thing to do so knowing that your vulnerable overture will be violently refused. It is the cost of coming close, the inherent danger of embodied love. Jesus counted the cost. Then he paid the price.

That's when the cross took on a very different message: The cross is what love look like. The cross is God turning the other cheek. The cross is not Jesus acting out of self-interest, but acting in the best interest of others, whether or not those "others" realize it or accept it. Glorious humility.

This enormous theological vision (v. 6-11) lands hard on a single point of practical application: Have the same mindset as Christ Jesus (v. 5). Go and do likewise. If Jesus was humble, you can be too.

Humility is hard. Some of us struggle with low self-esteem. Some of us struggle with high self-esteem. On the surface, self-aggrandizement and self-hatred look like polar opposites. But deep down, they have a common core: a wounded soul turned in on itself, self-centered and self-absorbed. Pride and self-loathing are not opposites of each other. Together, they are the opposite of humility and the opposite of Christlikeness. So whether we think too

(continued on next page)

**Sunday Schedule
during
Covid-19 Restrictions**

Morning Worship

10:00 am

At Meeting House

And Via Zoom

See Website For Link

(continued from last page)

have the opposite of humility and the opposite of Christlikeness. So whether we think too highly of ourselves or too lowly of ourselves, all of us need something — or someone — to come close, go deep, and pry us off ourselves.

Verses 2-5 can and should be turned into deep interpersonal questions for the body of Christ. Are we like-minded? Do we have the same love? Are we one in spirit?? Are we of one mind? Do we do anything—anything—out of selfish ambition? Do we do anything out of vain conceit? Do we value others above ourselves? Do we look to our own interests, or the interests of others? And if so, how do we conspicuously demonstrate this?

... [We] may be inclined to apply these questions to our own churches. That is necessary. It is also insufficient. I am told that, according to Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, there are now over 40,000 Christian denominations worldwide. Please let that number sink in.

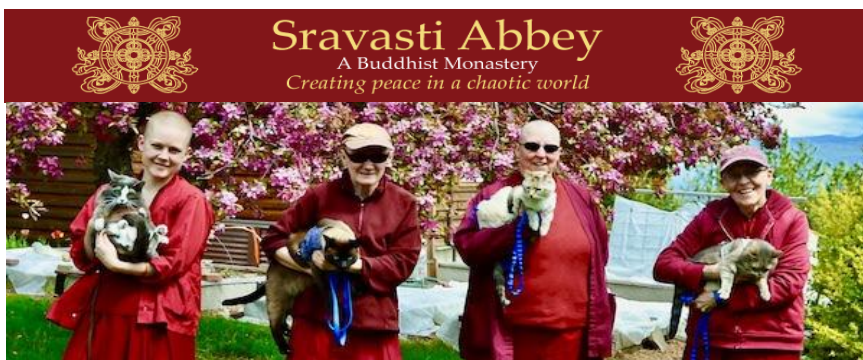
I consistently meet people—believers and unbelievers—who do not even know what a denomination is. I would be very hard pressed to describe more than a few denominations, and I am a lifelong religious professional. I'm an enthusiastic Protestant, but I am completely at a loss to give an account for the existence of 40,000 different Christian brands in light of Philippians 2:2-6. These verses are not "gray areas" of the Bible where "scholars disagree"; they are painfully clear commands. More than that, in the context of this scripture, these directives are rooted in our view of Jesus.

Jesus is infinitely more than a role model, and humility is more than a nice virtue. Christians have a generous view of others and a modest, honest view of ourselves for one reason: because we have a high view of Jesus. Christians believe that Jesus was and is and always will be every blessed thing he said he was. And this Christology demands relentless humility. The body of Christ should have the mind of Christ. In theological terms it's not a stretch. In practical terms it may be a miracle.

So I hold on to miracles, because I hold on to Jesus. His entire existence was and is a universe-bending concert of miracles. Perhaps Christ-like humility is more than a tame moral virtue. Perhaps Christ-like humility is the self-emptying, message-sending, knee-bending, tongue-confessing, death-defeating, servant-leading, other-loving God-glorifying, world-changing miracle all of us need.

Jeremy Ashworth is pastor of Circle of Peace Church of the Brethren in Peoria, Arizona. **Copyright Messenger magazine, all rights reserved, used by permission, link to <http://www.brethren.org/messenger/articles/2020/humility>.**

A Thank-you Note from Sravasti Abbey
(Ven. Samten, our Buddhist speaker last month,
donated her honorarium to the Abbey.)



Spokane Friends,

6/25/2020

Thank you for your kind offering of \$100.00 and for helping create peace in a chaotic world.

Right now there is so much uncertainty in the US and in the world. Kind and caring people like you are essential to maintaining a sense of hope and clarity as human beings meet these challenges together.

