

Episode 08: Angela Hopkins



Questions for Individual or Group Reflection

Q1. Angela came to Quakers in Kenya, after attending the World Gathering. What brought you to Friends?

Q2. How familiar are you with Quakers in other countries? Where and how did you learn about the wider fellowship of Friends?

Q3. Angela talks about her “John Boy” conversations with Pastor Priscilla as they traveled in the ministry: falling asleep they could talk, in the dark, about deep issues. Are there types of situations that facilitate deep sharing for you? What are they?

Q4. Angela says that work on anti-racism is not just social justice work, nor is it for folks who care about “anti-racism.” She feels it is just as critical for all people, including European Americans, to recognize that this is all of our work, and that it is a spiritual issue. Does that statement have power for you? What has been your experience with racism as spiritual issue?

Q5. Angela says that sometimes a leading feels easy, almost “too easy.” And sometimes the work is so hard that she borrows her mother’s prayer: “Lord, give me the will for the will.” What is your experience with both these kinds of leadings?

Q6. Benigno questioned whether taking on too many leadings might be “greedy.” In fact, the question we might ask is: “who might you be stealing that ministry from?” How might this inform community recognition and stewardship of gifts of the spirit?

Q7. Angela has a concern about how busy our lives have become. She believes that to really practice discernment we need to make a commitment of carving out the space in our lives to actually do discernment - to listen for the Spirit. How do you experience that statement?

Q8. Angela makes the additional connection of our fast-paced lives to a continuation of the structures of oppression: if we can’t slow down we can’t interrogate them. What is your reaction to this thought? Have you any experience to share?

Additional Resources and References Mentioned in the Episode

Friends in Kenya (FUM): Friends traveled to East Africa and started Quaker Meetings in the early part of the 20th Century. You can read the history of Friends in Africa, here:
<http://www.fwccafrika.org/about/history/>

Angela grew up as a **Missionary Baptist**. Find out more about them from their website:
<http://missionarybaptistchurches.com/>

Internalized Oppression: “When we accept or “buy-in to” the negative and inferiorizing messages that are propagated about who we are, then we have begun to internalize the oppression that we experienced. We have come to learn that—having certain traits, being a member of a particular group, and being who we are—are not good enough or are not desirable. Sometimes, we even learn to hate our traits, our groups, ourselves.” Excerpted from the article below:
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/unseen-and-unheard/201509/internalized-oppression-we-need-stop-hating-ourselves>

Dr. James H. Evans is the Robert K. Davies Professor of Systematic Theology. Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School Rochester. He is the author of several books on Black Church and Black Theology: <http://fortresspress.com/author/james-h-evans-jr>

Friends Center for Racial Justice - Friends Center for Racial Justice is at the Burt House, 227 N Willard Way, Ithaca, NY. They hold regular weekly workshops and periodic gatherings.
<http://fcrj.org/>

The **Church of the Savior** is a collection of affiliated / scattered churches in Washington DC.
<http://inwardoutward.org/the-church-of-the-saviour>

Angela shared the story of two women encountering **white supremacy in action in a grocery checkout line**. Here it is from Joy DeGruy - the story of being in the supermarket with her sister in law, who passes for white. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf9QBnPK6Yg>

Angela says that we need **prayer** when we are most broken. Here are a couple of websites that offer some insight and tips for increasing one's prayer life,
A book by Richard Foster: <https://renovare.org/books/prayer-finding-the-hearts-true-home>

Book on Center Prayer from Richard Rohr: <https://www.amazon.com/Everything-Belongs-Gift-Contemplative-Prayer/dp/0824519957>

Angela thinks it is very important to talk about money. Here's a link to a series of articles from Friends Journal about **releasing and funding ministry**.

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/search/funding+ministry>

If you're not yet subscribed to Friends Journal - you can do so here, and read all the articles online as well as receive current issues. <https://www.friendsjournal.org/subscribe/>

Released Friend: A released Friend is a Friend whose leading to carry out a particular course of action has met with approval from a Meeting which then promises to provide such support as would enable the Friend to follow that leading. Read C. Wess Daniels' blog entry on being a released Friend:

<http://gatheringinlight.com/2010/11/10/being-a-released-minister/>

Episode Transcript

Kristina: I'm Kristina Keefe-Perry.

Callid: And I'm Callid Keefe-Perry.

Kristina: This is On Carrying a Concern.

Callid: Stories of friends in service.

Kristina: We want to remind you that these podcasts are long and that there are broken up with musical interludes, thematically. So that if you're using them in community or just for your personal listening, you know that you can stop at after a musical interlude and take a break.

Callid: So the format is, there was some interview with a guest, and then Kristina and I reflect a little bit on it, and that can be considered as like a chunk, and then the next thing will be another piece of interview, and then another reflection chunk. So all of the transcripts and questions for reflection can be found on the website ocacshow.org, and it might be useful for you as you're listening or if you want to have a small group conversation about that.

Callid: If you're listening out there and finding the show useful, we would love to hear about it and how it's useful, how are you using it, why does it matter to you or why does it matter to your small group? Or if you've found something challenging or problematic, we'd like to hear about that too.

Callid: And again, this can be whenever, it's 2018, May, now, but if this is the two years later or three years or 10 years later and you're hearing it for the first time, hopefully the website will still be up, ocacshow.org, drop us a line or find me and Kristina somewhere and let us know how it has been useful or challenging or problematic for you. We want to stay in conversation about that and the feedback that you provide us, if it's timely, helps us figure out what we can address on the show. And presumably, hearing from you, even if it is five years out, will matter to us, in terms of knowing how the work is being received.

Kristina: Please, be in touch.

Kristina: This week, we get to have a conversation with Angela Hopkins, formerly of New England and currently a member of Ithaca Monthly Meeting in New York Yearly

Meeting. Callid should get some recognition for driving to Ithaca in a blizzard to conduct this interview.

Callid: It was fun and snowy.

Kristina: We will here Angela really lift up her story of coming to friends that is different from any of the other kinds of stories that we've heard. And I think informs her experience of really following life and leadings.

Callid: Absolutely, well, enjoy it, folks, this is another good one.

Kristina: Thanks for listening.

Angela: My name is Angela Hopkins and we're at the Friends Center for Racial Justice in Ithaca. My meeting, I became a friend in Kenya in Nzoia monthly meeting, Oganis yearly meeting, and traveled with a minute, and have been a released friend, enjoying the work of racial justice and working on racism within the Religious Society of Friends.

Angela: And about a year and a half ago, after doing some work with Ithica Monthly Meeting, was offered the opportunity to create the Friends Center for Racial Justice here at the Burt House, which is a property that the meeting had, that was donated to the meeting.

