

# SPOKANENWORD

September  
2020



Spokane Friends

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Sunday Schedule  
during  
Covid-19 Restrictions

Morning Worship

10:00 am

At Meeting House

And Via Zoom

See Website For Link

## The Messy Ethics of Giving

by Joe Morris

Why do Quakers soft-pedal the importance of financial giving? It's true, our Unprogrammed meetings don't need as much as conventional churches since they typically lack paid staff and large buildings. But beyond those differences, we seem to be quite uneasy in even bringing up the topic.

The one shining exception I have found is a two-page section in North Pacific Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice* on "Stewardship of Money and Other Resources."

These Friends don't mince words:

"Wealth, or a perceived lack of it, has an effect on every outward aspect of our life."

"Money, well-used, can make needed changes possible."

"Unequal distribution of wealth is one of the seeds of war."

Money is important. It can reach thousands of causes that individual efforts cannot. In areas like Central Africa most people die before the age of sixty without once seeing a physician. A contribution of a single day's wages in the U.S. can often save a life in a medical clinic far away.

Generosity does not require us to deprive ourselves of what we need for a full life. But it does require us to consider what we spend on ourselves. We need to determine how we distinguish needs from wants. For some, a trip to Hawaii or a gym membership would appear to be a necessity, as these provide rejuvenation from stressful, sedentary jobs. To others, maybe not.

Quakers are generally well-educated and have professional careers. Most Friends would likely consider a salary of \$50K to be a modest one; yet only one person in 300 worldwide makes that much or more. A salary of \$80K or higher is only earned by one in 1,000. Most Americans, and especially most Quakers, are unabashed beneficiaries of global inequality.

Try this simple but revealing exercise for yourself. Go to [www.givingwhatwecan.org](http://www.givingwhatwecan.org) and scroll down to the question, "How rich am I?" Insert your after-tax income and find its rank compared to the rest of the world. I found it a humbling discovery, but also inspiring in terms of the good I can do. Maybe you will, too.

It's quite possible that the donations we make can bring about the greatest social good we will ever perform in our lives. Yet donations involve messy ethical choices, which are, in turn, based on *heart* choices and *head* choices.

Heart choices are powerful for everyone. Appeals to our sympathies and fellow-feelings, especially when combined with concrete examples, can evoke quick generosity. A televised appeal showing abused animals or starving children will have some people reaching quickly for their checkbooks. We also give for less noble reasons, such as anxiety that someone will feel rejected if we are stingy in our wills or pride at being named an "angel" on a list of a nonprofit's contributors.

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(continued from last page) These sentiments are natural and not to be ignored. A kind heart is the basis of altruistic giving. Let yourself savor and enjoy the inner spirit of good within you. Consider the things that bring you the most happiness, the things that matter to you most, and base your giving there. For example, if you are an amateur musician, you might enjoy contributing to a public-school music program. Going with a concern that strongly appeals to you can lead to other involvement, such as after-school music tutoring or helping with a program's fund-raising.

In addition to making good heart choices, we need to listen to our heads. It's essential to consider how many people will benefit from our giving, in what way, and by how much. In 2015 William Macaskill launched a movement called "effective altruism" with his book *Doing Good Better*. Macaskill's goal is to short-circuit the usually subjective and uninformed ways that people give money by developing an approach, based on facts and careful reasoning, that can powerfully multiply the benefits of a person's philanthropy.

A key guideline is to examine the overhead costs of an organization compared to the direct services it provides to its clients. Consider, for instance, two nonprofits with the identical goal of teaching computer skills to girls in Ghana. One spends 80% of its income annually on administrators' salaries, fundraising, and rentals. The other operates much more efficiently: 40% of its income goes to the same overhead costs, leaving 60% for direct service to its girls.

Obviously, everything else being the same, we would write our checks to the second organization. However, charitable organizations rarely publish the amounts they spend on overhead versus program. For information like this, we can turn to "charity assessment organizations." The two most well-established and respected ones are Charity Navigator ([charitynavigator.org](http://charitynavigator.org)) and Charity Watch ([charitywatch.org](http://charitywatch.org)). Both organizations rate nonprofits with an overall grade of A-D and also give details about the basis of each rating. However, because around a million nonprofits exist in the U.S., these two organizations can only cover the largest and most prominent ones.

Here's a relevant example: the American Friends Service Committee. Charity Watch gives the AFSC an overall A rating. Its fundraising efforts raise an impressive \$100 for every \$15 spent. Total overhead consumes a modest 20% of its income, leaving 80% for direct service.

