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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.

Eulogy With a Heartbeat

An adaptation of a sermon by Lonnie Beachy

In 1977 NASA launched Voyager I and II for an exploration into our galaxy. A recording called "The Sounds of Earth" was attached to each of the twin spacecraft. It was a message from Earth to anyone out there in the universe who might be listening. It contained both music and the sounds of a human heartbeat. Some 30 years later, the person who served as the creative director of this project reflected on what she chose to include in the "Sounds of Earth" – "I found myself thinking of the piece by Beethoven called the 'Cavatina Movement.' When I first heard this piece, I thought this is a great - beautiful - and sad piece of music. Beethoven had originally written in the margins a word in German meaning 'longing.' In the end, NASA chose a great song of human longing and launched it into space. It's as if we were saying to the rest of the universe this is who and what we are as human beings - creatures of longing. And hidden in that basic introduction to who we are – there are implicit questions for extraterrestrials – 'Do you feel this too? Are we the only ones?'"

Before you judge me too harshly, I'm not a proponent of aliens or even Sasquatch.

If Christ came in the flesh today, I don't think that He would come to my house even by invitation to enjoy my wife's great cooking. I don't know that He would come to your house or the deacons' houses or any of the houses of you good people here. I think that maybe He would invite us to go with Him to some cardboard tent of some homeless woman or man or family. Or He would invite us to join Him in visiting some lonely people in some convalescent home. Or to the home of a gay couple. Or to the curbside of a brothel. Is that offensive to you? It was to the Pharisees. *"And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, 'Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?'"* (Matthew 9:11). I know this is an extreme example, but it is those who realize that they aren't enough – that they don't have enough – that they need help – that those become the focus of God. Where are we today? Does your life mirror your mission statement? A mission statement lets people know what you believe – who you follow – where your devotion lies – and where you're aiming. It only makes sense that if I can't proclaim what I believe – who I believe – what direction I'm going – am I not aiming at nothing? The greatest percentage of humanity is doing exactly that – casually living life without specific goals. They're aiming at nothing and landing on target. The God of the Bible gives everyone an option whom they may serve: *"And I have given you a land for which ye did not labor, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat. Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD"* (Joshua 24:13-15).

That's a mission statement that will carry you – that will motivate you. If you do a detail study on Joshua, you will see that the phrase "the Lord" is mentioned three times in verses 14 and 15 alone and "gods" three times as well. And he's basically saying, "Put away the other gods." *"By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks"* (Hebrews 11:4-5).

Hence my title – "Eulogy with a Heartbeat." On the corporate scale, any church wanting to serve God with integrity and truth has a mission statement or a statement of faith. It is birthed from and substantiated by Scripture. It proclaims God as the One true God. It says the Son is the only way to the Father. And it talks about the indwelling and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. The place of my employment – the Miller Cabinet Company – has a mission statement. How about you? Do you – would you – dare you have a personal mission statement? Have you considered the word "legacy?" Many of us don't give much thought to "legacy" because we don't entertain a biography being written of us. But please consider the fact that there will be a eulogy prepared for you. And how will it read? It will be the one you're writing right now – a "Eulogy with a Heartbeat." Have you ever considered what will be said at your wake? I know some of you are thinking, "This is a very morbid message!" I beg of you to consider differently. Someday they will prepare a eulogy for Lonnie Beachy, and yes for you as well. The culmination of what you or I did on this earthly journey will be our eulogy. Let's live with that mission in mind. Let's be cognizant of that reality. When your family, friends, community, and spouse (if you have one) sit around eating potato salad after your funeral, what will be remembered? What will be treasured? Cherished? What will the regrets be? Will the extent of your memory be that you were a great cook? The best carpenter? A good farmer? A great entrepreneur? A great nurse?

A housekeeper whose home was sterile? Your miserly and stingy ways? Ungratefulness? Your "business first" approach? Maybe you're ill-tempered – caustic – or retaliatory? We're all writing our eulogies today. How will yours read? Will you be remembered for compassion or for swift judgment? Or for your generosity versus that masked Mennonite thriftiness? Will you be remembered for mercy and love, or for selfishness? Did you extend forgiveness or harbor bitterness? Returning good for evil or evil for evil? The truth is – it's in our hands today. We're each writing a eulogy. Our own. It has a heartbeat.

