

# SPOKANENWORD

*March*  
**2020**



**Spokane Friends**

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**Sunday Schedule:**

**Unprogrammed Worship**

**9:00—9:45 am**

**Programmed Worship**

**10:00 am.**

**Fellowship 11:00 am**

**Third Sunday of the Month:**

**Monthly Meeting for  
Business begins at rise of  
worship.**

## Quakers and Conflict

by Sara Keeney

In your Quaker meeting, you may have experienced events similar to these: a Friend doesn't want to be on a committee with another Friend due to a past conflict; two Friends complain about a third party, whom they find to be impossible (yes, it does happen); a Friend speaks up in business meeting about a conflict that is going on, and no one responds or takes any follow-up action.

As Friends, many of us have worked with a variety of programs to learn and practice constructive ways of dealing with conflict. **Alternatives to Violence, Compassionate Listening, and Creative Conflict Resolution – all of these have Quaker roots.** Many Friends have learned and practiced the method of Nonviolent Communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg. We recognize the value of using these methods, knowing that as practitioners of a Peace Testimony, we can benefit from learning more about ways to resolve conflict. And we often agree with the concept that our own small groups can be laboratories for ways to constructively deal with conflict.

Yet, in my experience, we also sometimes confuse peacefulness with the absence of conflict. Of course, peace needs to include the absence of physical and emotional violence among people. However, because we are human, because we live and work in groups, because we have different perspectives, there most certainly will be conflict, anger, strong hurt feelings, and issues that arise among us and seem irresolvable.

Last summer, a group of Friends sat down together to think about conflict in our meetings and how we deal with it. The seminar started with these queries:

What are some results of conflict in your meeting?

What does Quaker tradition have to offer us for dealing with conflict?

What tools can we bring from conflict-resolution skills trainings to our meetings? What can those tools offer?

We each have a personal typical style of responding in a conflict. Whole Quaker meetings do, too. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument is a helpful tool for analyzing dynamics in a conflict situation. Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann designed the tool in the early 70s, based on earlier work by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton, who analyzed ways managers work with conflict in the business setting. Friends who are interested can take an online survey ([www.takethetki.com](http://www.takethetki.com)) to help identify their own personal conflict styles.

This chart below expresses the essence of the Thomas-Kilmann Inventory. Vertically, we see conflict styles that range from low to high in terms of seeking to meet one's own needs during conflict (assertiveness). Horizontally, we see conflict styles that range from low to high in terms of seeking to meet the other person's needs during conflict (cooperation).

The chart defines five positions that express different balances between meeting one's own needs and the needs of the other person.



Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, Ken Thomas and Ralph Kilmann (2008)

**Avoidance** (lower left) – a low level for meeting needs or satisfaction for both parties

**Competition** (upper left) – a high level for meeting one's own needs and a low level for meeting the other person's needs

**Accommodation** (lower right) – a low level for meeting one's own needs and a high level for meeting the other person's needs

**Compromise** (middle) – a middle level of meeting needs or satisfaction for both parties

**Collaboration** (upper right) – a high level of meeting needs or satisfaction for both parties

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(continued from last page. In the seminar, we reflected on our personal conflict styles and the styles we have observed in groups – especially Quaker meetings. We reflected on the implications of the different styles. Each style has advantages and disadvantages. Different styles have different cultural and gender associations, based on our socialization. We considered how our Friends meetings are socialized toward certain styles. And we considered the advantages and disadvantages of different styles for Quaker meetings.