Angela: So after much work and lots of threshing sessions, the meeting felt led to release this property for the creation of the Friends Center. So that's what I do.

Callid: So that's interesting, so for you, that word releasing or released, doesn't have a financial meaning to it.

Angela: No, I'm from Dayton, Ohio, and before going to Kenya, I really had no idea that Friends still ... I knew about Friends from studying them, I had gone to seminary and had read about Quakers, but did not know ... that year, there was a triennial and they said there were more Quakers in Kenya than anywhere else in the world. And I was raised a Missionary Baptist and I said, how did that come to be? And I was curious at first.

Angela: And so I went to Kenya, at the triennial, and I met a very sweet woman, Priscilla Makino, and she pastored a meeting, the Nzoia monthly meeting and she did a lot of work with women throughout Kenya. And she invited me to her home after the triennial and to just travel with her. And I just traveled with her as she went and met with women in different spots of Kenya, and they listened and shared with

one another about what was happening in their regions, these were other pastors of meetings.

Angela: After a certain period of time, I really felt like, well, this is where I was getting my spiritual nourishment. And because of that, I felt that it was important that my financial support to that meeting was important. And for various reasons, it became evident that the best way for me to do that was to connect and become a part of the meeting. And it was a little strange for them. It's kind of like, well, how do we do this?

Angela: And so we went through the regular process of clearness and all of that, and so I continued going back and forth. And then at one point-

Callid: So back and forth meeting, you would come to the U.S. and then go back to-

Angela: Kenya. Because I am from here and Priscilla came to the United States during the year. She's very well known and would come and travel. So when she was here, I would travel with her and then when I would go there, I would travel with her there, and she would come here and we would travel together.

Angela: And then at one point, she said, it's really important for you to ... you need to find out about Friends in the U.S. You're from the U.S., you need to find out.

Callid: She said that to you?

Angela: And it's interesting, because of her background, she knew more about what that meant than I did. So my knowledge was what I read about early Friends, and then we're just traveling around primarily program meetings in Kenya. And then I got my minute and I started traveling and went through culture shock in the U.S., or Quaker shock or whatever you want to call it.

Callid: And where was that first minute from?

Angela: It was from my meeting in Nzoia. In the first meeting I attended, I think was at Bar Harbor meeting.

Callid: You left Ohio and that wasn't really home-

Angela: I was born in Ohio but that wasn't ... you go to college and you go and visit, during special occasions. And at this point, my children were all grown, in college, so I had the flexibility to be a release rep. So being able to travel was very interesting. And I've attended meetings in Maine and on the West Coast, on the East Coast, in the

South, throughout the Religious Society of Friends program and Conservative Friends and Evangelical.

Callid: All over the U.S. and all the branches. There's not many of us who have done that.

Angela: It was a blessing.

Callid: In some ways this feels like a silly question, but I think it's good to talk about it, what are some of the ways in which you felt culture shock in the United States meetings?

Angela: So there were certain things that really ... that came to me, that let me know, this is who I am. I was very comfortable being a Missionary Baptist. I grew up, but there were certain things in practices that I was still uncomfortable with. Women did not have leadership roles, largely, during that time, in terms of pastoring and that kind of thing.

Callid: For the Missionary Baptists.

Angela: Yeah, so just a lot of those differences, growing up in the church and seeing women do so much of the work and just never connected for me. And I was raised by a very strong woman and it just didn't seem just.

Angela: And there were some other things that theologically, that just didn't fit with my spirit. Largely, it was the issue in regards to gay and lesbian relations and the church, to the church. I had a challenge with that. There were things that just didn't feel right for me, and for me, there's certain things that I knew I did not understand and that we as human beings don't understand. And for those things, I kind of felt like, well, who am I to judge? And it just didn't feel right for me.

Angela: And so when I found out about Quakerism and that there is the diversity, it felt more authentic. And for me, see, it didn't matter whether I was a heterosexual or not, for me, it was about the issue of whether it was really reflected right, relationship, if it was just.

Angela: And so when I found out that I didn't have to sign on the dotted line saying, I believe this or that about something that did not directly pertain to me, and that I was not clear about at that time, I felt like I had found a place where I could bring my whole self, where I could be really authentic.

Callid: I want to back up two minutes, because I think it's fascinating that you ... I don't know if I've heard many people say that the Religious Society of Friends in the United States is very diverse. But theologically diverse, is that ...

Angela: Theologically diverse. Diversity comes in many forms. We're still working on de-segregating it racially.

Callid: So that's really interesting, I'm testing this, you were drawn to the fact that there was a wide variety of kind of people's relationships and articulations of their own spirituality and theology. That was really appealing to you because you felt like you could show up as your full self there.

Angela: I felt it was a more authentic space. It felt more authentic because I recognized that we all grow, just like we all grow physically different, we all grow spiritually different. And it seemed to me that having a space where folks were growing at their own rate, in their own way, just made sense to me. And that was the diversity than I had.

Angela: And I did not know about the inner workings of it, how conservative friends got along with evangelical friends, with unprogrammed friends. I didn't know about the relational things. I knew about the history of Quakerism. I had studied that. But in terms of what does that mean for today, how the history had impact upon our relationships with one another today, I had no knowledge about.

Angela: So that's what Priscilla was trying to get me to see.

Callid: And then you kind of discovered it firsthand, traveling.

Angela: There is another thing that happened one night. We would have these conversations, I called them John-boy conversations, because when we would travel, we would have this time when we would be in our beds at night and whatever was on our heart we would kind of share. And we were talking about an aspect that appeared in both of our communities and it had to do with communities of color, particularly in the Religious Society of Friends, because that's the context in which we were dealing. Could not have the same sense of joy, reverence, appreciation for the gifts of people from their own culture, as they did for European Americans.

Angela: And I explained to her that we have a term in the U.S. called internalized oppression, that deals with that aspect of that understanding. And we talked about the issue of cultures that are grounded where the white culture is the norm. And so the whole issue of racism, individual, systemic, and how that plays on our relationships with one another and our understanding of ourselves and our children. And we talked about all the historical things that we know of, the blue eyed, the brown eyed doll, all those things that we learned about when we studied about race and its impact on our identity.

Angela: And there, that is when there was kind of a change in our relationship, because that is where the concerns and the leading started to unfold.

Callid: For you.

Angela: For me, and because as we traveled and she got to know more people of color within the Religious Society of Friends, she would ask me questions like, why can't people of color just forget about slavery? And realizing, and at first, I was kind of like, what do you mean why can't we forget about it? Although she did recognize the impact today in some ways, but she did not have that historical memory or experience.

Callid: Is she white?

Angela: No, she's African.

Callid: She's asking why in the United States can't you get over it. Interesting.