In these difficult times, people are yearning for peace of mind and human connection. Your offering directly supports the Abbey's mission of bringing the Buddha's teachings of compassion and wisdom to all. . . .

We dedicate merit for benefactors every day, and in a special ceremony twice a month. Your name is on that prayer list. You are in our thoughts as we dedicate for your good health and good conditions for practice.

Thank you for helping to create peace in a chaotic world.

Thubten Nyima, for Friends of Sravasti Abbey

The Book of Joy

by the Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, and Douglas Abrams

Eight friends completed a nine-week study of The Book of Joy, meeting weekly via Zoom to discuss the assigned pages they were reading. The lessons learned and the opinions shared ranged far and wide, challenging us to realize that our different experiences of the book came from the different life experiences we brought to it.

Three interesting concepts played a role in how these two spiritual leaders see the world, and each had its own name.

Ubuntu captures the idea that humanity is a shared experience, that we are bound to each other by deep ties, that "I am who I am because of who we all are." Survival after birth is dependent on the care of others; culture, language, ethics, are given to us by others; and as part of this greater whole, I am diminished when another is oppressed or humiliated.

Tonglen means "giving and taking" and is visualized as taking in the pain of others with each in-breath and sending out love and forgiveness on the out-breath. In the process we begin to feel love for ourselves and others; we begin to take care of ourselves and others.

Mudita means sympathetic or unselfish joy in the good fortune of others. It is extended to all beings, not just to those close to you. This is possible when we recognize our shared humanity, when we develop a sense of "we" rather than "I and they".

Eight pillars of joy were given: perspective, humility, humor, acceptance, forgiveness, gratitude, compassion and generosity., and each was discussed at length. There was general agreement among us that forgiveness was the most difficult one to practice. The book concluded with no less than 23 "joy practices" that we were invited to try in

our own lives.

Many of our pets made themselves known during our studies, and they were welcome, since a major Buddhist prayer desires all "beings" (not just humans) to be happy. Here are some of them, along with comments on the book by their humans.

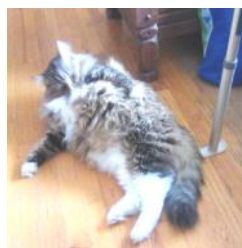


Linda P's cats Gus (top) and Sophie (under)

"Reading the Book of Joy was a pleasure but the best part was sharing the experience with others. Everyone felt free to contribute and share their reflections on the book as well as personal experiences. The Book of Joy was thought provoking and offered a new way to look at joy and happiness but sharing it with others brought me the most joy." — Linda Pierce

This book came at a good time. While we don't know all of the conversations between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu, there is enough information to thoughtfully consider. The chapter on forgiveness is particularly important right now."

— Sue Rehnert



Sue's Maine Coon Cat

joy is a deep well of the good life. find your way there - without delay - and drink like your life depends on it. your life depends on the joy that finds you. — paul



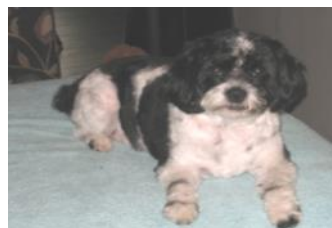
Wendell lives with Paul and Veronika



Judi and Tucker

"I really enjoyed the process of exploring this book with everyone in the group! The topic of joy seems pretty simple, but I loved how they brought in ideas and thoughts on how we can still find JOY, even amidst the suffering of the world. I especially appreciated the awareness and insight provided by the other members of the group as we explored different perspectives on joy, suffering, and compassion."

