

I learned something new a week ago... about the Quaker term Gospel Order

Gospel Order is essentially the same as the Kingdom of God, which we've been talking about
This counter cultural realm where we live with God and follow the Leadings of God

Gospel Order describes the distinctive corporate structures and discipline of the Quaker movement

In the early days there was an effort to balance the seemingly chaotic Spiritual movement

With structures that could allow the Leadings of the Spirit to take root

It is out of this effort that our Quaker business practices were developed

A way of Listening in community for the Leading of the Spirit

However, these structures and practices are not in themselves gospel order.

Rather, the structures are what enable Friends to live in gospel order

(i.e. in obedience to God and in harmony with God's order for creation).

It is by coming into harmony with gospel order that we realize God's shalom¹—wholeness

Lloyd Lee Wilson, in his book, *Quaker Vision of Gospel Order*, makes this statement:

"Gospel order is the order established by God that exists in every part of creation, transcending the chaos that seems so often prevalent. It is the right relationship of every part of creation, however small, to every other part and to the Creator."

Genesis 1:4 tells us that once God created light,

God separated it from the dark, chaotic void.

It was the first act of bringing order to a place where even God was unhappy.²

Pendle Hill Pamphlet, *Gospel Order: A Quaker Understanding of Faith in Community* by Sandra L. Cronk discusses Gospel Order and suggests three dimensions to gospel order:

1. Individuals living in a way that nurtures and maintains the covenant relationship with God.
2. The life of the meeting - community, the church, must reflect the love and unity gathered Friends feel in their relationship with God.
3. Provide a prophetic witness to the larger society, or as we say among Friends – live the testimonies.

Cronk also said, *"Early Friends stressed that God's new order was not present simply because people did all the 'right' things in an outward sense; rather, God's new order, gospel order, was present when people lived out of the fullness of their living relationship with Christ." "It simply means that gospel order is, first and foremost, life lived in God's transforming, guiding, and sustaining power."*

I would submit that the Kingdom of God is this vision of Gospel Order infused with the Power of the Lord George Fox talked often about the "Power of the Lord that was over all"

In 1656 Fox wrote: *"I charge you in the Presence of the Living God, dwell in his Power, that with his Power ye may be carried along to minister to [everyone]..."*

In the Power of the Lord we are able to go forth and live out the Leadings of Gospel Order

¹ <http://aquakerstew.blogspot.com/2010/06/shalom-and-gospel-order.html>

² <http://www.quakerquaker.org/profiles/blogs/gospel-order-i-insist>