

Conservative Quakers Raise Cattle Sustainably in Bolivia

We met Neva and Grant Kaufmann at World Plenary of Friends in Peru and were fascinated by their story. The Kaufmanns have lived in Bolivia for several decades but they are not typical Bolivian Friends. They are Conservative Friends who moved to Bolivia from Iowa twenty years ago and became cattle ranchers. They live as simply and as sustainably as possible. With their mostly homemade plain dress, they look like Friends who've stepped out of the 19th century.

They moved to an area called the Chaco, in the southeast part of Bolivia, where the climate is extremely hot and arid. When they arrived, the pond on their property looked like pea soup. To make the water drinkable, they had to boil it over a wood fire. The cistern held rainwater, but it rains so rarely the water was insufficient. They couldn't grow corn because it is too dry. The ground was unproductive. They lost cattle because there was not enough grass to feed them. Through the Mennonites they learned about panicum gatton, a species of grass that grows in shade. They also learned about a system of ranching called sylvopastoralism, which is "the practice of combining forestry and grazing of domesticated animals in a mutually beneficial way." Instead of cutting down trees to create a monoculture, the Kaufmanns planted panicum grass, which grows under trees and feeds their cattle. As a result of this practice, the Kaufmanns began to see deer, wild pigs and new species of birds. As their ranch prospered, neighboring ranchers also began to follow their example. They learned that certain trees called choroqueite thrive in this dry climate. Their leaves taste like salad. In June through October they drop their leaves and help create a cushion, which the cattle like to lick up. "It's a beautiful symbiotic system," explained Grant.

Their life hasn't been easy. In the first year they killed over 300 poisonous snakes. They had to work hard to live sustainably but they have a happy family and a deep gratitude to God.

Neva explained: "Our family loves to work and loves to have fun. They love to milk cows. One son wanted a cow since he was four years old. Nathan likes ranching, and Rachel trains horses. She loves animals and is very gentle and kind."



Grant told us: "The biblical counsel 'whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might' has encouraged us to press ahead with the ranch at a time when Bolivia's chronic political and legal instability, combined with threats of climate change, have discouraged many others. Thus far, I believe we have good cause to be thankful to our Creator for all that He has done for us and through us in our little corner of South America."

Asked what was most memorable about the FWCC Plenary

they responded: "Knowing again that we are not alone....The essence of our Friends community seems to be sharing the love of God, whether we call it that or something else. This was the Pisac experience for us."

How did you become a Quaker?

Neva responded: My earliest memories of Friends' meeting for worship were the quiet waiting with family and friends in Paullina meeting in NW Iowa. My Great Grandfather Anton Tjossem was one of the founders of that meeting in the late 1800s. There were good agricultural lands available in that place and some Norwegian families moved to Obrien Co. where they could practice their religion undisturbed. There were also Scots who became a significant part of the Friends' community there. There were some who wore plain dress and used the classic English plain speech, but the focus of Paullina Friends was always the direct relationship with God, and adherence to principles of peace with all.

During the years following WWII most of the focus of our meeting was on promoting peace, offering homes to European refugees for a few years (we had two German families living in our upstairs and my dad hired the two men to help with farm work), encouraging the Friends Committee on National Legislation's work to seek a world free of war through justice, supporting AFSC in every way possible. When our generation approached the age to be drafted most of the young men registered as conscientious objectors.

There was one non-registrant. With so many influences toward peace and justice, I had few issues to settle having to do with peace on earth. But my own spiritual state was far from settled. During my college

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Worship Groups

These groups practice waiting worship in the manner of Conservative Friends. It is best to make contact before making plans, as their schedules need to be adjusted to accommodate their regular participants. For worship at OYM monthly meetings see www.ohiょearlymeeting.org