Angela: And a lot of it was from her lack of direct experience about that and because we both consider ourselves followers of Jesus. And for me, the issue of racism, not only is it not a good thing, it's morally wrong. And for me, the witness to that, to the issue of racism, is just as much a part of our spiritual condition as any of the other so-called spices that we talk about.

Angela: And I have to say, one thing that is really challenging for me on a day-to-day basis, is when I often meet my friends who say to me, we all know racism is bad, but what does that have to do with our spiritual? And it's funny because I've heard comments from folks who have a leading on earth care and other aspects of their leadings. I don't understand how they cannot see that the work of racism is a spiritual calling. The most challenging aspect of this work, or one of the most challenging is for folks to you come to a place for friends, European-American friends, to come to an understanding that the Friends Center for Racial Justice and the work on anti-racism is not just about a social justice, something else to march about.

Callid: And it's not just for a niche people who care about, quote, the people who care about anti-racism, quote.

Angela: Right, I personally believe that European-Americans who are friends, it is just as much, just as important for those friends to recognize that, and to see this as an aspect of our individual and our organizational work, as people of color. It is not just the work for friends of color.

Angela: And the more that we connect with people and folks come here, that has been the blessing this past year. Friends shared, when they first came, it was because they knew racism was bad and they were trying to do a good thing and coming to recognize how racism has affected them. And then it becomes a different journey.

Callid: Dr. James Evans is a black theologian, who was my theology professor at Colgate Rochester Seminary and he says that racism is a foundational sin of the United States. And he does that on purpose. It's both the foundation, the economic labor and all of those justice issues, but it's also the foundational sin, that kind of ... much of what our power and privileges is premised on.

Angela: I believe that, yes, it is, I believe that it is a sin, it's not about a choice. And I just don't feel that any of us have a choice. If we say that we believe in non-violence, do we feel that we have a choice about ...

Callid: That's interesting. I was just talking to somebody this week, Monday, this week, he said, not everyone likes this conversation, but there is something about talking about white supremacy as a kind of an unavoidable sin, he said, a lot of people within Quakerism don't like talking about sin. Born with sin, this, that, that language is very scary. I said, but all of the theological reasons to do that are the same reasons to acknowledge white. You don't want it. I'm sure you don't want it. I don't want it, too bad, you got it, because the system is way bigger than one person. And a lot of resistance. I said, now, the reason you feel uncomfortable is because that's us, that's our deal.

Angela: And it's nice when ... in terms of relationship, so one of the first things that we worked on when we first opened was asking about the question of what is Quakerism, what is the essence of Quakerism, and what is culture, what is white American culture?

Angela: As we spent time together sharing about lots of stuff, folks began to be able to see that things that they automatically assumed were normal, were just cultural preferences. And one of the reasons that I think things are ... we're still at, I wouldn't say we're at the infant stage, we're toddling around, after a year. But friends in the meeting, Ithaca meeting, before I even came, recognized this hunger in themselves, and they had already come to the point of really saying, we feel the need for a greater commitment to the work of anti-racism, but was not sure what that path was.

Kristina: So Angela's story about the way that she came to find Quakers is different from-

Callid: Anyone I've heard before.

Kristina: Yes. From all the other stories that we have documented in this project, but really from anyone that I have heard, you were the one who spoke to her, but it sounds to my ears, like she learned about Quakers in seminary and heard that this triennial, presumably the FUM triennial was happening in Kenya. So she journeyed to Kenya to investigate this religious group.

Callid: Yes, that's my understanding, but I think maybe the more important thing underneath it is that she got yoked to a minister and kind of learned from the inside out, the work of ministry, traveling. In some ways, I guess it's a lie for me to say I've never heard this before, this is the old story. Fox would roll into town, meeting for worship would preach and people would go, what is that, I want some of it, and then they would go and follow him. Oh, also, I read that in the Bible.

Kristina: They follow him out to a public meeting and then to more-

Callid: It seems like that's what happened here, that she really found, like there was some power, and then realized she needed to kind of bring her life into that and so became a member because she realized that's where her life was, even though she's from the U.S. and now she's a member of an African, Kenyan monthly meeting.

Kristina: And it also speaks to the way in which Priscilla, the pastor of that meeting, recognized gifts in her, and was willing to reach out and nurture, invite her to her home. She was serious about that work.

Callid: Again, in terms of the project here, one of the things we see there is not only that they're doing the work, but at night, during their John-boy conversations, they're able to reflect and process kind of what's happened during the day, what's coming next and spiritual deepening. And they are able to then process not just what's happening in the moment or what's happening right in front of you, but they began to have conversations about what might be next steps for Angela. So that the process of kind of that ministerial work is also self-formation work.

Kristina: I like the way that she says, that after that particular late night conversation where she explained the concept of internalized racism, there was a shift, and that was the beginning of the unfolding of the leading for her.

Callid: And we'll talk a lot more about her leadings in the next section as it opens up, but one of the things I think that is useful here, before we transition back to Angela, is to reflect on how clear she is that the work of racial justice isn't, quote, just another thing to March for.

Callid: And my sense is that even if she thought it was important, if she really felt like it was just a social issue, she wouldn't carry it with the same weight and power that she really does fundamentally understand this work as a spiritual undertaking. And that's essential for her.

Callid: I don't think everyone who engages in social justice work conceives of their commitments in such a thoroughly spiritual or theological way. She was very clear from the get-go, I didn't even prompt her. She just said, this is a spiritual thing, I don't understand when people don't understand it's a spiritual thing.

Kristina: And it's a spiritual journey for everyone.

Callid: And it is about justice, absolutely, and if we're really talking about justice, then we're talking about our faith commitments.

Kristina: Also in the Bible.

Callid: It turns out. So let's hear where the conversations is about to shift into leadings, I think. So let's talk about that.

Callid: We'll jump right into it then. So you use the word released, you are a released friend. What does that mean or what did that mean to you and what does that mean to you?

Angela: So a released friend is a friend who travels with a minute from his or her meeting and carries a concern. It can be anything that the friend feels really ... has whatever leading that's on that person's heart. And so that's what I do.

Callid: And I'm wondering if you could share what a leading feels like to you, or maybe it feels like multiple things, but like what is that like for you?

Angela: I think that is one of the most challenging questions that you can answer, because one of the things that I have recognized is that it's not about how it feels. So my call to go to seminary was really strange. I did not feel called to be a pastor and doors opened for me, to be able to come, that I was not looking ... I was there and things happened. But I did have this thirst for studying religion.

Angela: It's like one thing happened, went for another, I went up to pick up my daughter and then I met this person and then that door open and I'm saying, well, no, I've got three kids in college, there's no way that I can ... then housing opened up. Well, then, and then all I was going to have to do was pay for books.