The seminar broke into five working groups, one for each style in the Thomas-Kilmann Inventory, and each group produced three lists about the style that they were considering: 1) disadvantages of the style, 2) advantages of the style, and 3) common “sayings” about the style. The complete lists are published in full in the Western Friend online library, along with a couple of other related resources ([westernfriend.org/media/conflict-quaker-meetings-resources](http://westernfriend.org/media/conflict-quaker-meetings-resources)). Below are some samples from each group’s list:

#### **Avoidance**

- Disadvantage: Chronic resentment may build
- Advantage: Buy time for people to calm down

**Saying: “Leave well enough alone.”**

#### **Accommodation**

- Disadvantage: Doormat factor
- Advantage: Nurturing – may be needed for children, elders

**Saying: “The customer is always right.”**

#### **Competition**

- Disadvantage: Hard feelings, may damage relationships, can cause escalation
- Advantage: Higher achievement

**Saying: “The best defense is a good offense.”**

#### **Compromise**

- Disadvantage: Less satisfaction for all
- Advantage: Both parties may agree the solution is fair

**Saying: “Even-Steven.”**

#### **Collaboration**

- Disadvantage: Requires skill, practice, courage, patience
- Advantage: May create more opening to new ideas, strengthens relationships

**Saying: “We’re in this together.”**

Looking at all this material during the seminar reminded me, once again, to open up my thinking about conflict and my response to it. I noticed that I can easily default to avoidance (my personal style, based on upbringing), but I also know that my response doesn’t have to be automatic. I can remember that I have a choice. Many other seminar participants described having similar insights.

We also noticed that, as Friends, we place a high value on collaboration, even though we often feel a lack of skill or “way forward” to move effectively into collaboration.

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One skill we can start to build right away is to let go of some fear of conflict by recognizing we can make a choice about our response.

Competition – or assertively putting forward our own needs – is a response that Friends may look down upon, yet we use it all the time when we protest public policies or call attention to situations that need to be changed. Although, granted, we typically protest with nonviolent strategies, lowering the risk of escalation.

Avoidance and accommodation – also frequently denigrated – can actually be useful in the short term, allowing time to develop longer-term ways to more deeply deal with issues, or to temporarily restore harmony. Compromise, similarly, can be handy in a lower-stakes conflict that needs a quick solution, when solutions perceived as “fair,” if not highly satisfactory, are sufficient.

Our seminar about Quakers and conflict reminded us that different styles of conflict can be useful in different situations – based on the advantages and disadvantages of the style, and the needs of the particular situation and the individuals involved. Over time, perhaps Friends will grow more comfortable with conflict, knowing we can make informed choices about our responses, rather than automatically defaulting to the styles we are most socialized to or are most comfortable with.

Here are some queries that you might consider with other Friends in your meeting:

How could you use knowledge about conflict styles to examine your meeting’s responses to conflicts in the meeting? To examine your personal responses?

How familiar are Friends in your meeting with skills for moving toward collaboration? How skilled are Friends at listening? At stating feelings and needs?

What structures are present in your meeting for working together to come up with mutually satisfying solutions when conflict arises?

As Friends, most of us live in mainstream American culture, which influences us toward valuing competition. We may personally place a high value on collaboration, but we might have little actual practice in collaborating. Even so, the more we try to collaborate, the more we will expand our awareness of collaboration skills that we want to develop. The more we work to develop those skills, the more we may choose to create systems to support collaboration in our Friends meetings. The more we develop such systems, the more we can be patterns and examples for healthy conflict resolution in our world.

*Sara Keeney is a life-long Friend and has been a member of Albuquerque Friends Meeting (IMYM) for forty years. She is a retired educator, having worked as a teacher and principal. During the 90’s, she worked with a community mediation center in Albuquerque, doing statewide work with peer mediation programs. This article is from the Jan/Feb 2020 issue of Western Friend*

## Caritas Stats for January 2020

Individuals served	838
Households served	334
Children (0-18)	259
Adults (18-54)	376
Seniors (55 & over)	203
Lbs. of food through the Table of Plenty & Food Pantry	14,538
Emergency utility assistance	\$ 193.44
Hygiene & Cleaning Supplies	\$ 1,148.00
Fuel Vouchers	\$ 10.00
Number of Volunteers	47
Volunteer Hours	650
Bus Passes	15

2020 is a new year with new challenges. This month we thank you for your love and support. As much as we depend on our supporters for donations, we know all good things come from our Creator. We ask for your prayers over this ministry that God's power be known as we meet the needs at our door. The poor will always be with us and Caritas, at its heart, is Christian love of humankind. Please keep us in your intercessions; claiming God's promise of a hope and a future for this ministry and our clients.