| Meeting | Location | Contact Person | Contact Information |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Friends of Jesus Fellowship | Washington, DC | Micah Bales | 316-210-6224 micahbales@gmail.com dcmetro.fojf.org |
| Friends Gathering in Jesus Christ | Evanston, Illinois (near Chicago) | Kevin McMurtrey | kevinmcmurtrey@gmail.com |
| Friends in Christ | Harrisville, Michigan | Kimberly Anne Makela | plainquakers@gmail.com www.plainquakers.org |
| Goshen Meeting | Scone, Scotland | Paul Thompson | UK # 01738 620688; Bookseeker @blueyonder.co.uk www.plainquakers.org |
| Lubbock Friends Meeting | Grace Presbyterian Church Building, Lubbock, Texas | Sara Scribner | sarabscribner@aol.com meeting is at 4820 W. 19th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79407 |
| One in Christ | 15 th St. Meeting House, NYC | Brian Doherty | 212-279-6200 brianj.doherty@verizon.net |
| Midlands Quakers | Stonebroom, Derbyshire, UK | Allistair Lomax | UK # 01773-875962 ripleychristianquakers@hotmail.co.uk weekly online meeting, First Days, 10:30 AM |
| Uxbridge Worship Group | Corner of Routes 98 and 146A, Uxbridge MA | Connie Bair-Thompson | First Days, 9:00 AM |
| Whittier Worship Group | Whittier, California | Kim Palmer | kimpalmer11@yahoo.com |

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The editor welcomes articles for publication, those written recently as well as excerpts from earlier Friends' writings.

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years, I tried a variety of churches, learning from a Baptist minister that there was a new covenant to be entered into with God! I tried to fit together the scripture that we memorized as children with the practices of Quaker meeting and an adult faith in relationship with God.

These questions drifted with me for several years until 1972 when I joined an apple picking crew of young Friends in SE Ohio. As part of the local Friends' Meeting in Barnesville, Ohio I attended Stillwater Meeting. I still vividly remember the meeting for worship in which the "Presence in the Midst" became real to me. Although I had sat through countless meetings and church services in the years since attending Paullina Meeting as a child, never had I felt that God was present and active.

Suddenly I was aware that this theory I had heard all my life, that when two or three gather together in His name He is present, was absolutely true right then and there! Nothing changed except that living reality.

The rest is a story of learning to allow Life to live in me. To guide and correct me. To strengthen me in the truth that comes gently and without fanfare. Thus to be a Friend.

Grant responded: Unlike Neva, who is a birth-right Friend and descendant of the "Valiant 60", I came to Quakerism as a young adult. My father was Jewish and my mother Gentile/Christian. Although both believed in God, they had lived their lives basically as secular Americans.

Unwelcome in either synagogue or church because of their union, they simply chose to "do nothing" until their desires for a spiritual community and my own yearnings for a knowledge of God as a young teenager led us to visit a Friends meeting when I was around 13. Accepting as a matter of principle, they offered a welcome to our family, and the quiet worship offered an outlet for my own spiritual searchings.

Always a great reader, I had read the Bible and many religious books by this time but could never "put it all together". The transforming moment came some months later when an older Friend rose to speak in meeting and opened by quoting the first verses of the book of Hebrews: "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son..."

Like George Fox on Pendle Hill, "my heart did leap for joy!" If the eternal God did "in these days" speak to us by His Son, then there is a way through the veil of confusion and God, in all His fullness, is knowable! This summed up the Quaker message and provided me a way forward.

Some years later, I came in contact with Conservative Friends, whose clear Christian testimony, combined with unprogrammed worship and a prophetic understanding of ministry, dovetailed with my own understandings of God's work. I moved my membership to Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative) where I have remained a member ever since.



What has been your experience with FWCC?

Grant replied: Pisac was our third FWCC conference of Friends. (We also attended Tela, Honduras, and Ghost Ranch, NM, with our then-young children.) Our work in Bolivia has kept us rather much "out of the loop" of Quakerism for the last 20 years, so when we learned

there was to be a world gathering virtually "next door" in Peru, we were pleased to be appointed by our yearly meeting (Ohio Conservative) as representatives. Although we have worked and had fellowship with many sorts of Christian people over the years, we remain very much Friends at heart. Nowhere else that I have been are people so open to the voice of God's spirit or so ready to accept one another (warts and all) with loving-kindness. These two traits, I believe, are the foundation for transformation. We cannot experience transformation (at least for the good) if we are hardened against the SOURCE of all good, nor if we harden ourselves against one another and come to view others in political terms (as pawns to be manipulated) rather than as fellow humans in whom we are called to "answer that of GOD". These are the hallmark traits of Friends, across all the diversity, so it came as no real surprise to see transformation happening in the hearts of those present or to hear of it occurring across the globe as the Friend's message has continued to spread well beyond our Anglo-American roots. We all went away, I think, if not transformed, at least blessed and reanimated to share the blessing with others.