Angela: And then as all of these things started coming down, I found the perfect job where all I had to do was be ... I'm an addiction counselor and all I had to do was be with a group of women in the first women's transitional program for women-

Angela: In the first women's transitional program for women vets, and be with them in the evenings when they come home. There was a whole support committee or whatever, and all I have to do is do what I love doing is having conversation around food, and anyone who's ever been here knows that that is my thing. I enjoy cooking, I enjoy building community around the table, but it was nice, and it was clean, and I had all this space. I had been engaged in ministry for a while. Being Baptist, we say ministry separate from our lives. Now, as Quakers, we see it in a different setting.

Angela: Everything just seemed too right. The faith community that I was a part of at the time I became a Quaker was an Ecumenical community, and the founder had friends who were friends. So, I had become used to the practice of waiting worship. Our structure was built around support committees, what we called mission groups. The Church of the Savior in Washington D.C., and I said this cannot be an authentic eliding. It feels too comfortable. Everything just feels too right.

Callid: Meaning that it should feel challenging or hard?

Angela: Right. I was like this is temptation, this cannot be right. This wrong, and so in that situation, and this is why I believe community is so important, it was my support committee that helped me see because I had thought I'm going to go get my addiction counseling, I'm going to work in one of our recovery places. I just knew that was what God's plan was. I'm saying but, but, but, and my support committee helped me see that yeah, this feels right. Sitting there, everybody crying, I was heading to Boston. In that situation, and it was a wonderful time, and I got to study. Then, there were other times when eliding feels very overwhelming and hard, and Lord, I don't want to do this, I'm not the one, I don't have the fits.

Angela: Even being in the place where my grandmother, I remember her praying Lord, give me the will for the will if I don't have the will. So, being in that situation where it feels ... it is a very hard place to be. One of the things that I personally tried to say to myself when I'm in a place like that in terms of leaving and going somewhere else or doing something different is when it feels hard to sit with it because from my experience, there is a peace that comes. It's not that all of those things can get fixed, but there's this peace. It's kind of like when we're sitting and the meeting is gathered, we cannot name exactly what that is, but we all experience it, or most of us experience it. I can't say all for everyone. So, it's that same kind of thing, and then you know.

Callid: So, that's really interesting, Angela. I think what I'm hearing is because ... it could look a variety of ways.

Angela: Exactly.

Callid: Because God can show up in our lives in different ways and different contexts and different times, it's almost like we don't know what eliding is, and that's one of the reasons we need community.

Angela: Exactly.

Callid: Is that right?

Angela: Exactly. That's exactly what I'm saying, and not all of us ... we're all different. We're all made differently. Some of us are more right brained, and some of are more, all of those things that define certain ways of being in the world, and for me, I personally feel like when I'm on someone's clearness committee, I don't try to look at how they're eliding is according to my ... just like I was talking about that sense in regards to my sense of eliding, that sense of peace. I do feel when we're seeking discernment that that can happen, and it doesn't necessarily have to look like it looked the last time.

Callid: Right. This may be too much of a tangent, but what's rising for me is conversations with people who are emerging into their gifts or elidings and are trying to kind of have an intuition around how important oversight or accountability is, and wanting people to kind of be with them and help them discern, and having committees say everything seems fine here, and that's not the point.

Angela: That's not the point, yeah.

Callid: Right? The way you think about it, and I think me too, it's not about, well, are your paychecks in, do you have a roof over your head, and now how are you, and now how is it with spirit?

Angela: Right.

Callid: And that constant, not aggressive finger wagging, but how is it now? How is God now? How is God now because it looks different at different times.

Angela: I think that a support committee or a clearness committee is a gathering of people so we gather around this specific concern, and it's not about all of the things that you just mentioned, just those things. It is about the commitment, just like we say about worship. I hate it when people say silence.

Callid: I like that it's quiet.

Angela: Yeah. I like that it's quiet too, but it's waiting worship, and that's what a support or a clearness committee is. It is a commitment that each of the members feels led to dwell with someone, to dwell with this concern together.

Callid: Yeah. That's, I think, certainly really important to the way Christina and I think about it is that it's not dwelling with the person, it's dwelling with the concern or gift that they're carrying or stewarding. Does that match your sense of it?

Angela: Exactly. Exactly.

Callid: Yeah. I think that's a fairly uncommon perspective among friends. Would you agree with that?

Angela: Yes, I agree, and I think that sometimes, our hearts and our minds can say oh, this just feels like this person or that person, or this is just the right ... it has nothing to do with any of those qualifications, so to speak. I do believe that only God knows the heart. I just have this passion around discernment, and I do have a concern with how busy our lives have gotten because there has to be a commitment to time and to spending time for discernment if we're going to do what we say we do, wait on the spirit, and that's what it is, and each of those persons on that committee has the same sense of call as the focus person. So, those individuals have their own discernment process about whether they're led to enter into this concern with the focus person.

Callid: Yeah. It's interesting, and I'd be curious to see what your thoughts are on this because it has always seemed to me like a grave disservice to the tradition when I hear people reporting that their anchor committees or support committees say to them well, what do you want to do, as if it's just a preference.

Angela: Right.

Callid: I think, to the people that are seriously trying to say come along with me, help me see if I'm supposed to be doing X, Y, and Z, to say to that person well, what do you want? It's like an undermining of their attempts to be faithful.

Angela: Attempts to be faithful. That is so true. My birthday is Friday, and one of the things that I can say about that reality is that I've lived long enough to be so glad that God did not give me what I thought I wanted. There is something in having that experience for me that fuels my faith, and I think that there are certain practices that we can nourish in our lives to help us reflect and to be able to see, to have those lenses, to see those things, and that's one of the other concerns that I

have in regards to the busyness that we have in our lives, and that we're moving so fast. It's those things.

Callid: And it also seems to me, I mean, I don't know if I have a spiritual conviction of this, but it seems to me that one of the negative ways that oppression shows up in our culture, not just friends culture, but culture in general, is if we keep going too fast to really interrogate it, it just stays status quo. If some of these things, misogyny, white supremacy, and some of these things that are so deep-

Angela: Exactly.

Callid: That the only way you see them is if you slow down to take a look, because otherwise, you'd just be like that's the world.

Angela: Because we're reacting to the manifestations, not the root problem.

Callid: Yeah.

Angela: And then we will continue to do status quo. We put bandaids on it, and we try to make it feel better, and sometimes, the only way to get through it does not feel good, and that's the issue in regards to racism in the work that we do, and Friends of Color, people of color have challenges around how internalized racism has manifested in their lives as well. When asked about what is my vision for Friends, I really pray, and I've actually said this in terms of our yearly meeting, I am hoping that Friends, as we start recognizing some of the systemic manifestations that we will recognize that white privilege is a manifestation of internalized racism, and that we will get behind the work for Friends of Color to do their own work and internalize racism with the same sense of commitment, financial dollars, and support as we have gathered around the call of white privilege. Now, we still have a ways to go in regards to the issue of white privilege and decentering whiteness as our norm in terms of our organizational practice.