— Judi Puckett



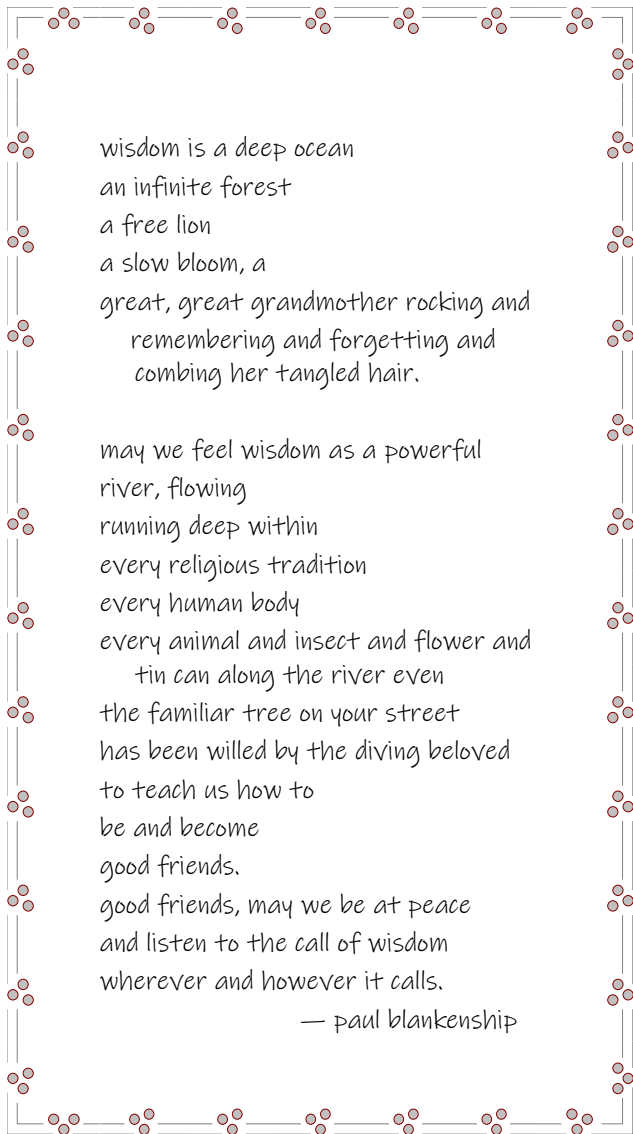
Sally's puppy Olen



Lois's cat Black Orpheus



Pam and Jeffrey



wisdom is a deep ocean
an infinite forest
a free lion
a slow bloom, a
great, great grandmother rocking and
remembering and forgetting and
combing her tangled hair.

may we feel wisdom as a powerful
river, flowing
running deep within
every religious tradition
every human body
every animal and insect and flower and
tin can along the river even
the familiar tree on your street
has been willed by the diving beloved
to teach us how to
be and become
good friends.
good friends, may we be at peace
and listen to the call of wisdom
wherever and however it calls.

— paul blankenship

Getting Started (Educating Ourselves about Racism)

Read a Book

America's Original Sin by Jim Wallis

Prophetic Lament: A Call for Justice in Troubled Times by Soong-
Chan Rah

White Fragility by Robin D'Angelo

The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander

How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram Kendi

Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People by Mahzarin R. Banaji

Watch a Movie

Just Mercy

Dear White People (Justin Simien) Netflix

I am Not Your Negro (James Baldwin documentary)

If Beale Street Could Talk (Barry Jenkins) Hulu

The Hate You Give (George Tillman Jr.) Hulu with Cinemax

These are just a few suggestions. Within the next couple weeks we hope to publish a more extensive list of materials that Friends can use for self-education about racial injustice and how it can best be reduced or eradicated. (Quakers are a hopeful people.)

Equality is a Quaker Testimony

Many of us have been involved in one way or another in the activities following the death of George Floyd, when we have been once again reminded of our country's seeming lack of concern about racial injustice in our criminal and economic systems.

Lorna Hernandez Jarvis, in her capacity as Chief Diversity Officer and Associate Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, has suggested to Whitworth faculty and staff what they might do to help us lament, reflect, plan for change and commit to action. She has given permission to share some not focused particularly for faculty.

- Think about your own circles of influence. Who are your friends (or closest friends)? Your spiritual leaders? The authors you have recently read? The podcasts you listen to? List all these names and their race/ethnicity. Any patterns? Identify ways to enlarge your circle to become more multicultural and richer in the variety of experiences and perspectives.
- Learn about your own implicit biases by taking several of the Harvard Implicit Association tests, and see what you learn about yourself at implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html.
- Watch a movie on racism. Ask others to watch it with you and discuss it. Coming soon: a page on our website with recommendations of movies.
- Choose a book about racial injustice and share it with a friend or family member so you can talk about it together.
- Find and support organizations in your community that are already working to dismantle racism.

CALLED MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES

31 May 2020



The virtual called meeting was opened by Assistant Presiding Clerk, Jon Maroni. Bob Wiese led in prayer. 14 people were in attendance via Zoom.

The minutes from the May 24th meeting were read and approved as read.

Our treasurer, Jon Maroni, gave the responses to his recent email regarding how much money individuals would commit to give to the meeting on a monthly basis. There were 10 people who responded with a total amount of \$3,240. Caritas is still just paying \$550. The proposal from the February meeting suggests the new payment should be \$900. TOPS has continued their monthly payment during COVID in hopes of returning to the Meeting House soon.

At the previous meeting on May 24th we had some discussion about how much more to pay Paul Blankenship for the months of June and July. People had a week to pray about this and those that were at the meeting today decided on an additional \$400 through July. This was approved.

With no further business and all hearts were clear, the meeting was closed by Anya Lawrence.

Respectfully submitted:

Linda Nixon, Recording Clerk

MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES

21 June 2020

The meeting was opened by Presiding Clerk Jonas Cox. 16 people were in attendance.