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What was most memorable about the Plenary in Peru?

Neva replied: What was most memorable about the gathering in Peru was knowing again that we are not alone. In Bolivia for close to 20 years, seeking to live in a way which promotes awareness of God's love and the abundance of His resources, there have been many frustrations. People do not necessarily understand generosity. It appears to some to be weakness or stupidity. Ever give from heart felt love and later learn that the recipient was hoping for MORE? Didn't think the gift was good enough? The essence of our Friends community seems to be sharing the love of God, whether we call it that or something else. This was the Pisaq experience.

Why did you move to Bolivia?

Grant replied: question we are often asked (and ask ourselves). Why give up the comforts and security of life in the USA to invest our life savings and 20 years of our family's labor in one of the most backward areas of a poor country, known the world over for its political instability, corruption and legal insecurity? The only real answer I can give is what Jacob said when he reached Eben-Ezer: "Thus far has the LORD led me." As Friends and followers of Jesus, we have always tried to live our lives following the leadings of God's spirit. As such, we are no strangers to "outside the box" decisions, but always within the parameters of where God has called us, involving alternatives in agriculture and witnessing to God's love. I have always liked the saying, " If not us, who? If not now, when?" This world is full of brokenness and suffering. We each have God-given abilities and understanding. We are each called to foster SHALOM. What we do for even the least among people, we do for Christ. We have had our successes and failures. We have grown old in God's service and the world is passing to a new generation. To them, I would most want to communicate "In all your ways, acknowledge HIM and HE will direct your paths." On-

ly God sees the end from the beginning. He is worthy of our trust.

Please tell us about the development of your ranch.

Grant replied: In the development of the ranch, Phase 1 involved fencing the perimeter of the property so that we were able to control stocking numbers. Phase 2 was to divide the property internally into several large (200-1500 HA) paddocks so the movement of the cattle could be controlled and the native range better utilized. Phase 3 was to progressively fence smaller paddocks near water sources (digging new ponds where none existed previously), clearing the understory to about a 60% shade cover and seeding an adapted grass (panicum gatton) under the remaining tree cover.

The original information on the Gatton Panicum came from the British Foreign Agriculture Service's "Centro de Investigacion Agricola Tropical" (CIAT) which, at the time, had a model ranch not far from where we now live in the Chaco. The Men-

nonites in the Paraguayan part of the Chaco had also worked with this species of grass, and it was from them that we got our first seed.

Concurrently, we brought in bulls of improved breeds to increase the growth rate of the cattle as the available nutrients also increased from grass and range management. All of this was (and is) a big project



and we are nowhere near the end of it yet, but so far we can note a very substantial increase in meat and milk marketed, compared with the traditional system and, much to our satisfaction, a steady increase in wildlife, as the grass and water sources benefit the ranch's wild inhabitants as well as the cattle. The moment was right for the technology to spread among the local people as well and there are now many other ranches following the silvopasture system. I think the fact that we were just fellow cattlemen rather than a government or NGO project with outside funding, and dependent, as they are on our cattle for our livelihood, gave them the courage to

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try something new which their natural conservatism had heretofore resisted.

The biblical counsel "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" has encouraged us to press ahead with the ranch at a time when Bolivia's chronic political and legal instability, combined with threats of climate change have discouraged many others. Thus far, I believe we have good cause to be thankful to our Creator for all that He has done for us and through us in our little corner of South America

Some question whether meat production is sustainable. What are your thoughts?

Unfortunately, it seems to be a weakness of our times to discard the wisdom of Millennia in favor of our own new (and supposedly better) ideas. To me, the issue seems pretty straightforward. There are currently something like seven billion people on the earth, a figure projected to grow to at least 12 billion over the next couple of generations. All of these people are going to need to eat every day, which means a great deal more food must be produced. The present world food system relies very heavily on industrial type grain production, something which requires large expanses of flat land in moderate climatic zones and carries a high environmental cost. A large portion of the earth's land area is unsuited to this type of agriculture. Of this land, nearly all but the driest deserts and polar ice caps is, however, utilizable by some type of grazing animals (cattle, sheep, goats, camels, llamas, and so forth). These animals, by the nature of their digestive systems, can convert raw nutrient vegetable matter (graze and browse) into high nutrient-dense proteins (meat and milk) as well as providing other useful goods like wool and leather. It was for these obvious benefits that these creatures were domesticated in the first place. In a properly managed grazing system, the total environmental cost is very low. Grazing animals return to the soil from which they derive nutrients about 98% of the what they consume, the remaining 2% being the famous belches, which are mostly a result of grain feeding. I do not recall seeing a ranch cow belch when processing forage....