"On the day Jesus ascended, the disciples stood around dumb-

What legacy did Jesus Christ leave? Or did He leave one?

founded, like children who've lost their parent. Two angels sent to calm them asked the obvious question, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky?' The sky was blank, empty. Still they stood and gazed, not knowing how to go on or what to do next... Jesus left few traces of Himself on earth. He wrote no books or even pamphlets. A wanderer, he left no home or even belongings that could be enshrined in a museum. He did not marry, settle down, and begin a dynasty. We would, in fact, know nothing about him except for the traces he left in human beings. That was his design" (Yancey, pages 227-228).

The evidences He left behind were the people He touched. Jesus Christ lives on in the life of the Church. We are His legacy. We're what was remembered of His eulogy. He left us behind and commissioned us. The Church in America is failing miserably as it relates to living for Jesus Christ in a culture that includes discipleship. Instead of being opportunistic and making 2020 and 2021 the season of love and walking along side people – we've become detrimental to the cause of Christ. Whether it's conspiracy proponents or whether we've become distracted and become naysayers, we hurt the cause of Christ. I'm frustrated – many of you are as well. I get it – maybe there's a reason for it. The problem has always been with us since Adam. Trials have been a part of humanity. But let's call the problem what it is - carnality – sinful brokenness – the Fall – sin!

The word disciple occurs 269 times in the New Testament. The word Christian occurs three times, and when used referred specifically to the disciples. In the last several decades the Western world has not made discipleship a condition of the Christian. One is not required to be a disciple to become a Christian, and one may remain a Christian even if they possess no sign or evidence of progress toward discipleship.

Conversely, too often Christians are much like their Old Testament counterparts – the Jews. They take the pure simple truth of following Christ and make it into something far removed from the life and the simplicity of a covenant walk with Christ that He envisioned for us. And so consequently we leave this sour overarching cloud over Christianity. Jesus never said that all men will know we are His disciples if you pass laws – suppress immorality – restore decency to the family – or keep the government in check. What did He say? *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:35). Again, what did Jesus leave behind? He left behind people that He touched. Everywhere Jesus went He touched people. They were the blind – the lame – demon-possessed – those caught in adultery. Jesus was with them in all those situations. If we take Jesus' discipleship model seriously, it's more than giving somebody a book or inviting them to a workshop. Rather, we make a difference by connecting relationally. Our share-time weekly testimonies speak about life in the church. Not that it happens on Sunday - rather it happens Monday through Saturday. Connecting relationally comes with sacrifice. It's much easier to write a check or give somebody a book. Jesus never left a pattern for us to follow regarding method. He was just with people - a ministry of presence. Who can't do that? He spent time with twelve men. Why? Because they had good flashy resumes? Hardly. Because they were willing learners and willing to get the job done. We can do the same. And the grace that God has put into your life will reveal itself as you pour grace into others. When we pass, there won't be much made of our titles – our degrees – our material pursuits and accumulations. What will matter on that day when your friends are left eating potato salad is where your relationships were.

Jesus left behind a lot of people who testified about His actions. Let's consider a few from the Old Testament. There was Moses and there was Pharaoh. What happened in the end? Pharaoh had the title and Moses had the testimony - eternal life. What about Jezebel and Elijah? Jezebel had the title and Elijah had the testimony. For King Darius and Daniel – Darius had the title and Daniel had the testimony.

One of these days they're going to have a memorial service for me – for you. And they will appropriately and gently place your body into the ground. And yes - your family – your spouse – your friends will set aside a time to appropriately grieve. The question is how and what will they remember? What will they grieve? Do you want a tombstone with a title? One that represents all the endless hours of material pursuit? We all have different gifts and vocations, but here is only one commission – "Go ye – love ye – live ye – follow me." So, write your eulogy with a surrendered heart to Christ. There is room for accolades, etc. But wouldn't it be better if after your funeral they would remember how you listened? How you made time for others? How you ministered? How much you cared? How you shared? All of these require the sacrifice of self and America has not prepared us well for this challenge. It's all about me – myself – and I and what I can accumulate. If we love Jesus, then some adjustments need to be made to my priorities. I pray this morbid message would motivate us to consider our legacy. Jesus did not say "Discuss me." He said, "Follow me."