Callid: Yeah, and it seems like part of that is also hearing that ... the insidious ways that it lives in our lives. The continual focus on, for example, white supremacy or white privilege, still centers whiteness.

Angela: Still centers whiteness, and that's the big thing. Yeah. That's the line, and we talk about that a lot in our classes here at the Friend Center. One of the challenges, and it results from an individual Friends coming and saying how much am I allowed to bring and share with you before I cross that line with you're doing the work of educating me, recognizing that we all need to do our own work and there's lots of anti-racism understanding around that process. I think it's something that we in-

dividually need to work out on a case by case situation, and I'm trying to think, I can't remember who it is, who does this workshop, and she's in the line with her sister, who presents as Caucasian, and she's an African American. So, how much is she allowed to use her white privilege with her niece there without it becoming her speaking on behalf of her sister who manifests as a person of color?

Callid: You know this I'm sure, but I'll just say it back to you for the sake of saying it. It seems to me so clear that if this work was not spiritual, it would be way easier to give up on.

Angela: Oh yeah.

Callid: That it has to be about the dailiness of it, even if you don't know what it's going to look like tomorrow. Does that sound right to you?

Angela: That's definitely what it is. It's a day by day situation. The whole saying you don't get to take your ball and go home applies to us all. For me, if we come to the point where we say it is not a choice, then we really need to look at what does that mean. It's a long road of building trust around that. One of the biggest challenges, you mentioned early about the work shucks in all of that, and there is that tendency to do.

Callid: So, I have a distinct memory of sitting on the couch in the interview with Angela thinking oh, this feels right, kind of a, I mean, some part of it was cognitive, but also it was kind of a visceral experience of this is a different thing than I've heard, and feeling like there was some power to it. She essentially says you have no idea what eliding is. You don't know how it feels. Sometimes you think it feels too good, and so it shouldn't be eliding, and sometimes, you realize eliding feels good, and then sometimes it'll feel really hard, and you'll think it's not eliding because eliding is supposed to feel good, and it turns out that's eliding.

Callid: She essentially just says I don't know. I don't know what eliding is. It could be anything. That's why we have to discern and attest in community. What was interesting about it, my experience was cognitively, my thoughts were like what about the five true tests of eliding, or whatever the Hugh Barber thing. There are some practices to say how do you know what eliding is.

Kristina: Right. Right. Some criteria.

Callid: Right, and I was like what about that one, and then so and so says it's this one, and what about this thing, and what about the queries? There's all this thought that I have, knowledge that emerged, but when I was sitting there, I thought oh, no,

something about this feels really right, and she returns to this prayer that her grandmother gave her, give me the will if I have no will, Lord, and it seems to really point toward how essential for her the community is in the process of discernment, and supportive of the ministry.

Kristina: Well, absolutely, and she had the great experience to be a member of the Church of the Savior. Note, this is the second time that the Church of the Savior has come up in an interview.

Callid: It was there in Elizabeth Dearborn as well.

Kristina: That's right.

Callid: Yeah.

Kristina: She talks about how relying on community and becoming clear, that there is that peace. What I heard is that ultimate test was when in community, there was that feeling of gathering of a kind of felt sense of truth among those who were gathered and worshipping about the concern. That was the indication.

Callid: Right. That it wasn't necessarily about the feeling of the caring of the concern for the, what she calls the released friend.

Kristina: Right. It's not about if she feels uncomfortable or if she feels excited.

Callid: Or comfortable.

Kristina: Right.

Callid: It's about the testing and worship.

Kristina: Correct, and even though she talks about when she was called to go to seminary, she was going to move from D.C. to Boston, she was going to leave, people were crying, but they're like it's the right thing to do. They were clear. They had that sense of peace, even though it didn't feel good for them either.

Callid: And I think she names it gathering. It feels like a gathered meeting.

Kristina: That's right. She does.

Callid: It's really interesting to me. Angela seems to have really high, not standards, but her hope for what we do and how we do it is really intense in terms of the support committee who is supporting someone who's in ministry or is released.

Kristina: She says they're each doing their own discernment.

Callid: They have to have a commitment to dwell on the concern together, and then she says support people ought to have the same sense of call to the committee as the focus person has to the concern that they're carrying. That's a heck of a ... I mean, I'm resonant with similar kind of ideas, we've talked about it in some other episodes I think, but that's a really intense version of it.

Kristina: Right.

Callid: That they have to have the same leading to be ... what's the language? A commitment to dwell on the concern together. That same leading to serve because she's also one of these folks that says it's not really about the person who's carrying the concern. It's about people coming together to sit with the concern.

Kristina: Right, to admit to that kind of waiting and dwelling. Before I move on to something else that she said, I want to maybe push back a little bit. You said that she has high hopes. I'm not sure that she actually has high hopes. I think she has, maybe we could characterize them as high expectations, but they're expectations that are not inconsistent with the robustness that the tradition offers us. It's there. It's not that it's not there. We just don't come into it with our own set of equal expectations.

Callid: Thank you for putting a finer note on that. I don't mean that she has high hopes that she's high highfalutin or something. I was impressed and inspired by the degree to which she expected a level of commitment. If the committees that were appointed to support released friends in her language, ministers or people carrying concern, ministry, came to the support of that ministry with the same intensity that the individuals who were carrying the concern had and felt for the concern they're carrying, the consequences of that would be spiritually profound and the ripples would be intense. I think many times, the people who come to those committees do not come with the same level of fervor and sense, and the invitation, it seems, that Angela is naming in her expectations are ones, if we saw more of, would, I think, have profound spiritually deepening consequences for the Religious Society of Friends. That's what I think I meant.

Kristina: I agree, and what I hear is I hear echoes of Sandra Kronk's Pendlehill pamphlet on gospel order, which she begins with the statement to the effect of early Friends expected and experienced the in-breaking of the Holy Spirit in their worship.

Callid: Yeah.

Kristina: And there's something about the connection between entering with that expectation and the experience.

Callid: Yeah. In retrospect here, I guess this is why we reflect on this, the other thing that's really notable is I don't hear any judgment in Angela. All those other support committees that don't come with that same commitment to dwell on the concern, they're junk or they're not doing it right, I don't hear that energy at all. It's just saying this is what we ought to do.

Kristina: Right.

Callid: And it functions, for me at least, invitationally or inspirationally.