God is the giver of life and the creator of all that is. He has created us humans as rational beings and entrusted the care of His creation into our hands. It is ours to manage as good stewards, not to hoard as miserly owners or to loot as robbers.

- Anthony Manousos

Reprinted from his blog,
<http://laquaker.blogspot.com/>
 posted 10-31-2016

Christian Friends Conference - Western Region Palo Alto (California) Friends Meetinghouse September 10, 2016

The quarterly meeting of the Christian Friends Conference - Western Region was held on Saturday September 10, 2016 at Palo Alto Friends Meetinghouse, with eight Friends present, two for the first time. Introductions were made and greetings from absent members were passed on. One Friend usually here is caring for his wife who had surgery recently, and we send our prayers to them. The CFC statement of purpose was read, our schedule for the day was presented, and finally Our Invitation to Worship was read.

Friends then gathered for about two hours of waiting worship, begun with a period of Bible reading.

Following fellowship over lunch, Strat Jaquette spoke about a visit he had while in England with John Punshon, a Friend who many of us have had the pleasure of meeting. In the past John had attended at least one session of Pacific Yearly Meeting, and College Park Quarterly Meeting. Strat brought copies of many of John's books and pamphlets, and encouraged Friends to read them. We were very glad to receive news of this visit, and asked Strat to convey to John our prayers and good wishes. Strat also mentioned attending Reading Meeting's meeting for business, and noted that in England the Clerk writes the minutes. They have no recording clerks, as American Friends usually have.

A Friend feels we spend too much time talking among ourselves, and do not think enough about non-Quakers and the future.

The date of our next gathering will be Dec. 3 at Berkeley Friends Church. We considered dates for March of 2017 (the 18th or the 11th).

Krista Barnard requested prayers for her upcoming Bible study at the SF Meeting women's retreat, where she will talk on the Book of Jonah. She offered to make a similar presentation to us at a future gathering, which we would be glad to hear.

We were reminded that San Francisco Monthly Meeting has an extended worship (9:30-12:00) whenever a fifth First Day occurs, usually 4 times a year.

Inner Light Books has a new publication, "The Anti-War" by Doug Gwyn. A copy was passed around.

A Friend not able to be present today notes that Contemplative Outreach of No. Calif. has retreats around the Bay Area. For details please contact Bruce Folsom.

Notice of Waiting Worship in So. Calif. on Sept. 17th was given.

We concluded with a final period of worship for about an hour. Vocal ministry included Luke 11:2; 1 Cor 2:1ff; and a prayer for God's assistance in knowing where to step and where to be still.

On behalf of Christian Friends Conference - Western Region, Bruce Folsom

The Scriptures As Understood and Used by Conservative Friends

Conservative Friends, like the original Friends, believe that Jesus Christ is the Word of God. We take seriously the verse in the Gospel of John that says, “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us...” (John 1: 14) We also believe that the Word of God inspired the writers of the Bible. Conservative Friends, like earlier Friends, often refer to those writings as “scriptures,” the term used by Jesus and by New Testament writers.

Early Friends’ Understanding of the Scriptures

Although by modern standards George Fox had only a rudimentary education, he knew the Scriptures well and used them often in personal study and in his ministry. It is clear that Fox considered not the Bible but Jesus Christ to be the Word of God. In his Epistle 249 Fox declares, ”For the Scriptures of Truth are the words of God ... (T)he Word was in the beginning, and Christ’s name is called the Word of God. But Christ is neither called scripture nor writings” Douglas Gwyn, in his *Apocalypse of the Word*, states, ”It is perhaps Fox’s most valuable contribution that he rejoins the Spirit and the Word in prophetic experience of the risen Christ. While he presents Jesus Christ as the one Word of God, present and teaching by his Spirit, he places scripture, the historical record of the Word’s work, as the words of God. The true Word is the Christ who is speaking now.”