The minutes from the May 31st meeting were read and approved as read.

Treasurer's Report – no report today

Stewards & Trustees Report – the new amount of \$900 a month was presented to the Caritas Board, no response at this time.

Elder's Report – a new contract for the months of June and July has been written up and approved for our pastor Paul Blankenship. The Visioning meeting has been postponed because of the COVID pandemic. Jon and Krista Maroni are going to help with the Web site upgrade. \$250 was approved for the Library upgrade. Walter Simon has offered his expertise at writing grants for non-profit organizations. There has to be a project in the works to do this. A schedule for the next 2 months has been set for the Sunday messages.

Pastor's Report – Paul expressed his thanks and gratitude for the time he has spent with us as an interim pastor and also for the increase in his salary. He is looking forward to a special speaker in July from the new director at Pendle Hill, Francisco Burgos. Not sure if this will be on Zoom or in person.

With no further business and all hearts and minds were clear the meeting was closed with prayer by Pam Emery,

Respectfully submitted

Linda Nixon, Recording Clerk

Phrases of Praises

Can you identify the hymns in which the following phrases appear?

1. That Christ has regarded my helpless estate
2. The rivers of sorry shall not overflow
3. Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
4. Well-spring of the joy of living, ocean-depth of happy rest
5. Let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace
6. Stop to my weakness, mighty as thou art



ANSWERS: 1. When Peace Like a River (It is Well with my Soul); 2. How Firm a Foundation; 3. Great is Thy Faithfulness; 4. Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee; 5. Dear Lord and Father of Man-kind; 6. Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart..

Caritas Stats for May 2020



Individuals served	546
Households served	238
Children (0-18)	141
Adults (18-54)	225
Seniors (55 & over)	180
Lbs. of food through the Table of Plenty & Food Pantry	
	26,207
Hygiene & Cleaning Supplies	\$ 210.00
Number of Volunteers	42
Volunteer Hours	2447

Summer Meal Kits for Kids

Starting Monday, June 22, Caritas again began distributing Summer Meal Kits for Kids. These are shelf stable take home bags filled with 5 breakfast items, 5 lunch entrees, and kid friendly snacks. Families may pick up kits once a week with their regular food boxes. They are looking for donations!

Single serve breakfast boxes	Tuna pouches
Wrapped breakfast pastries	Granola bars
Breakfast bars	Single serve trail mix
Boxed juices	Crackers/pretzels
Shelf stable boxed milks	Single serve nuts/seed
Instant oatmeal packets	Dried fruit/fruit leather
Microwave mac n cheese	Boxed juices
Microwave raviolis	Peanut butter pods
Microwave soups	Shelf stable fruit cups

*"He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.
Isaiah 61:1b (LNT)*

Kelsie Rowland
Operations Manager
Caritas Outreach Ministries

Quaker News

- ⇒ **Northwest Yearly Meeting** annual sessions will be held virtually on July 19-21, 2020. Main speaker will be Joseph Clair, PhD., Dean of College of Christian Studies, Liberal Arts, and Honors & Associate Professor of Theology at George Fox University. His theme will be "Thriving."
- ⇒ Come walk with **West Hills Friends** into the future. We are seeking an exceptional individual to join our welcoming and uniquely diverse Quaker community as a released minister. If you are interested in learning more about this position, go to <https://westhillsfriends.org/jobposting>
- ⇒ **Thursdays with Friends** is a new online conversation series brought to you by FCNL during this period of great difficulty when we are isolated from our loved ones. It is a 30-minute community chat on issues that Quakers and people of faith continue to work on, whatever the circumstances. For more information, go to <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/thursdays-with-friends-2695>
- ⇒ At their annual session last month, Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends passed a very compelling **Minute for Black Lives** which suggests specific areas of racial tension and what members commit to do to attempt reconciliation as a body of Quakers. You can read it in the 6-19-20 issue of their newsletter at <https://www.scymfriends.org/newsletter-archives>
- ⇒ Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends will hold its **Quarterly Meeting** this fall at Eugene Friends Church on Saturday, October 24, 2020.

Two options to worship with Spokane Friends this month

The Meeting House is now open for those who wish to **meet in person** for worship. We follow the Governor's guidelines which are listed below: Attendees must wear face masks and maintain social distancing. In addition, they must use hand sanitizer when entering and leaving and cannot consume in the Building. Singing is permitted with face masks.

Those **attending via Zoom** will use the link on the Welcome page of the Meeting's website at spokanefriends.com just as they have during the last two months.

Sunday Worship Schedule

July 5	Paul Blankenship
July 12	Sarah Scott
July 19	Francisco Burgos, Executive Director of Pendle Hill
July 26	Paul Blankenship
Aug 1	Oscar Mmbale, a Kenyan pastor working overseas in Belize