As Quakers, we would also want information as well about social responsibility: actions toward social equality, racial justice, environmental sustainability, and peace-making. Because of this complexity, most of us will want professional help in making plans for major portions of our wealth, such as setting up investment plans and wills. Fortunately, they can seek such help from a Quaker organization, Friends Fiduciary Corporation, open to Quakers and non-Quakers alike.

Established in Philadelphia in 1892, Friends Fiduciary is a nonprofit that furnishes information and advice to individuals and groups (e.g., monthly meetings) on socially responsible investing. They have the capacity to investigate the merits of particular nonprofits, and they use Quaker values as part of their evaluations. I recommend them.

As I enter my late seventies, it is becoming easier to accept that I am only the temporary steward of my possessions (though I'll hate to part with my banjo!) May we all be able to let go of our wealth easily and pass it on wisely.

**Joe Morris** is a member of Santa Monica Friends Meeting in Santa Monica, California. His remarks here are based on a presentation given at the annual session of Pacific Yearly Meeting in July 2019 and published in *Western Friend*, May/June 2020.



## The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek by Kim Michele Richardson

## Sue's Corner



Imagine the poorest of the poor in coal mining eastern Kentucky during the Depression. Then add to those troubles being blue. Yes....there were blue people. It's a rare genetic abnormality called methemoglobinemia.

This is a fictionalized accounting based on a variety of actual people and events. Cussy Mary Carter is the Book Woman, a traveling librarian who makes her rounds on her very protective mule, which becomes a character in its own. These traveling librarians were created through Roosevelt's WPA as a way to help educate the people who had little or no access to formal education.

The story covers the prejudice against Cussy Mary (who is also called Blurette). She was treated as poorly as the Black librarian: both had to use the "colored" facilities. Also dealt with are her determination and attempts to overcome the prejudice and to make her own way, along with alternating hope and heartbreak.

## MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES

23 August 2020



The meeting was opened by Presiding Clerk, Jonas Cox. 11 people were in attendance. The Minutes from the June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting were read and approved as read.

**Treasurer's Report:** Jon Maroni brought the report showing that as of this date we have \$34,850 in our accounts. Our expenses to date have been \$29,495. We are in the positive over \$5K. Our statement of position is good. Still working on giving tithes and offerings on line. When ready to launch he will take it to the Stewards and Trustees committee before bringing it back to the general meeting.

**Stewards & Trustees Report:** Bill Emery brought the report. He was contacted by Ms Santos regarding some gifted items to Caritas from St Peters Lutheran Church. Nonperishable foods were moved to the Caritas food bank in our church. They were given some refrigerators and freezers. They are wanting to put a shed by our shed on the church property to house these appliances for now. A contract will be written concerning this. Bill will be meeting with the Caritas Board on Monday August 24<sup>th</sup>. He will also be bringing to their attention that the new donation will be raised to \$750/month. Caritas still owes the church approximately \$6K in back donations. After quite a bit of discussion the presiding clerk decided to table both items until the September business meeting.

**Elders Report:** Pam Emery brought the report. Previous messages from services have been reviewed. We have expressed our thanks to Paul Blankenship, our Interim Pastor, for his exceptional service. Walter Simon has offered to help write a survey to send out to the meeting before the September meeting. Lois Keiffaber has requested \$40 to attend a webinar from Pendall Hill. She will cover the remaining expense. This was approved by the meeting.

**Old Business:** 1. The website update is in progress. 2. Linda Pierce will continue with the Library update. Paul left recommendations for the Library with the Elders.

**New Business:** Anya Lawrence asked if we were going to be looking for a new pastor. Jonas Cox stated it was a little premature to look for anyone at this time. A seminar with Colin Saxton will be offered in the near future.

With no more old or new business and all hearts and minds clear, Anya Lawrence dismissed us in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Nixon, Recording Clerk

Colin Saxton

to lead

On-Line Series

Starting on September 15, Colin will facilitate a six-week series called

**Cultivating Generous Congregations**

**(CGC).** During the sessions you will be grounded in the biblical and faith foundations of stewardship, discover contemporary giving trends, learn about new giving tools, and develop a generosity plan for your congregation.

Spokane Friends will be fielding a team to attend this workshop. If you want to be kept in the information loop, please contact our Clerk, Jonas Cox.