"...We should love people not only with words and talk, but by our actions and true caring." 1 John 3:17-18 (NCV)

*Kelsie Rowland*

Operations Manager  
Caritas Outreach Ministries

# Sue's Corner



## CAPITAL DAMES

### THE CIVIL WAR AND THE WOMEN OF WASHINGTON 1848-1868



by Cokie Roberts

This is one of my rare trips into reading nonfiction and so far I enjoy reading it. As a side note, Cokie Roberts was a political commentator

for NPR.

The idea for the book is to tell about the women behind the power brokers before the Civil War. In telling about the history happening at that time, I learn about what the wives were doing, what they were angry about and how they helped shape some political attitudes.

Along with the 'mandatory' social calls, banquets and parties, these women also were very invested in being in the Senate gallery to listen to the debates. One of the women was so well thought of that she was allowed a seat on the floor in order to hear the debate better.

Ms. Roberts has researched correspondence, diaries and government records to give insights into personal backgrounds of the women and men and also how amazingly direct the women could be. Abby Adams called one of the men a pig and then had to be "polite....but cool" to him when her husband brought the man home for dinner.

Many things that are described are very similar to today's situations. President Buchanan was quite the Supreme Court meddler..

## FAITH ACTION NETWORK

*A Partnership for the Common Good*

FAN has been giving us weekly updates of what is happening in the State Legislature this spring. You can find their legislative agenda at <https://fanwa.org/advocacy/legislative-agenda/>. Any bill which was not passed by its house of origin by Feb. 19 was dead for the session. You can find the status of those bills which are still alive by going to <http://fanwa.org/advocacy/bill-tracker> to check on any bill. Below is a sample of the kind of information you can find there. An exclamation point in status is a success for FAN!

Category	Bill Number	Sponsors	Bill Title/Description	Bill Status
Criminal Justice	<a href="#">HB 1488/SB 5339</a>	Rep. Orwall Sen. Carlyle	Reducing criminal justice expenses by eliminating the death penalty.	Senate bill passed on 1/31! 28 yeas, 18 nays, 0 absent, 3 excused. Vote scheduled in the House Committee on Public Safety at 8 AM on 2/27.
Housing	<a href="#">SB 5441</a>	Sen. Nguyen	Extending rental vouchers for eligible people exiting prison.	Bill passed in the House on 2/12! 47 yeas, 0 nays, 0 absent, 2 excused. Vote scheduled in the House Committee on Public Safety at 8 AM on 2/27.
Climate Change Transportation	<a href="#">HB 1110/SB 5412</a>	Rep. Fitzgibbon/ Sen. Saldaña	Reducing the greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation fuels (Clean Fuel Standards bill).	Bill passed in the House on 1/29! 52 yeas, 44 nays, 0 absent, 2 excused. First reading in the Senate on 1/31, referred to Environment, Energy & Technology.
Gun Responsibility	<a href="#">HB 2241/SB 6076</a>	Rep. Peterson/ Sen. Kuderer	Ban the purchase of semi-automatic weapons.	Public hearing in the House Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary on 1/21 at 10 AM. First reading in the Senate on 1/13, referred to Law & Justice.
Medicaid/Immigrant Rights	<a href="#">HB 1697/SB 5814</a>	Rep. Macri/Sen. Nguyen	Expand Medicaid to age 26 for all, including for undocumented youth	Public hearing in the House Committee on Health Care & Wellness on 1/14 at 1:30 PM. Senate bill reintroduced and retained in present status on 1/13.

On February 17, 2020, the Spokesman-Review carried a column by our own Paul Blankenship in its Faith and Values section. It is reprinted below.

## God's love goes far beyond red, white and blue

By Paul Houston Blankenship

On Jan. 3, in the dead of night, US missiles struck two cars leaving Bagdad airport. A man named Qasem Soleimani and several officials from Iran-backed militias were killed.



