

SPOKANEWORD



December

Peace and Merry Christmas

Twelfth Month, 2008

*Come let's
be
Friends....*

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Sunday Schedule:

Unprogrammed Worship
8:45
Education Hour 9:30
Meeting for worship
10:45



to you and your family

Dear Friends:

With December comes the requirement that we say something about Christmas. So, Merry Christmas to all.... Now, what follows isn't about Christmas. It is a continuation of the November newsletter piece that focused on Friends decision making process. How we go about conducting business often seems very efficient to observers. There is a growing group of organizations beyond Quaker circles which are trying their hands at consensus. They really like it when everyone is in agreement about the shape of the way forward. But when things don't go easily..., and sometimes on difficult matters they don't, these lower case friends feel led by expediency to take a vote. Such is not an option for us. We are called to continue the waiting and listening.

For instance, there was a time when no Quaker, including George Fox, considered slavery a deep and terrible sin. But in New England as early as 1688 there were public stirrings among Friends over the issue. In 1696 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting advised against the importation of more Negroes. In his will of 1701, William Penn began the process of freeing all of his slaves. In 1711 a huge tax was imposed on the importation of slaves into the Colony of Pennsylvania. In 1714 Chester Meeting pressed Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to adopt a decided measure against human trafficking. This all preceded John Woolman being born in New Jersey in 1720. Just before he turned twenty, as an apprentice tailor, he prepared a bill of sale for a woman slave. John Greenleaf Whittier wrote of how this event impacted the life of Woolman: "God's voice against the desecration of his image spoke in his soul and began his life long testimony against slavery".

Fourteen years later, in 1754, after traveling into Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina to visit slaveholders, Woolman wrote a pamphlet calling for emancipation. He stopped using sugar because it was a product of plantation slavery. He stopped using indigo to dye cloth both because it was a product of slavery and was known to cause nerve damage in those forced to use it. After years of traveling and laboring with Friends through out New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in 1758, minuted a prohibition of slave holding for Friends. In the same year Woolman preached a sermon against slavery at London Grove Friends Meeting south of Philadelphia and afterward was offered hospitality at the home of Thomas Woodward. He arrived to find that the Woodwards owned slaves. He promptly left. Under the weight of conviction Woodward freed his slaves. It was not Woolman's sermon that resulted in Woodward's change of heart it was his quiet and deliberate action. By 1771 the Yearly Meeting itself was making visits to slave holding Friends urging emancipation. John Woolman died in 1772. Two years later the Yearly Meeting united in denying membership to any who continued to hold slaves. Eight-four years it took to reach consensus!

And, of course, the story didn't end there. In 1786 George Washington complained that one of his slaves had been helped to escape by "the Society of Quakers organized for that purpose". The North Carolinian, Levy Coffin, after years of teaching Sunday School, moved to Indiana where for thirty four years he helped to operate the Underground Railroad. In 1847 he established the Free Produce Store in Cincinnati where cotton, rice, and other commodities produced by 'free workers' were sold. Imagine, under the weight of oppression of other human beings being inconsistent Christianity Friends labored tirelessly from 1688 until 1861. "Persistence in doing good..." isn't just a memory verse (Romans 2:7), it takes generations.

Persistence: to go on resolutely in spite of opposition, impatience or warning; to continue in a course in spite of interference or treatment. Is it a character flaw or a mark of integrity? It certainly has been a hallmark of some weighty members of the Society of Friends. In

England the children of Quakers jailed for holding public worship persisted in holding public worship. Mary Dyer persisted to press her case for toleration in Massachusetts until she could not be heard for the sound of drums and was silenced at the end of a rope. Friends have persisted in the testimony against the use of violence to resolve problems among people and nations.

What does that mean for us when there is one among us who carries a burden, like a John Woolman, Levi Coffin or Mary Dyer? Or even like a Jeremiah or Amos? These people aren't easy to be around. They make us uncomfortable. Their persistence rubs us the wrong way and the rubbing can feel like sand paper. John Woolman was a pest to the leaders of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting as well as in Rhode Island, New Jersey, North Carolina and Virginia. It was believed by lot of people that Mary Dyer, a mother of six, should have stayed home and contented herself with being a housewife. Before the War Between the States Levi Coffin made the folks in slave holding North Carolina cringe when they saw him coming. For that matter American Quakers who provided prosthetic limbs for Vietnamese victims of bombing were vilified and declared to be traitors. It causes us to ask where in our world do we see practices that are inconsistent with Christianity condoned? Maybe the selling of cluster bombs? Do you hear God's voice in your soul revealing to you where his image is being desecrated in how others are being treated? Maybe in how we've turned a blind eye to the torture of suspected terrorists? But that's too easy. And it's not where I want us to go – at least right now – I want us to consider how we marginalize within our own community the voices of those who carry a concern.