We should not gather, however, that Fox belittled Scripture. He records in his *Journal* that “I had no slight esteem of the holy scriptures, but they were very precious to me, for I was in that spirit by which they were given forth, and what the Lord opened in me I later found was agreeable to them.” Likewise William Penn, in his *Advice to His Children*, writes “The holy scriptures of Truth were blessed to me.... I charge you to read (the scriptures) daily; the old testament for history chiefly, the psalms for meditation and devotion; the prophets for comfort and hope; but especially the new testament for doctrine, faith and worship.” In his *Apology*, Robert Barclay declares that Friends “value (the scriptures), ... to which...no other writings are to be preferred.” They are “very comfortable and necessary to the church of Christ.”

Early Friends held, as Conservative Friends do now, that only through the work of Christ within them can people understand the truth in Scripture. Referring to the Gospel of John, Fox wrote in his *Journal*, “And I saw that none could read John’s words aright with a true understanding of them, but [i.e., except] in and with the same divine Spirit by which John spoke them, and by his burning shining light which is sent from God.”

Friends can be differentiated from other Christians by where their primary religious authority on earth resides. For Catholics, the institution of the

Church has primary authority on earth. For Protestants, the Bible is the primary authority, while for Friends the Spirit of the Living Christ has primary authority.

Barclay argues that Scripture also is a valid source of religious authority, secondary but not in opposition to the Spirit of Christ. Because both the Scriptures and the divine revelations experienced within come from Christ, they are compatible and in unison. Barclay insists that “divine and inward revelations do not and cannot contradict the Scriptures of Truth.” Similarly, “whatsoever doctrine is contrary to (the Scriptures’) testimony may therefore justly be rejected as false.” Barclay affirms that Scripture is of great benefit to Friends seeking to know and follow the Living Word of God. Conservative Friends have maintained that understanding in an unbroken stream from the first Friends.

The Bible Among Conservative Friends Today

For present day Conservative Friends, Jesus Christ is an ever-present reality experienced among us as the Living Presence; Christ is the foundation on which we build our faith. Because the Scriptures were inspired by Christ Himself and because Christ remains unchanging (Heb.13:8), the two must agree. Ohio Yearly Meeting Friends value the Scriptures. OYM’s Book of Discipline includes this Advice (#16): “Be diligent in the reading of the Bible and other spiritually helpful writings....” OYM Friends today use the Bible in many ways:

1. Business sessions begin with a period of waiting worship, followed by a reading from Scripture.
2. Upon the conclusion of each evening program at yearly meeting, a portion of Scripture is read aloud.
3. In our traditional Bible readings, we gather in the presence of the divine Inspiration that gave forth the Scriptures. As different Friends are moved, they select a passage of Scripture and read it aloud, without introduction or explanation, allowing the Word present to minister to us about what was just read.
4. Ministry in meeting for worship often includes Scripture as part of the spoken message.
5. Many individuals and families have a regular time for the daily reading of the Bible.
6. Some Meetings have a Bible study group in which a passage is read aloud and discussed a few verses at a time.

- John C. Smith
Member of Rockingham Monthly Meeting



Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends Publications List, 2017

Books and Booklets

Continuing in Marriage. Accounts by and about couples within Ohio Yearly Meeting who have been married 50 years or more. 1990. \$ 2.00.

Discipline of Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends. 2013. \$ 5.50.

The Eye of Faith, by William P. Taber, Jr. A History of Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends. 1985. (Hard cover) \$ 8.00.

The Gospel Imperative, by Grant Kaufmann. A call to Friends to obey the great commission. 1995. \$1.00.

Mind the Heavenly Treasure, compiled by Gary Bowell. Thoughts for each day from the Scriptures and the eight volumes of writings of George Fox. 1989. \$4.00

So That You Come Behind in No Gift. Papers from Ohio Yearly Meeting's Gathering on Eldering. 1996. \$ 2.00.

Statements Opposing War. Testimonies of a number of Ohio Yearly Meeting members who took a stand against war. 1993. \$ 3.00.

Tell Me A True Story, compiled by Sheldon Smith. A collection of true stories for children, young and old. 1985. \$ 3.25.