Men - will you be remembered as a husband who loved his wife faithfully and mimicked Christ's love for the Church? Will you be remembered as one who listened? As one who cared about others? The one who gave words of affirmation? The one who brought flowers before the funeral? Will you be remembered as one whose business and spiritual witness were one and the same? It's in your hand. We're each writing our own eulogy.

"For in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

Lonnie Beachy is an Associate Pastor of Haven Fellowship Church, Plain City, OH. He and his bride Delilah have three children – James, of Canal Winchester, OH; Megan, married to Josh Yoder of Goshen, IN; and Sari, married to Dustin Weaver of Plain City, OH. Lonnie serves ADC as Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee as well as being a member of the missions development committee.

Yancey, Philip. The Jesus I Never Knew. *Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI. 1995.*

Six Common Myths About Missions

by Darren Carlson

Evangelical Christians are committed to spreading the good news of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. It is our mandate. For two thousand years, Christians have imperfectly crossed cultures to bring this good news, and today there are believers from more languages and peoples than ever before.

Yet as always, Satan lurks in the shadows, plotting against the Spirit's work and lashing out "because he knows that his time is short" (Revelation 12:12). He has already lost, but his disinformation continues, and sometimes we get caught believing lies about God's mission to all nations. It is hard work to sift through what the Spirit is really doing in the world: myths persist, and many believe them. The way out is to shed light on some of the most common myths Christians today believe.

We Experience Calling Alone

Interpreting God's calling on our lives is hard. I've read my journal from when I first became a Christian and, wow, I had no idea what I was talking about. I've needed the church again and again to help me interpret God's word and his call on my life. You do too, regardless of your vocation. Being a missionary is difficult work, and none of us should be left to figure it out on our own. There is a reason the New Testament letters focus so much time on the community of faith. We easily mistake our personal abilities and callings, and head out believing we are doing God's work. We tend to think the best about ourselves.

Consider, however, the church of Antioch, who sent Barnabas and Saul, already proven leaders, and confirmed their missionary call by laying hands on them (Acts 13:1–3). The church should send missionaries out "in a manner worthy of God" (3 John 6), which includes confirming our call and preparing us to go. Having great preparation and confirmation doesn't mean everything will go smoothly, but it does set us up for success over the long term.

Missions Reporting Must Be Positive

I don't think many are purposefully lying. The pressure is real: Will people give to me or my organization if it seems we are ineffective? Expectations fueled by snippets from the lives of our missionary heroes have fed the temptation to think that missions reporting must always be positive. There are problems at institutional and personal levels.

> ***"Will people give to me or my organization if it seems we are ineffective?"***

At the institutional level, research and reporting can give the impression of victory after victory. "Hundreds of churches were planted." "We led thousands of people to Christ on the organization's short-term mission trip." And then these stories get perpetuated. But those on the ground are often discouraged when they hear these reports, which are typically created by people who do not understand what they are experiencing. My friend once read the newsletter of his own mission organization and, to his surprise, he had led multiple people to Christ!

At the personal level, missionaries can feel pressure to produce positive reports — or, if they do say something negative, to relate it to persecution. Our social-media personas are selective, and sometimes we are surprised to learn what people think of us who know us only by what we post. The same is true

in missionary reporting. As an exercise, live this week as you normally would, and then try to turn it into a missionary support letter. Think about what you would emphasize and what you would leave out. You might begin to appreciate the pressure missionaries feel.

Everyone Is Doing Missions Wrong

Many missionaries can indulge a critical spirit, a spirit I also fall into on occasion. We need to take great care about how strongly we criticize practitioners who are trying to stay afloat in hard ministry locations. What team wants to hear from a guy in the U.S. that the way they are doing ministry is wrong?

