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The ADC Disciple

Anabaptist Disciples of Christ is an affiliation of Conservative Anabaptist churches seeking likeminded fellowship, instruction, and accountability in church administration and congregational life in the Biblical pattern of the Apostolic church.

The Gifts of Biblical Anabaptism

by Tyler W. Hochstetler, Esq.

Life is like a race, and not every runner starts at the same place on the track. Some are born into financial stability, and some are born into poverty. Some are born with Christian parents, and some are born with criminal parents. Some are born in Holmes County, and some are born in Haiti. Some are born athletes, and some are born without hands or feet.

The recent George Floyd tragedy has further sparked debate and emotion on the topic of "privilege." While we have no control over how God created us or where we started on the track, we can control our own attitudes and responses to the privileges God has given us.

If you were born into an Anabaptist home, in most cases, you were blessed and privileged. While some hang their heads in shame or guilt because they are "privileged," that is the wrong response. Instead, we should use our privilege as a God-given opportunity to reach out to others and help them live more abundant lives. The talents God has given us should never be squandered, wasted, or taken for granted. "To whom much is given, much will be required" (Luke 12:48).

Sometimes it is helpful to stop and reflect on how much we have been given in the Anabaptist community. When we take it for granted or fail to reflect on what we have, we can become dissatisfied or ungrateful.

Our Anabaptist heritage has intrinsic value that is sometimes forgotten. Here is a short list of some of the blessings and privileges that many have experienced within the Anabaptist community:

1. **The gift of spousal commitment** - it brings security to a marriage to know that your spouse is committed. By teaching the Biblical principle of marriage for life, this community has long avoided the scourges of divorce, poverty, single parent homes, and other challenges experienced by many Americans today. Choosing a spouse wisely is incredibly important to the success of a marriage. Many of the young people raised in Anabaptist homes have been taught what it means to be faithful in marriage by the examples of their own parents. When an entire culture of marital faithfulness is developed, it produces young people and marriage partners who know what it means to love for life. In contrast, the mainstream Christian church has a rampant divorce rate. Let's not take this gift for granted.

2. **The gift of business integrity** - it is a privilege to work with people who honor their word. Anabaptists are born and raised into communities where people are typically honest and do not seek to defraud others. This trustworthiness is so prevalent that it actually results in Anabaptists becoming vulnerable in business dealings outside of the community because trust and integrity are expected from everyone. It is much easier to write a contract between Anabaptists who are going to do the right thing, than to try to draft an agreement that covers every possible loophole and potential for fraud. In the end, even the best drafted agreement is only as good as the parties who are making the agreement. The mainstream Christian church has too many people who would not hesitate to sue or breach an agreement for financial gain. Integrity and trustworthiness are character traits that are becoming harder and harder to find. Again, let's not take this gift for granted.

3. **The gift of nonresistance** - the Anabaptist community has avoided much contention and strife by practicing nonresistance in the area of litigation. I Corinthians 6 teaches that lawsuits among the brotherhood should not occur, and encourages the use of mediators within the church to help work through difficult matters. Living in peace within the church has enabled members to grow closer to one another in trust and fellowship. Living in peace is not always accomplished, but many Anabaptists still value this principle and strive to follow it.

4. **The gift of financial solvency** - Anabaptists are generally financially solvent as a community. The rates of poverty, welfare, bankruptcy, and foreclosure in the Anabaptist community are low in comparison to America as a whole. Anabaptists are taught from an early age how to take personal responsibility for finances, are taught a strong work ethic, and are taught not to become depen-

dent on the government. The Biblical principle of stewardship helps the community save money wisely, give money generously, and build solvent businesses. Basic financial wisdom has become part of the culture of the Anabaptist community.

5. **The gift of sound doctrine** - Anabaptists believe in the inerrant Word of God. The Anabaptist church, born out of persecution in Europe, seeks to apply a literal interpretation of Scripture in all areas of life. The Anabaptist church does not view the Bible as a mere allegory riddled with inaccuracies. In contrast, more and more pastors outside of this community are compromising on core Biblical principles and are questioning the relevance and accuracy of Scripture.

6. **The gift of family** - Anabaptists believe in strong family units. The institution of the family is becoming increasingly rare in America. Family dinner time, family prayer time, and functional family life are privileges that many children never experience. If you grew up in a home with two parents who loved you, you are blessed and privileged. Don't ever take your family for granted. Despite its positives, this community must improve on preventing child abuse and protecting those who are victims. Church leaders and all church members must step up and improve in these areas. The greatest threat to the continued viability of the church is complacency in areas of iniquity.