Qasem Soleimani, the 62-year-old Iranian who headed the elite Quds Force, was the second most powerful person in Iran. President Donald Trump, we are all aware by now, ordered Suleiman's execution. Shortly after he received word that Soleimani died, Trump went online and tweeted a picture of the American flag. He also tweeted that Soleimani was responsible for thousands of American lives, that he was plotting to kill many more, and that his execution should have happened years ago. Since that time, Trump has been using Soleimani's death as a campaign pitch to demonstrate that he is the kind of commander and chief we want to keep around. In lockstep, the other side of the isle has been questioning whether Trump overstepped his power and whether Soleimani's execution really made the United States safer.

We are, quite literally, a captive audience.

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, promised immediate and severe retaliation. More missiles flew in the air. At his funeral on the streets of Tehran, the supreme leader said prayers and wept over Soleimani's casket. In her eulogy, Soleimani's daughter vowed to avenge her father's life with the agony of American suffering.

Last month I marched through the streets of downtown Spokane. It was Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Arm in arm with Quakers, I held a sign, produced by the Friends Committee on National Legislation, that read: "#Love Thy Neighbor (No Exceptions)." As I walked through the icy streets—thinking of how much harder it was for King to march, given the violence that threatened and ultimately stole his life—I imagined Soleimani. I held Soleimani in my heart and said to myself, through my ignorance and the unconscionable evil he committed, "I love you, Qasem. God, teach me to love you."

To be honest, I don't know much about the man. I know his father was poor and that Soleimani began working construction at 13. I know he had a family. I know he became a great military leader and that he considered war a kind of heavenly orchestra. I know people in the United States, most of whom could not pronounce his name a month ago, are convinced that he is a terrorist. People in the United States may not agree with his execution, but no one is mourning the death of Qasem Soleimani. No one sheds a tear for a terrorist.

I am grieved because we are not grieving. A beloved child of God fell down. I am mourning that we are not mourning. It is a sacred tragedy that a brother in the human family fell in love with war, stole innocent lives, and died without making amends.

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Our love has become love cheap and easy. Love is not red, white, and blue. We have forgotten, or never really learned, what it means to love our enemies. King taught that hatred cannot drive out hatred, that darkness cannot drive out darkness, and that violence begets violence. He marched for his friends and his enemies because he knew what was at stake. If we do not fight nonviolently for real and robust social justice—mentally, emotionally, and physically—we will wound ourselves without knowing it and surely fail to build the kind of world we all long for.

Where are you learning to fight for peace and love what you hate? The Quakers at Spokane Friends are teaching me. Every Sunday morning, we sit down in a holy silence. We wait to hear the still small voice of God. Often we share how the God of peace stirs our hearts and minds. Come join us sometime—we need to hear how God is stirring you.

*Paul Houston Blankenship is an interim pastor at Spokane Friends and a PhD candidate at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA.*

## Quaker News

**Quaker Women — Save the Date** On June 24–28, 2020, the Pacific Northwest Quaker Women's Theology Conference will meet at Cascades Camp in Yelm, WA to explore together the theme "Cultivating Faith and Hope in Troubled Times."

Northwest Quaker Men's Gathering will be April 17-19, 2020, at **Camp Tilikum**. The theme this year is Finding Our Way.

**Klamath Falls Friends Church**, an open and affirming semi-programmed Meeting of the Society of Friends (Quakers), is currently seeking a full-time pastor to journey with us. Our desired pastor will plan and present weekly messages/meditations to guide our Meetings for Worship and be called to equip and encourage all people to respond to God's love and transforming spirit. For information and inquiries, email: [klamathfallsfriendschurch@gmail.com](mailto:klamathfallsfriendschurch@gmail.com)

**Northwest Yearly Meeting** annual sessions will be held at George Fox University July 20-22, 2020.

**Annual Gathering** for Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends will be this June 12–14, 2020, at Canby Grove.

**Bolivia Quaker Education Fund** is sponsoring a two-week tour of Bolivia, July 9-22, 2020, with an emphasis on studying climate change and its impact. The itinerary will include La Paz, the stunning flats of solar de Uyuni, Quaker communities in the Altiplano, and pre-Incan ruins of Tiwanaku, and Lake Titicaca. For further information, email