Kristina: That's right. I also appreciate the emphasis that she has making the space to do discernment. The concern that she carries for the amount of busyness in our lives that gets in the way, it not only prevents us from doing daily discernment or being available to be on a support committee fully, showing up, but I think she talks about it later when she's talking, really, about the work of racial justice. She seems to be saying that there's always a tendency to do, and maybe this work is not about doing, but it's about waiting. It's that spiritual work that isn't something that we can do, but that God does.

Callid: I don't think there's any maybe at all in her ... she says we're too busy.

Kristina: Yeah.

Callid: If you're going to take discernment as seriously as she wants to, you've got to give up on some of the things you do because you simply won't have enough time to really wait and test.

Kristina: Right.

Callid: And so it's not like busyness is bad, we shouldn't do it because it's bad. It's if you want to live your life really trying to follow leadings and leadings really require that kind of commitment to dwell on the concern over and over again. Again, I kind of think it comes back to that prayer from her grandmother. I don't really feel like I got the will for it today. Today, I just want to go do the thing. The prayer is God, give me the will when I have no will. I really do want to try and live my life fully under discernment. Then, we have to clear some stuff out so we've got space for it.

Kristina: Right, and there's an aspect of it, also, and you brought this up in the conversation, and I think she affirmed it, that that space also provides room for a different kind

of perception, for a different kind of sight, and I think that certainly is related to discernment, but it's subtly different.

Callid: Can you say more about what you're hearing there?

Kristina: It was almost visual for me when you were talking about it. Let me just get it. You said that misogyny and white supremacy can only be seen if we slow down. I imagined myself perhaps kind of rushing busily through life, and just going through the structures and the motions of my day, but slowing down, sort of like Neo in the Matrix, being able to kind of see those structures and systems at work.

Callid: Yeah. Yes. To kind of sharpen that, we see the consequences of patriarchy beyond the ways that class and race kind of deaden and destroy. I think what I was thinking then and there was if we want to get past the symptoms and kind of find out where it comes from, the spiritual seeds of war that we carry around, racism and sexism, et cetera, then we need to do that discernment work of seeking out them. That's the kind of early idea around holding people in the light or asking to be held in the light is to have the light illuminate those things that we don't want to see.

Kristina: Right.

Callid: That's what convincement and conviction is.

Kristina: Right.

Callid: The conviction allows us to recognize the things we're carrying that we don't want to carry.

Kristina: And our brokenness.

Callid: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And invite in the transformation and conversion of manners so you end up being a different person because you've spiritually worked towards seeing the things that you carry that you don't want.

Kristina: Right.

Callid: And changing your life so it's harder for you to carry them without noticing it. That's just to clarify because I don't want anyone to think you don't notice racism.

Kristina: Oh no, I wasn't saying that. I was thinking more of the underlying structures and how they work. We certainly see the effects and casualties.

Callid: Yeah. In parallel, even if it's not about racism or sexism, or any kind of structural oppression, there's a spiritual truth there, which is that our busyness can sometimes keep us from realizing our priorities are out of whack. The agnations call it the disordered affection, that you can spend your time on something instead of what you're called to spend it on, and so that practice of discernment helps you see both personally and potentially, societally what we're placing our energies on.

Callid: What is ministry in the Religious Society of Friends? I wrote down earlier, you said at a time when you were with Missionary Baptist, you had said we, the Baptists, used to think that quote, ministry was separate from our regular lives, but as Friends, we think different.

Angela: Right.

Callid: So, what do Friends think of ministry, and you don't have to speak for all Friends.

Angela: Right, right.

Callid: For you, Angela, what does ministry mean? Maybe I'm wrong, but it seems to me that you have a clear sense of calling to this work as a released Friend to kind of serving, that it's on you, that you carry it. So, the question is what is it? What is this ministry?

Angela: See, that's the thing. I don't feel like it's on me.

Callid: Interesting, great.

Angela: That's on me.

Callid: Interesting. Great. Have you ever? I mean-

Angela: No.

Callid: No.

Angela: There are moments. The tidal wave will come.

Callid: Let me clarify. I'm thinking, on you, that you're carrying a concern.

Angela: That you're carrying a concern.

Callid: That you're carrying-

Angela: I don't feel like I carry a concern totally.

Callid: Okay, great.

Angela: I feel like I am a fundamental believer in the gifts of everyone. I believe everybody has gifts and they have callings, and they have bleedings, whether they can name them or not. There was a time in which we did what we called evoking the gifts of one another. We spent time with one another. You can't name a gift in another person if you just spend time with them on an hour on Sunday.

Angela: That's a very important process for me, spending time with one another. In terms of carrying that leading, for me, the sense of carrying a leading, one would find oneself in a higher optical place, in which I carry the main responsibility. I don't see that. Just as we have clerks that are different than pastors, in other denominations, I feel the same way about the person who's carrying the leading. Gordon Cosby, from the Church of the Saviour, where I was before I became a Friend, he would say, "When you feel strongly that this leading inside you, and there's not another person that can stand beside you, your work at that time is to keep speaking the leading. To keep sharing, and you do that as if it's way opens."

Angela: So I feel that that's the way our work in manifested. It's been very challenging with my work on the outside, on the outside of Quakerism. I'm an early childhood specialist and I've opened various daycare's and preschools, and working with staff, and creating a structure when folks are used to more top down structure, and I share often about these two women who were just wonderful. Sisters that came to me and they went through the whole process of visiting the school and everything. So I was talking to them about their gifts. What aspect of working with the children do you feel called to, or whatever?

Angela: "Well, whatever you tell us to do Mrs. Hopkins." After 20 minutes of me saying, "But," and trying to explain that to them, "We would do whatever. We love the children. We love the staff. We will do whatever you tell us to do." It was very hard for me to try to find out what they were feeling called to, but I think that we each have a piece. We carry a piece of the truth around something. I don't feel it's mine to carry. It's also been a major part, structurally, here at the Friends Center for Racial Justice. The connecting piece with who's teaching who, I don't feel ... I'm not here teaching, even when I'm facilitating our class, I came here and I'm coming along folks with their concern around anti-racism.

Angela: We say this a lot. We say, "Everyone is responsible for the group." So we say a lot of things just like our whole attitudes about structure and hierarchy, and all of that, but then there's certain practices that are just internalized with us. It feels differ-

ent. So our structure feels different, for many folks it is taken well. That seems to be, right now, folks are writing a reflection paper right now about we just celebrated our one year. How has your vision of community changed since you started a year ago?

Callid: So that's interesting. If I'm getting the kind of spirit of what you're saying, it's not that you have more responsibility than others, but that the kind of responsibility that you have is different, or something. It's not more, or more important, or something. It's just that-

Angela: It's different.

Callid: It's different.