Traditional Quaker Christianity, edited by Wallace, Smith, Smith, & Berk. Published by Ohio Yearly Meeting, 2014. \$ 15.00. Available through Amazon.com; BarnesandNoble.com; Foundation Publications; Ohio Yearly Meeting.

Pamphlets

“A Brief Introduction to Conservative Friends”. \$ 1.00.

“Advices and Queries of Ohio Yearly Meeting”. \$ 1.00.

“Living A-Top of the World” by Charles P. Morlan. 1954. \$ 1.50.

“Welcome to Our Meeting.” A brief description of our beliefs. \$ 1.00.

Periodical

“*The Conservative Friend*,” 4 issues \$ 10.00.

Issues of our former publication
“*The Ohio Conservative Friends Review*”
1985-1995 (our choice of ten issues) \$ 4.00.

Shipping and handling: will be added to all orders.

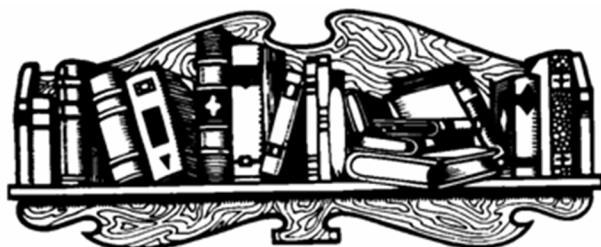
Order from, and make checks (U.S. funds only) payable to: Elvina Krekler, 1187 U.S. Route 250, Adena, OH 43901-7959. 740-546-3814.
<elvinakrekler@gmail.com

Silence

“Spoken words, if inspired by the Spirit, can contribute to a realization of the presence of God in a meeting for worship. But it is the silence at the opening of the meeting and the silences between the messages that are more important than words. For it is in the silence that we lift the words which have been spoken and the unexpressed thoughts of our hearts before God in submission to eternal truth and love, and await the revelations of the inner light. It is in the silence that we become aware of the immediate presence of God, and worship Him in wordless communion of spirit.

“Is it not a sobering thought that if anyone speaks too long in a meeting for worship, or if too many speak, we do not leave time for God Himself to speak in the silence?”

--A letter written by James Myers from New York City to the Editor of *Friends Intelligencer* and appearing in that journal under date of Second Month 26, 1955.



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The Prodigal Son

In the Gospel according to Luke, Jesus speaks about the lost sheep returning to the everlasting Father who communicates constantly with those who have left Him; they abandon the Father because they desired independence

In the parable of the prodigal son, one of the sons desires his economic freedom from the father to live in his own domain, then through his own mistakes, he loses his capital and seeks help from a farmer.

But his labors are in vain. God, however, never abandoned this rebellious son, ministering to his beloved inwardly. As a result of God's efforts, the son repents and begs his Father to forgive him.

Since God is a forgiving Lord, He welcomes His son returning to the Kingdom as this same God invites all who have abandoned Him to repent. In other words, God affords us the magnificent opportunity of embracing our everlasting King.

The other son, however, expresses jealousy because God forgave his brother. Yet the Lord reminds the recalcitrant brother that the Lord has been nurturing him on a consistent level and he should welcome his brother's return to the spiritual Kingdom with gratitude.

Let us remember that Jesus invites His followers who abandoned God's directives to once again seek our Lord's love. In that way we do return to Jesus' government. Friends, we may be tempted to reject God but

He will find us if we are willing to live in His community.

- Arthur Berk
Affiliate Member of Rockingham Monthly Meeting

The Blessed Community

Many religious bodies overemphasize the individual's relationship to the Lord. They ignore the fact that God is speaking to his body of believers who hear his ministry.

That is why we wait on the Lord together to absorb his commands. We start with silence and then the Lord communicates His care toward His creations. No wonder we are able to absorb His peace and tranquility and this is the essence of our peace testimony.

While we are silent the Lord displays how He expects us to treat each other. In His kingdom we must be able to show respect for one another while listening to that small voice within. In this way we can learn with His love to forgive each other.

As a community the Lord teaches us to share with others what they need and desire. As a result we become more of a blessed community in obedience to Christ.

- Arthur Berk
Affiliate Member of Rockingham Monthly Meeting