7. **The gift of mutual aid** - when a farmer's barn burns down, it is common for a crew of volunteer construction workers to be the first ones on the scene to help rebuild and restore what was lost. When someone has a catastrophic illness, it is normal for the church to take up a love offering to help cover the medical expenses. Bearing one another's burdens is an everyday, normal practice within many Anabaptist churches. This practice is rarely found outside of this community.

8. **The gift of moral purity** - when young people keep themselves pure until marriage, it provides an environment of trust and faithfulness that is unrivaled. Promiscuity and unfaithfulness have destroyed many marriages and lives, and to the extent that this church avoids these societal ills, it is immensely blessed. It is a privilege to be raised with the principles of purity, modesty, and moral accountability.

9. **The gift of brotherhood accountability** - church leaders and church members care enough about one another to mutually hold each other accountable as one body of Christ. When the church body agrees together to follow established guidelines of the church, the church body holds one another accountable to following those guidelines. When someone falls into sin, the church body loves and nurtures them back to spiritual health, while also requiring reform and accountability. Instead of conforming to the mainstream environment where principles are slowly eroded and eventually eradicated, the principles of this church have endured for centuries because of its approach to accountability.

10. **The gifts of godly education and godly parenting** - when parents are unified in education and parenting, their children will have a better chance to make wise decisions in life. One of the greatest blessings of the Anabaptist church is the opportunity to raise children around godly influences, positive peer pressures, and many friends who are raised well. If we teach our children to reject our heritage, they will cast it off. If we raise our children in an environment that is vastly different from how we were raised, we cannot be surprised when they make decisions that are vastly different from the decisions we made. We only get one, rapidly passing chance to raise our children. Their friends, their teachers, their peers, and their church environment are important factors which will shape their lives forever. We should choose our children's environment wisely for their benefit, even if it means sacrificing some of our own personal desires and wants. If we do not practice self-discipline and self-restraint in life, our children will observe us and react accordingly. There is nothing more important in life than our children. Let's not take them for granted.

The Anabaptist church is not simply blind tradition with a rulebook. This is a devout community born out of extreme persecution by both the Roman Catholic Church and the reformed Protestant state church during the 16th century in Europe. The convictions of this church were literally tried by fire as thousands of Anabaptists were tortured, beheaded, or burned at the stake for their faith. This is a community that left everything behind in countries like the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Germany, and fled persecution to the United States where they could worship God in freedom. Our ancestors sacrificed their own personal desires and wants for our future benefit.

Now that we are in the 21st century, millennials and Generation Z require discipleship and core teaching, and are dissatisfied with the explanation, "We do things the way we do things, just because that is the way we have always done things." The Anabaptist church has much to offer that is not readily found or duplicated anywhere else. Visionary leadership teaches why we do what we do, and why we are who we are, and then casts a vision for carrying that torch of faith onward to the next generation.

No denomination, church, or community should ever be placed on a pedestal, and no denomination is perfect. There are many areas where the Anabaptist church can and must improve. The goal of this article is to simply remind us of the privileges we have, and to instill a deeper appreciation of our heritage into each one of us as we seek to follow Jesus Christ.

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PASTOR SPOTLIGHT

James R. Beachy is a retired pastor attending Crosspointe Mennonite Church in Baltic, Ohio. He and his wife Mary Ann have six children: Tabitha Dawn, married to Peter Schmidt; Starla Joy, married to Clifford Kreider; Virginia Ruth; James Ellis, married to Kimberly Zelaya; Kevin Mark, married to Rhoda Lanza; and Mari Jean, married to Jonathan Royal. They have thirteen grandchildren. James was ordained October 25, 1992 as a minister and then in July 2013 was ordained as Lead Pastor of Crosspointe. He works as an electrical contractor.

James reflects on his pastoral journey: "I was ordained on the evening of October 25, 1992. I took that as a call of the church to preach the Word of God in the best way that the Lord enabled me. Over the years, we were asked to go abroad to the mission field but never felt a call to go, as we very strongly felt that the call we had was to stay in the local area and serve the local people and businesses as the Lord directed us. After all, the Christian is always called to serve wherever we are, letting the light of Christ shine though us. There is never a time not to serve.

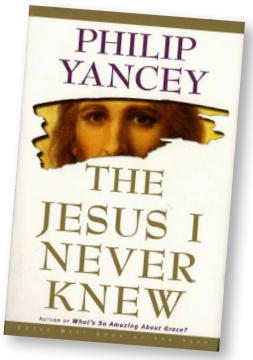
Being a pastor is a work of the Lord and the Church and adds a lot of responsibility and should never put us in a position of 'status.'