Angela: Just like the clerks' role is. Just like the person who holds the meeting. Those are different roles.

Callid: Yeah, that's really interesting. So it's a mistake to say it's not different, but it's also a mistake to say it's not ... It's a mistake to say it's not important, but it's also a mistake to say it's more important.

Angela: It's more important.

Callid: Right, so both of those are problems.

Angela: Yeah, because the primary calling is to really, to help everyone find their leading around this concern. When we come together, our work is structurally how getting to know one another and finding out Susie and Anna both write, but Anna hates to write, and she may be better at writing, but this is what she's feeling led to do, making those kinds of ...

Callid: You didn't say this, so I'm not gonna say you said this, but what just occurred to me is, a really beautiful definition of ministry would be to say, whatever it looks like, and it will look like different things in different places at different times, one of the fruits should be, "People coming into greater contact with life and leading."

Angela: Exactly. Exactly. I personally believe even when it's hard, even when, "Oh, you're just exhausting and dreading it." There is something that energizes you and gets you up. I do that there's a certain amount of discipline that comes. I say discipline, but it's discipline that is birthed of the fruit of having gone through. I talk about prayer a lot. We don't need prayer when we're engaging in the act of prayer. The most important time we need prayer is in those moments when our spirit is so broken, and we just can't find the words. We can't find the focus, the concentra-

tion, to be able to come when there's been an experience that has caused us such grief.

Angela: It has been those times when I just ... It's my habit to get up at this certain time, and it's waiting worship from me, and I show up. Sometimes I just don't want to show up. It's not about being tired. It's just, my spirit feels ... You know how you sometimes can get spun up? It's like, "No, I'm gonna hang onto my anger. I'm not ready to let my anger go." It's hard. My grandmother said, "it's hard to stay mad at a person that you pray for regularly."

Callid: It goes back to the right, give me the will to have the will.

Angela: Give me the will to have the will. Sometimes all we can do is show up. It's always been for me, when I've been in those spaces, where I just can barely just be there. For me, those are miracles that I see in the world.

Callid: Yeah. I don't know, because here your experience about this, but my experience has been ... Part of the importance of that discipline, whatever it looks like for you, I think it's a mistake to say, "This is what your discipline has to be."

Angela: Right.

Callid: But whatever it looks like for somebody, that's an important part to kind of help stay true to whatever the leading is, because to the extent that any friend has any authority, it's authority by virtue of spirit, not by virtue of position, or something. So to make sure that we're acting out of that authority, and not because I said so, we need those practices to kind of keep us on the path.

Angela: Otherwise, I feel, that we will just inevitably end up, which we always end up that way anyway, we'll be searching for the next right thing. What is the next right thing that is going to bring all of these people together for this workshop? What is the next right thing to do? Then we start, for me, acting out of our own will without seasoning what we're hearing.

Callid: And what hard work that is, right?

Angela: Yeah. I think that it's inevitable. That's why that whole discipline, which is basically just a period of some process of reflection of stopping and reflecting, and saying, and showing up. That's why that's needed, I believe. For me, I need that time because I can just from A to B to C to D. Come along spirit. Move a little faster, I'll meet you down the road.

Callid: It's interesting. I sometimes will say to people, because in the ye old Quaker books, we often will hear people talking about outrunning the guy, but these days I find myself just as frequently talking about under running.

Angela: Under running, exactly. Yeah.

Callid: Are you afraid of living into this power that isn't yours, but that you're supposed to carry? You can show up, maybe you're being asked to show up more.

Angela: Yup. Yeah.

Kristina: So I must say that I really resonate with the concern that Angela carries around gifts, and that we can't what's the saying. We can evoke each other's gifts. That's just such a lovely phrase. If we're only spending an hour with each other on Sunday, that really requires knowing each other and spending that time together to help to lift up the gifts in each other. Listening to some of the other pieces in this section, I wonder if ... I hear her discomfort around hierarchies, and that to claim a leading or that you're carrying a concern, might put you in a position where you are directing other people.

Kristina: I do think that sometimes people have a calling, have a special insight, or concern, that's laid upon them that energizes other people, that enables other people to step into their gifts because the person who's carrying the concern is fully living in to that concern, and maybe even blazing a little bit of a trail, taking a leadership position. We're uncomfortable with leadership in the religious society. We're ambivalent about it, but I think denying the importance of it might do us a disservice.

Kristina: I'm not saying that she's denying that it's important, but I felt like I heard some echoes of that wider ambivalence around leadership in the religious society.

Callid: Yeah, so listeners, this is a kind of a transparent facilitation moment because Kristina and I are clear that not everyone we speak to, and not all the interviews we do, are with people who kind of think or say the same things that we do. So part of leaving in some of these pieces of the conversation that we don't know what to do with, is to remind you that this is kind of an ongoing dialogue that we all need to be having. These conversations, we think, ought to be occurring more. This is our way of saying, "We don't really know what to do with Angela's comment that she doesn't carry a concern, or she doesn't feel it on her."

Callid: Because my experience is that she's profoundly gifted, and there's a concern she's carrying that is bearing incredible fruit. It's not my job to say, "No, you're wrong Angela. Your experience of"

Kristina: No, it's not your job.

Callid: "Of God's gift is incorrect, I have a better sense of it." So we don't know what to do with it. She says, "No, that's the thing. It isn't on me." And then tells that story around the preschool, where she wants to invite those young women. I guess what I would say, and I wouldn't wanna kind of get in a fight with Angela about this. Hi Angela, if you're listening. I don't want to fight you, but I guess the model I would say about is, and I think maybe some of the ways that I understand ministry, or having it on you, maybe that's the problematic part, whatever, is in that preschool situation the reason those women are not ...

Callid: They become accustomed to just kind of doing what people tell them because of the way the world is. So Angela's saying, "No, we want to name your own gifts." I guess the way I think about what ministry is, is the reason that Angela can invite those young women to kind of think about their own sense of calling, is because she's in charge. It's her preschool, or she's a boss, or a manager, at that preschool. If she wasn't in charge, if she didn't have the ability inside of that school to allow for people to kind of have expression and agency, it would just end up looking like the rest of the world. So what ministry is, is like building a container in which people can live into their gifts.

Callid: But someone needs to do that sometimes, and say, "No, no, no. In here we don't do it like the world does. In here we don't want that kind of hierarchy. In here I want to invite you into the fullness of your calling and your gifts." That's possible because she's leading. Leading doesn't have to mean hierarchy or dictate, which is often what we think leadership means. But I do think that there is a kind of leadership that's being exerted, even in that story, which she's using to show how hierarchy isn't what she wants. There's a different kind of leadership that can modeled within friends.