Marginalization originally had to do with comments penned on the outer edge of a document – comments which, while germane to the content, were not considered important enough to be in the main body. Then it became an economic term to describe a class of people who experienced material deprivation or were excluded from programs or services. How do we keep from doing the same sort of thing to the prophets among us: relegate them to the outer edge where perspectives uncomfortable to us can be disregarded as less important than business as usual? I was once asked to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee of the Indiana Legislature in a hearing on the death penalty. One of the things I learned was that Friends have opposed the death penalty not primarily because of a belief in the sacredness of life or in opposition to violence against another but because the death penalty cuts off a potential voice through which Christ's spirit may speak to us.

We've read verses like "If you **obey** me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession." Or "**Obey** the Lord your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today." Or "Now therefore, if ye will **obey** my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." An interesting news flash is that the original Hebrew word isn't **obey**. The word is **hear**. God wants to be **heard**. We tend to focus on how weighty Friends have been obedient and forget that their obedience began in hearing. Learning to hear each other and learning to hear the voice of Christ in our lives is essential to Quakerism.

Through the first nine Wednesday evenings of 2009 a course on Empathic Listening will be offered at the Meeting House. You are invited to participate.

And, oh, by the way, Merry Christmas. Nick

An introduction to Restorative Justice led by Paul McCold will be offered here on Saturday December 27th from ten 'til noon. In preparation you should google "Paul McCold" and explore www.restorativejustice.org. His resume is impressive and we are delighted and honored to have him with us. We will be inviting others of the Spokane community to this event that has the support of Washington Association of Churches and Friends Committee on Washington Public Policy.

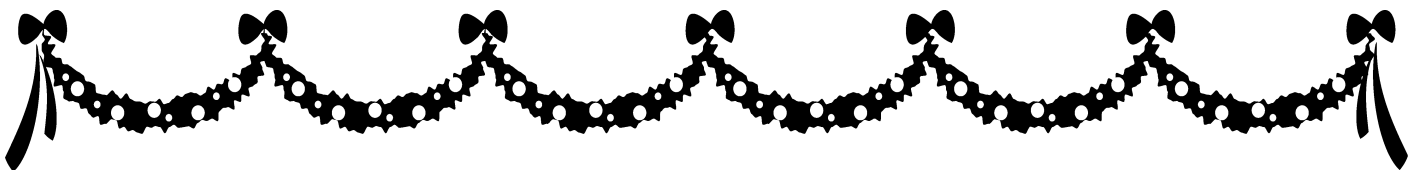
The most important thing we know about Paul is that he is Corky Turney's father. He recently moved to the Olympia area where he is on the faculty of Simon Fraser University's School of Criminology. Friends Committee on Washington Public Policy has recruited him to help with its work with Washington's State Legislature.

His bio tells us some other things including: Paul was a founding professor of restorative practices and the International Institute for Restorative Practices in Bethlehem PA, USA. He received his Ph.D. in Criminal Justice at the University of Albany and was a Research Scientist with the NY State Division for Youth for ten years. He has represented the Friends World Committee on Consultation (Quakers) at the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (NY) since 1995 and served as chair from 2006 to 2008.

As chair of the Working Party on Restorative Justice, Paul help organized a number of ancillary sessions on restorative justice at both the 2000 and 2005 United Nations Congresses on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. He published *Restorative Justice: An Annotated Bibliography* and several articles for the Working Party. He also served a member of the Expert Group to review the *Handbook on Restorative Justice* by the Criminal Justice Reform Unit of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime.

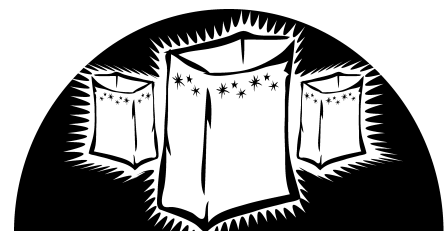
Paul was an original member of the International Network for Research on Restorative Justice of Belgium and is a signatory of the Declaration of Leuven, 1997. He has served as a technical consultant to the COST Action 21 Restorative Justice Developments in Europe, and as a grant reviewer on restorative justice projects for the European Science Foundation, the Community-University Research Alliances in Canada and the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong. He represented the IIRP as an institutional member of the European Forum on Restorative Justice and has trained restorative conferencing facilitators and trainers in Australia, Canada, Hungary, the Netherlands, Sweden, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

He has also been asked to bring a message on Sunday morning.



Milk Carton Christmas Luminaries

Two people have asked whether we will be lighting Luminaries on the sidewalk around the Meeting House for Christmas this year. The cartons, sand and candles aren't a problem. The answer is dependent on a few volunteers who have supple backs, the willingness to brave the cold and a decision as to how many evenings we want to burn them. If you've got the time, grit, and determination call or email Nick.



