**SESSION 1 – INTRODUCTION**

Consider this excerpt from the introduction:

“… the ability to find your way around the Bible is of particular value these days, when groups who claim to have the exclusive, true, understanding of Scripture are running around attempting to impose their understanding on everyone else… …their efforts can be effectively blunted by people prepared to meet them on their own ground…”

Question: What is your relationship with the Bible? Have you been exposed to it at all, through a different Christian background, or some other source? Do you have any non-mainstream interpretations of certain portions of the Bible?

“…the biblical texts we read contain errors and even contradictions, making ridiculous the notion of treating the Bible as an all-purpose, authoritative answer book about religion, ancient history, and science… …a genuine and vigorous faith can nonetheless be nurtured and deepened by study of biblical witness, contradictions and all”

Question: What are some of these errors and contradictions you might have heard of? Are there any specific topics within the Bible you are hoping to be able to discuss during these sessions? Have you ever encountered content from the Bible in a positive light, and has it affected your spiritual growth or moral convictions in any way?

The introduction also speaks about how interpretations of the Bible by early Friends led to some practical conclusions which were far ahead of their time (very progressive for the age they were in!) Some include Margaret Fell’s 300+ year old *“Women Speaking Justified, Proved and Allowed of by the Scripture”*, which came long before modern discussions of women’s rights, or the Quakers’ push to end slavery more than a century before anyone else.

Question: We tend to see issues of the past through our modern moral lenses and wonder how anyone could have ever been comfortable with some of the atrocities that were allowed, and even encouraged. What are some similar social/moral blind spots you think we have today?