Of course, we should hold up the Bible as the lens to understand how people are approaching the mission, and we should not shy away from trying to bring reformation to mission practices. But before we do, let's consider Paul, who rejoiced simply because "Christ is proclaimed," despite poor motives (Philippians 1:18). Let's consider how much we know about places far away, and then tread carefully as we push back. It's easy to criticize from afar.

Missionaries Are Super Christians

When we talk about missions, we tend to talk about heroes. These heroes typically look like us and have forsaken what we have for a different life. But as we read more realistic biographies, we find all kinds of idiosyncrasies and bewildering behavior. Missionaries are sinners saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8). Every problem that occurs in your local church occurs on the mission field. Even if missionaries are trained, are willing to go, and have suffered hardship, these dear brothers and sisters struggle and are often lonely and overwhelmed. They sometimes yell at their children. Marriages are challenging. Relationships with other missionaries can be strained. These realities should surprise no one. If we are going to treasure the gospel, part of that treasuring involves not being surprised by human sinfulness.

"Missionaries are sinners saved by grace. Every problem that occurs in your local church occurs on the mission field."

This truth can be an encouragement if you feel you will never measure up to the standard you have inflicted on yourself. It can also be a call for churches not to forget the real needs of those they have sent out.

The Farther You Go, the More Committed You'll Be

Some aspiring missionaries think that if you travel for a purpose to a faraway place, you will be more committed to Jesus than if you stayed near home. At its worst, this impulse essentially treats missions as a self-discovery project, and the farther away you get from home, the more focused you will find yourself. But the reality is that your sin nature and weaknesses will not stay behind when you board a plane. They will be there when you land, and more exposed than ever before.

When I take my kids fishing, they instinctively want to cast as far as possible. They assume the bigger and better fish are the farthest away from them at any given point. The same is true for many people in ministry. But the reality is that the people next door may be just as alienated from God as the people at the uttermost parts of the world. We would be wise to do evangelism now in our own contexts before we go to the ends of the earth (Luke 16:10).

Missionaries Are Excited to 'Come Home'

Missionaries "come home" for furloughs or forever. We can imagine that missionaries will love the chance to be near family and old friends again. But for many, home assignments are mostly stressful.

Imagine that you have a young family and have been gone for five years. You have just made friends and adjusted to the culture, and your kids are in a school routine. And then you pull out for six to twelve months in order to live on the road. I recently heard a missionary say that he felt most distant from Christ during home assignments because of how numbing day-to-day life was for him in the United States. Sending churches would be wise to consider carefully the expectations they want to place on people who may be relieved to return to their place of ministry when furlough is over.

The problem can feel more acute, however, when missionaries return permanently (for whatever reason). They commonly hear, "Aren't you glad to be home?" and the answer is rarely a resounding "Yes!"

Of course, there is a lot to love about being closer to family, but there are more significant reasons why it is hard. Some missionaries find themselves facing reverse culture shock, unable to navigate the culture they grew up in. Friends and family have changed in the time they have been gone. Kids are not happy to leave their friends "back home." Relationships don't make sense, and work doesn't feel as meaningful.

A friend who used to be a missionary in Uganda once said to me, "In Uganda I was in charge of multimillion dollar projects and led many people to Christ, but now that I am back in the U.S., I have to ask permission whether I can put napkins on the table at a men's prayer breakfast." Returning is often painful, disorienting, and numbing.

Missions Without Myths

We have been given a mandate that cannot be ignored. We are to send or go. But we also are to be aware of how myths shape our worship and practice. Our attitudes can be misinformed. Our actions can be immature.

Exposing these myths is not intended to put a damper on a passion for the nations, or quench a desire to go out for the sake of the name, or cause you to be hesitant to obey Jesus. It's about seeing the world as it is in order to better serve God's global people that he is calling to himself.

Used with permission.
Darren Carlson is the Founder and President of Training Leaders International. He has written on issues relating to short-term missions, missionary care, trends in global theology, missiological discussions, and the effective use of financial resources to relieve poverty.