As of December 8, 2019, I am now retired and preach only when asked.

May God bless all true followers, pastors, and teachers of God!"

Thank you James and Mary Ann for your years of faithful service to the Church!

Book Review



As a teenager confidently and freely handing out parenting advice to his married siblings, much of the western church has reduced Christianity to a neat and tidy set of ideas to be "preached" to those that do not already adhere to these ideas. We have spent years, even centuries, refining correct theology and doctrine, and often see sharing the good news as a debate of our refined theology and doctrine versus another set of ideas.

In *The Jesus I Never Knew,* Philip Yancey invites us to follow along as he makes an honest attempt at removing any preconceived ideas of Jesus and to really get to know the Jesus of the Gospels. This is not a call to renew some lost doctrine, or to make a defense against heresy, but rather a call to lay down all of our own arrogance and pride about what we think we know about Jesus, and to take an honest look at the "Good News" left for us by the Gospel writers.

Yancey divides the book into three sections - Who He Was, Why He came, and What He Left Behind.

Beginning with Who He Was, he writes of his own experience as child, and how that shaped his view of how he understood and read the Gospels. He marvels at the miracle of a God, who doesn't know time or boundaries, visiting earth, as he struggles to understand Jesus' Jewish roots. He wraps up the first section by wrestling with how he would have responded to Jesus while He was here on earth, writing with brutal honesty, "I have placed myself on the edges of the crowd in Jesus' day, as a sincere seeker captivated by the rabbi but reluctant to commit to him" (page 97).

Continuing with the second section of Why He Came, Yancey begins by confessing his struggle with understanding the Beatitudes, and I quote: "Now that I am an adult, the crisis of the Sermon on the Mount still has not gone away. Though I have tried at times to dismiss it as rhetorical excess, the more I study Jesus, the more I realize that the statements contained here lie at the heart of His message. If I fail to understand His teaching, I fail to understand Him" (page 105). As Yancey wrestles with these teachings, which he calls "A Mission of Offence," he cannot help but contrast the offence these teachings brought to the religious of the day, with the grace and mercy that was brought to the social outcasts of the day - a half-breed Samaritan woman, a cheating tax collector, a military officer of the tyrant Herod, etc. Yancey wraps up this section marveling at the fact that Jesus made a conscious choice to go to the cross for mankind, and rejoicing at the promise that Easter brings, stating "…… if I take Easter as the starting point, the one incontrovertible fact about how God treats those whom He loves, then human history becomes the contradiction and Easter a preview of ultimate reality" (page 220).

Yancey concludes in the final section What He Left Behind by wrestling through the ascension and the fact that the church Jesus left behind has so often done a poor job of representing the Kingdom of God. He continues, acknowledging that the "…..problem of the church is no different that the problem of one solitary Christian" (page 235), accepting that the church is no more hot or cold than the people that are a part of it. He finishes by making a strong defense that Jesus is King, and that He came to establish His Kingdom on this earth. He encourages his readers to anxiously anticipate the return of Christ, and to see themselves as an "advanced guard" of the culmination of the Kingdom of God when Christ does return.

I would recommend this book to anyone wanting to wrestle with their relationship with Jesus. As I mentioned at the beginning, this book is not so much about teaching us more facts about Jesus, or even necessarily about teaching "correct theology." Rather, it is meant to motivate the reader to take time to study the person of Jesus Christ.

- Contributed by Jake Frey
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The Work of God In Ireland

Comeragh Wilderness Camp, located in Rathgormack County, Waterford, Ireland, was the vision of Dunmore East Christian Fellowship and a former chief from Bald Eagle Wilderness Camp in Pennsylvania. Efforts to clone a wilderness camp for troubled boys as we know them in the states weren't what we consider successful, but as we worked with the Irish authorities, health, and social childcare officials, we've developed a plan to fill the existing needs. The Camp's main purpose is to host five-day sessions with troubled lads, but in between sessions we work with day groups for schools, scouts, and host other programs such as cookouts, hikes, and forest activities; four weeks of summer camp for local children; and a specialized ten-day program for Christian teens once or twice per year. You can find out more about what is happening on our website at wilderness.ie. You can also keep abreast with the Dunmore East Christian Fellowship Church at anabaptistireland.org.

Ireland is an island about the size of the state of Indiana with a similar population. Even though the latitude is as far north as Newfoundland, the normal temperature range is only from 30 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit due to warm ocean currents. The frequent light showers keep the country green year around and ideally suited for small grains and grass when it comes to agriculture. It is said that Ireland has more cows and certainly more sheep than people. To this day, we drive across bridges still in operation and in good repair that were built before Columbus sailed to America in 1492.

