

Faith Statement
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Good Morning!

I still speak English very poorly, but on this occasion I am obliged to speak in English, because I am here with you and it is a sign of respect to you. Forgive my bad pronunciation and the mistakes I may make. Finally, I want to speak to you from my heart.

I've never been a religious man. From childhood I lived in the world of education and so I dedicated myself to science when I discovered the misery of the world of politics and ideology. When I was 12 years old, I left my home and pursued self-improvement, knowledge and the struggle for social justice. My family were my companions and friends, so you might say my religion was always friendship, true friendship that I had the opportunity to experience. My mother was a fervent Catholic and I was baptized when I was one-year-old (Sorry, I don't remember anything about the event) and I took my first communion when I was 8 or 9 years-old. Precisely here my contradictions began because in the Church taught me one thing, but my reality was very different.

Since childhood my thinking has been logical and orderly, that's why I dedicated myself to the sciences. Mathematics, logic, philosophy and methods, have set the course of my life and my way of living.

I studied religions and the Bible for their great historical, cultural, educational value and for the wisdom of their content. I understood many things of the present world from study, but as an intellectual. (There are two people who have made me see the transcendent meaning of reading the Bible: Pastors Daniel Yoder and Luis Tapia. Thank you!)

My big problem with religions and religious people is that, in general, their thinking, words and actions are different, there is no coherence.

My interest in philosophy and history led me to study in detail the life and work of Jesus Christ through the Gospels and the New Testament in general. His presence radically transformed the whole society from its roots. However, religious connotation limited my understanding of its scope. I identified with the Christ of the road, of his actions among the people, but Jesus was always presented to me as a suffering, bloody and wounded being on the cross.

However, there came a time when science and knowledge did not explain the phenomena that I encountered in my life.

Until one day, as I walked between the dining room and the rooms of my house in Mexico, I saw him, I saw the Christ in front of me. That was my personal "road to Damascus", but it did not happen to me like Saul of Tarsus, to whom the Christ Light blinded him. He opened my eyes, my life shone brightly and my narrow horizon widened 360 degrees.

I recognized the Christ, I saw the Master Jesus. I did not see Him dead on the cross, but preaching, alive and strong, guiding and loving. That's the image I had of him.

And at that moment I asked my wife Adoration (who's here with me on this important occasion): "Why didn't you tell me, why didn't you share with me what you know?" And she replied: "You can only see Jesus with your own eyes, listen to Him with your own ears and understand Him with your own mind ... when you are ready! No one can do it for you." It's not logic, mathematics or philosophy that gives you the understanding of the world, of life, of yourself, of how you should live: it is the light of the Teaching of Christ.

After having seen many places in my life, having been in contact with many people from different cultures and countries, the goal of my life is peace, inner peace and peace with my fellow human beings. The teaching of Christ and my personal experience in life have allowed me to realize that respect, tolerance and acceptance of others are the foundation of that peace and true happiness of humanity.

And unexpectedly, I'm in Goshen to begin a new life with my newborn grandson. I was looking for a community to relate to in the city, its people, customs, and traditions and to complete my studies of the English language, to be able to speak and understand it.

And one day I met Don Yost. He invited me to participate in a job and I also met Ron Kennel, who introduced me to Gwen Gustafson-Zook. And thus began an incredible journey for me. Don opened the door to an exceptional community and Gwen opened the door to this sacred place. I will always be grateful to them.

I could come every Sunday to be in the house of God and feel the presence of Christ in the people, in the sermons, in the music of angels that filled my soul. Harmony and peace, welcomes, smiles, acceptance, interest, respect. But dreams and good intentions do not always turn out as expected. And hard times came for me.

I needed a living space and an angel named Weldon Troyer helped me. He took me to Marie and Vic Stoltfus who would rent space to me, but circumstances changed and they decided to rent me their house until I got an apartment! Their house! I asked Vic why he was doing this since he did not really know me. Invite me to share their private space, their belongings, their books, etc.! And his simple answer is one of the greatest things that I have experienced in my life: "we are people of God" he said. **WE ARE PEOPLE OF GOD!**

Who are you? Where am I?

Don, Ron, Gwen, Marty, Phil, Allen, Claudia, Francisco, Felipe and many, many more people whose names I can't always remember, but who always have a smile and a kind and loving word for me.

Who are you? Where am I?

I said earlier that my contradiction with religions and religious people was the incoherence between thinking, speaking and acting. And in this same place where I am now, there were Marie Clements and Wanda Newbry, who told me about their experiences with a community that accepted them, welcomed them and gave them the strength they needed to change and demonstrate to the world that they were fine people.

Here my pain dissipated, here my tears dried up. I could speak non-stop for days about what I feel, I think and I have experienced here, but it's not necessary.

I can only tell you from the depths of my soul that I am a fortunate man because:

At last I found the real people of God!