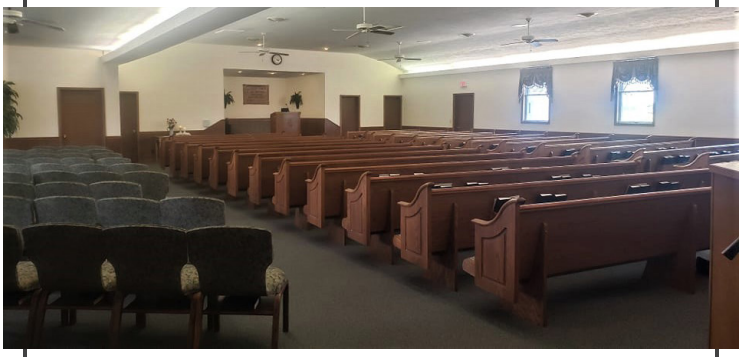
ADC Church Profile —

Woodlawn Church, Goshen, IN was founded in 1959 when three small Amish church districts agreed to build a church house and begin meeting together. Surrounding districts had disfellowshipped the three churches because of various involvements in missions, midweek prayer meetings, and Sunday School. In 1957 these Amish began to drive automobiles.

The current pastoral team consists of Steve Miller, Lead Pastor; Dean Miller; Glen Miller; Arlen Bontrager; and James Hostetler. Current membership is 140.

Woodlawn has been involved for decades with Believers Fellowship in western Ontario, which is under the direction of Mission Interest Committee (MIC). Woodlawn has also been involved in many different missions and voluntary service units, stateside and overseas. Locally we have been involved in a rescue mission for fifty years, as well as jail and prison ministries. Woodlawn's annual Vacation Bible School draws over fifty Amish students.

Woodlawn has also been doing a week of Bible Camp in a park in Detroit, MI; operates a K-12 Christian school; and is a supporting church of Grace Haven Biblical Renewal Ministries.



Woodlawn is in the heart of the recreational manufacturing capital of the world. Over 75% of the 300,000 RV units shipped in the first six months of 2021 were produced in northern Indiana.

PASTOR SPOTLIGHT

Mahlon and Rhoda Stoltzfus are serving at Harmony Christian Fellowship, Millington, Maryland. Mahlon was ordained as Deacon in April 2008.

They have five children – Liz, married to Ryan Troyer of Goshen, Indiana; Emily, married to Quintin Lapp of Millington, MD; Abby, married to Jeremy Maust of Millington, MD; Kyle; and Kristen. They have nine grandchildren – Caleb, Micah, Silas, Annie, Maddy, Audrie, Juliette, Eowyn, and Everly.

Mahlon works in light commercial and residential building construction.

Some of Mahlon's favorite books and podcasts are the Bible; *Out of the Salt Shaker and into the World* by Rebecca Manley Pippert; *The Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God* by Dan Allender and Tremper Longman; *The Seven Laws of the Learner* by Bruce Wilkinson; and *The Truth Project* by Focus on the Family. He also enjoys notable speakers such as Ken Ham, David Jeremiah, Tony Evans, Aden Troyer, Billy Graham, and many more.

Mahlon reflects on his pastoral journey – "I enjoy interacting with people so ministering, disciple work, and mentoring are something that comes easy for me. My wife is also a very good team member along side of me. We also have a very good ministry team to work with. It's been a very fulfilling journey but not always easy. God has stretched and tested us and helped us become people of faith and grace. We still have lots to learn but God is faithful and good. Our goal is to give God the best all the way to our heavenly home. Our children were young when we were ordained but we often took them along if we were doing visitation and we sang together as a family when we visited older people."

Thank you Mahlon and Rhoda for your faithful service to the Church!

PLANNING COMMITTEE
James Yoder – *Chairman*
Lonnie Beachy – *Vice-Chairman*
Paul A. Miller – *Secretary-Treasurer*

Nate Yoder – *Editor*
614-736-1727
janate3@frontier.com

P.O. Box 55, Walnut Creek, OH 44687 | anabaptistdisciplesofchrist.org