Kristina: Right. It alludes to the notion of servant leadership. I think she talks about it similarly when she talks about the workshops at the Friends Center for Racial Justice, where she says, "Here everyone has responsibility for the whole group." That's possible because she's really clear about that and sets that cultural norm. That's a kind of leadership, making space for everyone to be able to take responsibility for the group.

Callid: Right. I said this and she agreed, "The primary calling is to have everyone come into greater contact with life and dealings." Again, this is really tricky, and this is why these conversations are important. Everyone has to take responsibility for racism, but they didn't ask everyone to move into the Friends Center for Racial Justice. They asked Angela Hopkins. So how do we think about ourselves when we

do this work? How do we think about others who are doing this work? This is tricky and I don't know if we know exactly how to do it.

Callid: How some of us do it is different than others do. Not useful, we don't have a great answer to this, but we just wanted to kind of point out that we don't always know what to do, or how to think about it ourselves.

Kristina: Right, that's why these conversations are so important. I hope that people who are listening have begun with the other episodes, and will certainly feel like this gives them permission to have conversations with folks in your context, in your meeting, or community.

Callid: Yup. So we're about to close out this conversation with the money questions. One of the reasons this comes up is because there has been an enormous conversation around how we support ministry. We're here in the New England yearly meeting, where the legacy gift fund kind of allows for some people to have funds available to do this work that's different from all other yearly meetings. We're still trying, I think here in New England, to figure out what we think of this, how we conceive of it spiritually, how we deal with paying people.

Callid: There's a lot of concern. Not everyone is clear if it's a good idea or a right idea. There's a lot of concern, kind of like Angela mentioned, around what happens in people get too much money, and money becomes power, and therefore then they're the ones in charge. Right? I think that's part of the worry that someone kind of takes too much responsibility, or too much power on, and then other people feel like they don't need to do the work because someone's being paid to do it. That's one of the big concerns.

Callid: We're aware, for example, of the releasing ministry alliance, which is a project held by Vaughn New and Viv Hawkins, who are clear around the importance for people to be able to be supported in their attempts to kind of live faithfully, and to their ministry, and sometimes the need to pay for things like insurance, or bread. So this conversation is a robust topic, I think there was a Friends' journal article about it. This calms up a lot, which is one of the reasons that we ask people, how have you managed to live and pay for your life if you've given over so much of it to this?

Callid: It's a hard thing to talk about. Friends don't usually like talking about money, so we kind of say it to the end of the interview, when people feel comfortable and say, "Hey, would you be willing to talk about the money thing?" Then, in this interview, I raised the question and then Angela got really excited. So we'll close out here

talking about the nitty gritty, the kind of quicker taboo, of talking about finances, but in a joyous way because Angela loves talking about that topic apparently.

Callid: To table, and I'm wondering if you have any thought about any of this.

Angela: This is one of my favorite conversations.

Callid: Oh, good.

Angela: And I know that it's not one for all, and again it goes back to my roots at the Church of the Saber because we had an organization called the Ministry of Money. The reality is, is that money is a gift. It is a gift that is bestowed upon folks, or they acquired by other means, that it's just like any other gift. What creates the problem for us, I believe, is that we set money aside. We set our financial wealth aside as being different than of our other gifts, so for me as a follower of Jesus, money is just another gift.

Angela: If we believe that the gifts are given to us for the benefit of the community, not just for the benefit of ourselves, we say those things, but what does that look like? When we engage in the process of recovery from racism, or recovery for whatever our particular challenge is, because it's different for all of us, then we learn more about how to walk in that relationship to our gifts, with our gifts. I also believe that our biggest challenge structurally is directly connected to our perception around finances.

Angela: The issue around scarcity, the issue around abundance, and the use of our financial gifts.

Callid: That is to say, we're not extending financial gifts in a way that frees people up to do work.

Angela: Right. Do we really believe that these people who are retired and have a pension, who can afford to engage in ministry, or these who are ... No. If we say that we believe that there is that of God in everyone, and everyone is endowed with gifts, to me it is a privileging of certain gifts over others, and I don't believe in that. I think we suffer for the want of something, or many things, that we're already gifted with. That's because of the way that we're structured.

Callid: Alright. Somehow the way you just said this made me think. What are we missing out on? Because some of our members have to take that second shift, and so they're so tired that they can't spend a little bit more time in prayer, or in that book, or in that conversation. What are we limiting our friends from?

Angela: Right, and it's insidious in our structure throughout, so we say we want everyone to be at the table, but when we have meetings that only meet at certain times, how's that working for folks that have childcare needs? If we meet during certain times of the year, what's that say for folks who's primary work, like in New England, where tourism, that's a big part, if they're not free during that particular time because that's where they make the bulk of their money to sustain themselves for the rest of the year, what is that saying about whether we really care about ... I don't mean to say care, but that's just the reality.

Angela: If we really want everyone to be at the table, then we need to structure ourselves in such a way that everyone can show up and be present. I don't believe that I'm being idealistic about this.

Callid: That seems to speak for itself, so I think we'll just close.

Kristina: Yeah, yeah.

Callid: Thanks so much Angela for taking your time on that day to speak with me. It was a pleasure and it was a gift to me, to kind of hear all the ways in which you have clarity about things and speak about them in a way that is different than I've heard before in lots of cases.

Kristina: Yes, thank you Angela Hopkins for sharing your story and being so clear about the insights that she's gathered over the years.

Callid: We also want to give thanks to Fresh Pawn monthly meeting here in Cambridge, Massachusetts. We're really grateful for the support we have from that body, and from our committees of caring, accountability, and support here at the meeting, which have cared for the ministry that Kristina carries and the one that I do. They're an important part of the project, and we couldn't do this without them.

Kristina: This project is made possible by the financial support of the legacy gift fund of New England yearly meeting.

Callid: The Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund.

Kristina: And from a grant from Salem quarterly meeting.

Callid: So thanks to all of them, and also to Blue Dot Sessions for the music, and also this week some music from John Watts. Really grateful to the folks who make music available for use in podcasts, especially when it's so good. Thanks folks.

Kristina: You can listen to this podcast on iTunes or Google Play. You can also check it out on the webpage for this show, which is ocacshow.org.

Callid: On Facebook you can search for On Caring Concern and you'll find it there.

Kristina: On Facebook you can leave us some feedback, let us know how this show's working for you.

Callid: Same thing in Twitter, [@OCACshow](https://twitter.com/OCACshow). Again, let us know if there are things that you're using this for, and things you find useful about it, whether you're doing it in personal reflection and listening, or in a group. Even if it's now 2020, we'd love to hear from you.

Kristina: Thanks for listening.

Callid: So let us know, drop up a comment on the show's website, OCACshow.org. And we'll talk to you soon.

Kristina: Bye bye, thanks for listening.