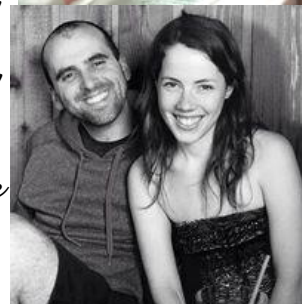
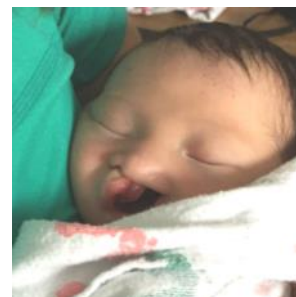


*Good Things Come in Small Packages!*

*Meet Mila Rose*

*and her happy parents,  
Jon and Krista Maroni*

*Mila Rose arrived unexpectedly on August 23, when Jon and Krista received a long-awaited phone call that Mila was ready for her chosen adoptive parents. Some have seen Mila Rose, many have sent gifts to her, and ALL OF US are excited about the addition to our Quaker family. We hold this family in the Light and, celebrate with them.*



## Caritas Stats for July 2020



Individuals served	519
Households served	267
Lbs. of food through the Table of Plenty & Food Pantry	26,964
Hygiene & Cleaning Supplies	\$ 271
Utility assistance	\$ 504.38
Number of Volunteers	40
Volunteer Hours	858

### Little Free Pantry — Hosts Wanted!

Northwest Harvest is partnering with Caritas to build and install more Little Free Pantries in NW Spokane. Over the last two years, Caritas has maintained 5 LFPs located at different supporting churches. Now we are looking to expand into your local neighborhoods. LFPs are small outdoor units that provide 24/7 access to emergency food relief. The goal of these pantries is to address need directly without barriers and provide a connection point to Caritas and other stable support systems. These pantries are filled weekly by Caritas by rely on community support to keep stocked between visits. If you are interested in hosting a pantry on your property or want to find out more, contact us today at 509-326-2449, or email us at [staff@caritasoutreachministries.org](mailto:staff@caritasoutreachministries.org)

*"For I was hungry and you fed me,  
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,  
I was a stranger and you invited me into your home."*  
Matthew 25:35 (NLT)

*Kelsie Rowland*  
Operations Manager  
Caritas Outreach Ministries

## FAITH ACTION NETWORK

The Faith Action Network Governing Board has unanimously endorsed Referendum go that will appear on your November ballot. During this

legislative session, a coalition of parents, educators, medical professionals, and advocates passed SB 5395 (Sen. Claire Wilson) in Washington state focused on keeping young people safe and healthy. This law requires all public schools to teach age appropriate, inclusive, comprehensive sexual health education to K-12 students. It was backed by a large statewide coalition and has strong support from a majority of Washington state voters. Those opposed to the bill have launched a misinformation campaign and gathered enough signatures to put that law up for a public vote this November.

FAN is asking faith leaders and advocates to speak out on this. You can read about the referendum at <https://www.approvegowa.org/#why>. The FAN statement will be made available via email. Those who wish to sign on to FAN's statement, whether personally or as a faith group, can do so at [bit.ly/FANsupportsRgo](http://bit.ly/FANsupportsRgo). Since some who oppose it do so for religious reasons, faith leaders who support it should also speak out.

## Quaker News

- ⇒ Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends **Quarterly Gathering** will be a virtual Zoom event on October 24. If you would like to offer a 60-90 Workshop at this event, go to [gathering@scymf.org](mailto:gathering@scymf.org).
  - ⇒ Staff of **Ben Lomand Quaker Center** were evacuated on August 23 due to wildfires in the area and are asked to stay away so as not to hinder fire fighters. The Quaker center is located in 80 acres of coastal redwoods, tan oaks and madrones, southwest of San Jose, CA. Latest report is that no structures have been damaged so far. They are also struggling for their life financially due to COVID-19.
  - ⇒ Mary Klein, editor and executive director of the magazine *Western Friend* has recently started an **online community forum** for ongoing mutual support among Friends in the West. Find it at <https://westernfriend.discussioncommunity/>
  - ⇒ **Friends House Moscow** (where Johan and Judy Maurer served) has a new English language website about "who we are, what we do, and the people and projects we support. Visit it at <https://friendshousemoscow.org/>
  - ⇒ **Working Toward Right Relationship with Indigenous Peoples** Conference is a series of 6 online webinars from Pendle Hill. Lois Kieffaber is attending the series, but one or more sessions can be attended individually. Sessions (4:30—6:00 pm PDT) yet to come are:
    - Sept. 14 Cultural Appreciation vs. Appropriation/Misappropriation
    - Sept 28 Solidarity, Guidance for Engagement
    - Oct 12 Intergenerational Trauma and Healing for Indigenous Peoples
    - Oct. 26 Truth and Healing
- Contact the Office if you would like to attend one.

## Two options to worship at Spokane Friends this month

The Meeting House is now open for those who wish to **meet in person** for worship. For your safety, we follow the health guidelines for public meetings.

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