The religious history of Ireland is long and varied. Patrick was probably the single most influential person in bringing Christianity to Ireland more than 1600 years ago. A few centuries after the rest of Europe was plunged into the dark ages, Irish missionaries were known to take the gospel back to mainland Europe to bring

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light back into the darkness. Today we believe the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ is still the answer to the darkness that results when oppressive government and religious systems try to reform people externally without emphasizing an internal heart change.

Comeragh Stores and Bakery began when the local corner shop/newsstand owner wanted to retire and the Rathgormack community suggested camp personnel could move in and keep it alive. The board envisioned two main goals as reasons for taking on this responsibil-

One of our past camp administrators says we work with troubled lads, but also with local children to keep them from becoming troubled.

ity. One goal was to provide funds for the continued operation of Camp activities. Another goal was to provide a place of interaction between the local community and Comeragh Wilderness Camp. We are delighted to see how both of those goals are being accomplished.

Beginning in August 2014, we have watched the shop grow from selling two loaves of soda bread per day to thirty-two loaves (or more) daily. Our other products have risen in popularity in a similar fashion and we are grateful to report that daily sales which averaged approximately €350 that first year now average over €1000 per day. We have volunteers coming from varied Anabaptist backgrounds including some European Christians who share our vision. We bake Irish brown soda bread loaves, flaky scones, brownies, chocolate chip cookies, apple tarts, carrot cakes, lemon drizzle cakes, and more. We sell newspapers, coffee, tea, potatoes, basic pantry items, homemade jam and Comeragh Mountain honey along with Comeragh candles and a few emergency hardware items. Children are a big percent of our customer base, whether it's stopping in for a treat while on summer bike rides, or after school while it's in session. With summer camp happening for the same children

our volunteers are seeing at the shop daily, we have so many opportunities to speak into their lives. One of our past camp administrators says we work with troubled lads, but also with local children to keep them from becoming troubled.

The interaction with the local community at the store has helped us get to know and understand each other on a completely different level and given us opportunities to serve and show compassion through both joy and sorrow. Depression leading to suicide has touched some of our dearest friends. The volunteer at the till of the shop might be listening to a grief-stricken mother trying to deal with her son's suicide one day and rejoicing with a new mother concerning the joys of motherhood the next. People tell us the shop is a place of peace, and those who come in contact with the volunteers can't help but feel it. This has opened the door for us to be invited to share in the local Catholic church with our Christmas Choir. Since the Irish particularly love singing, they suggested we join choirs for a few songs in the last two years and the results have been opened doors of opportunity to share in other ways as well. Our goal is to be both salt and light as we share the Gospel of Christ. Thanks be to God and His people in America and other parts of the world for supporting us with resources, time, and energy.

Because He lives, we can live also!

- John and Karen Hostetler
Associate Pastor, Haven Fellowship Church

ADC Church Profile —

Emmanuel Christian Fellowship, Amanda, Ohio, was founded in 1990. The current leadership team consists of Ryan Good, Senior Pastor; Ken Beachy, Associate Pastor; and Phil Stoltzfus, Deacon. Current membership is at 70 with 25 households.

The church was started in 1990 as an outreach from Haven Fellowship in Plain City, Ohio. A local man who was a seed dealer learned to know farmers from Plain City as he made sales calls. These farmers were members of Haven. Eventually he and his family joined the church at Haven. The James Gingerich family from Plain City moved here and a church plant was started. For many years, three families and a minister from Haven would come every Sunday for services held in the Grange building in Amanda. For a time, the Melita church in Martinsburg, OH also sent families to help. In 1999, Ryan Good was commissioned as a local pastor. In 2005 the current facility was purchased and after some renovation, has been the meeting place for the church since then. The church has continued to grow over the years to the point that members are considering an expansion project on their current facility.

The church is in south central Ohio about forty minutes from Columbus. It is between the cities of Lancaster, Circleville, and Chillicothe and located along State Route 159 just outside the little village of Amanda.

The church divides into groups once a month and visits the elderly people in the community. Emmanuel has a very active Kid's Club which meets every Tuesday evening in the spring and fall for six months of the year. Volunteers pick up children from the local community and the city of Lancaster and average about ten to twenty children a week.

Interesting trivia – between the three pastors, there are twenty-three children. There are three sets sets of twins as well! Emmanuel is a young church with lots of children and activity.

Thank you Pastors for providing us with this "window" into your church!

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