**Lighting of the
Luminaria**

True listening is rare. To listen to another without judgment, with positive warm interest, with a concern to understand the other person takes practice. It is an acquired skill and it is a gift you can give to others. Beginning on Wednesday, January 7 and continuing each Wednesday evening through March 4 from 7:00 until 9:00 p.m. we will have a workshop to help us learn to listen with empathy. These sessions will not be lectures. During the 1 ½ to 2 hour session each person will participate in a series of exercises designed to facilitate a person's ability to recognize and express their own feelings and accurately understand and respond to the feelings of others. There will be a time for learning the relevant concepts, get instructions for specific interaction exercises and opportunity to reflect on and apply what is learned. Because the concepts build on each other and relationships will be built within the group, participants will be asked to commit themselves to faithfully attend every session if at all possible, agree to a set of discussion guidelines which are simply rules that model good listening and will be asked to make a ten dollar contribution to help defray the cost of materials. Scholarships are available. You can sign up on the registration sheet in the Meeting House foyer, email your registration (spokanefriends@gmail.com) or even use the phone (327-7852). Not missing a session is so important that for a session unavoidably missed a make up session will be arranged. One person suggested that she knew someone to whom she'd like to give a gift registration.... I hope that isn't you.



The new directory has come out and most of you should have your copy by now. You may have noticed that the prayer chain list and format has changed since several things on the old list have changed. So when we published the new directory we only put people on the prayer chain that do not have email. We do send out emails when concerns come into the office but we realize now after bringing it to our attention that not everyone checks their email on a daily basis. So now we are asking if any of you want to be on a telephone prayer chain that would be initiated from the office telephone but will actually be a recorded voice of what the concern is. This method works really well for committee meeting reminders and other things. Let the office or Nick know if you want to be on this list. We will need to know what phone number you want to be called on and what time of the day. (during the day, evening, etc.) Thank you. Nick, Pam and Jeannette

And from our Missions committee:



THIS YEAR'S COMBINED OFFERING WILL GO TO INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK IN TWO WAYS.

The first way is sponsoring a family or families that have been in IHN. We will buy Christmas gifts for each member of the families. There will be 2 items per adult and 3 for children. (2 clothing items and 1 toy). So far, we have one family. (2 adults and 1 child). You may have noticed in the foyer a bit of Christmas decorating. If you look on the 'fireplace' mantel there are stockings hanging there. If you would like to buy a gift take both tags out of a stocking and it will have a name and an item listed. Keep one of the tags to remind you of the gift and put your name on the other one and put it back into the stocking. That way we will know who is buying that gift. Any questions just ask Becky Williams, Cheryl Bendixen or Pam Emery.

The second way is going to be an ongoing project and will start the next week we host IHN families which is Dec. 14-21. But we will start collecting things now. We are going to give each family member a bag of goodies when they stay in our building. Just a little extra surprise for them. So, we want to give you some ideas. One thing to keep in mind when you shop for these goodies is that it needs to fit into a bag that will be about a 12 inch square. Also, don't buy huge containers of anything. There will be a wide variety of items since we will be giving to adults as well as children and all ages and of course boys and girls. Some ideas are: hair clips, band aids, sewing kits, envelopes, stationary, color crayons or pencils, school supplies, coloring books, storybooks, stamps, \$10 dollar gift certificate to dollar store, small stuffed animals, pocket packs of Kleenex, toothbrushes, combs, hairbrushes, etc. This list is not limited—use your imagination and be creative. You can put these items in the boxes in front of the 'fireplace'. Thanks for your help.



December 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Peace with Justice 7:30	3 Kids Club 6:30 pm Music team 6:30pm <i>Kitty Bendixen- park</i>	4 TOPS 5pm	5 Mom's Club 9:30 <i>Jeannette Eaton</i>	6 Heritage Class 10am
7 Bluegrass Party	8	9	10 Kids Club 6:30 pm Mom's club 9:30 Music team 6:30	11 TOPS 5pm Foresters 6pm	12 Puckett block Party 6pm	13 Walking club 3-10 pm
14 Fiddlers 2pm Elders 5pm <i>Norm Pasche</i>	15 Interfaith	16 <i>Dustin Turney Trinity Stockler</i>	17 Kids Club 6:30 pm Music team 6:30 Hospitality	18 TOPS 5pm <i>Sue Keefmen</i>	19 <i>Scott/Julie Kolbo</i> Network	20 <i>Linda Schwartz</i>
21 →	22 <i>Alan Peterson/ Lois Kieffaber Chris Beiers/ Andrea Tuin- stra</i>	23 Mom's club 9:30 <i>Bill Emery</i>	24	25 Christmas Day	26	27 Nelson family Christmas Paul McCold workshop 10am
28	29	30 Tops 5 pm	31 <i>Scott Kolbo</i>			

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Spokane Friends Meeting



Holding in the Light

- * Faith Stockler, is home after minor surgery.
- * Lorraine Rattray , after surgery will be in Sacred Heart Hospital for a week.
- * Samuel , as he begins a different course of treatment.
- * Jesse in his search for employment.
- * For our Meeting as we seek God's will in areas of our life together.
- * We pray for the safety of Josh, Joel, Robin and Rich, and Eddy, friends and loved ones of families in the Meeting, as they are deployed in military service to Iraq or Afghanistan.
- * We pray that the leaders of countries at war, including our own, will seek just and non-violent ways to resolve conflict, and peace for the people in war torn countries and all who either personally or corporately endure war's consequences.
- * For our nation, our leaders and Members of Congress as they contemplate ways to conclude this war.
- * For families in our worshipping community wrestling with the practical concerns of health, education, employment and residence.

