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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.

Finding Peace in Perilous Times

by James Yoder

Editor's note - In the wake of the recent murder of Charlie Kirk, Pastor James Yoder (Berea Fellowship, Nappanee, IN) was asked to make a statement to his church concerning the tragedy and provide some healthy guidance for those he pastors. Upon obtaining Pastor James' statement, I felt it would serve the larger body of ADC churches as well. Pastor James' statement offers wisdom, insight, and a Biblical perspective for these troublesome times.

The murder of Charlie Kirk this past week has dominated the headlines of networks all across America, and perhaps even the globe. The fact that many refer to his death as a "political assassination" gives proof to the impact he left on Western society. The loss of this young man's life is not only a tragic and senseless act of cruelty, but it also leaves two young children and a young, heart-broken widow without father and husband.

When I first heard of the shooting, it immediately crossed my mind whether this ought to be addressed with our church family. Later, I received a call from one of our youth leaders, and later another call from a father with several Generation Z youth, and yet later from a Millennial father, all encouraging me to help our people, particularly the younger generation, process Charlie's life and death in healthy ways. In consulting with our leadership team, they too gave their blessing for me to make a statement. So, in an effort to shepherd our congregation through this current issue, I will attempt to give some guiding thoughts.

Charlie Kirk, without doubt, was endowed with unique gifts that he put to use to confront very controversial issues of our day, and he did it in such a way that grazed right past the "politically correct" jargon that has become the status quo of mainstream culture. He spoke against wokeness, against abortion, against transgender and gay rights, against affirmative action, and open borders. He was an advocate for marriage, the right to life, and a promoter of the conjugal family. He lauded capitalism under the guise of Christian nationalism and, of course, supported the right to bear arms. He was generally fair, polite, and held to a basic set of conservative values that, surprisingly, attracted a significant following, perhaps even from among our own.

One of his greater strengths was the ability to engage his opponents with respect and courtesy, even when it wasn't reciprocated (which was more often than not.) Sitting under his "Prove Me Wrong" tent, he would invite dialogue with Generation Zer's on issues of controversy, often assisting the opponent to talk their way into a trap of their own making. He was quick-witted, non-hostile, and invited honest dialogue. His appeal to youth may have contributed to Trump receiving the largest support base ever in the Republican Party, from those 30 years old and younger. On the DISC scale he was clearly an "Influencer," and on the Working Genius Scale, a "Galvanizer." He definitely left his imprint on many college and university campuses across the nation.

But perhaps his most compelling strengths rested in his courageous ability to confront both sin and sinner. He was transparent about his Christian faith and values and unashamedly reached into faith-based principles to make his case. He would frequently say, "*This is not a career; this is a calling!*" And this "calling" led to a formation of an organization called "Turning Point USA," which in turn helped fuel the MAGA Movement, and this crusade has only gained momentum in the recent years. I can't help but wonder how this narrative plays into the fulfillment of end-times.

So, how ought we as a people, who have traditionally refrained from political involvement of any sort, reconcile the life and death of Charlie Kirk? I offer you several thoughts.

1. First, we must be mature enough to understand that not all peoples of faith interpret Scripture alike. It's the very reason why we Pastors have spent the last two years teaching our way through our Statement of Faith to help you understand how and why we view Scripture as we do. We don't apologize for our historic stance against "Christian nationalism" and holding to a two-Kingdom concept. This is how we understand Christ!

   But we also dare not be so arrogant as to think we have the edge on Christianity. I'm certain there are those of our Protestant cousins who are equally convinced they are serving God by serving their country. This ought not shake our faith, rather we anchor ourselves in the Living Word to help us interpret the written Word.

   It is right for us to applaud those who promote Christ, whether or not we agree on their method or mode of witness. Even Paul expressed joy when some preachers taught Christ with malicious intent. Listen to what he says in Philippians 1:15-18: *"Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from good will: the former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice."* So, we can trust the Heavenly Father who's big enough to judge righteously the thoughts and intents of the heart. We don't need to make that call!

"Be careful not to get caught up in any hype that creates walls—expend your energies to bridge gaps."

2. Secondly, as a people who have historically been known to adhere to conservative values, it's easy for us to gravitate toward conservative rhetoric. Yet in so doing, perhaps we get influenced to form an "us-them" mentality. When in the frame of mind, it becomes easy for us to see "Liberals" or the "Democratic Party" as opponents rather than as people bearing the image of God.

   I ask the question: does "Turning Point USA" or the "MAGA Movement" bring people closer together, or do the lines of distinction only becoming greater? Ephesians 2:14-16 reads like this: *"For He Himself,* (referring to Christ,) *is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility… that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God… thereby killing the hostility."* I urge us to be careful not to get caught up in any hype that creates walls, rather that we expend our energies to bridge gaps with those who know not Christ.

3. Finally, looking to an earthly government or the sword to defend the gospel of Christ is as old as Christianity itself. The Jews appealed to Jesus to defend their cause against the barbaric Romans. Peter used the sword to defend Jesus. Before his conversion, Paul attempted to destroy the Church in an attempt to defend God. The Crusaders mutilated their Islamic brothers for the cause of Christ, and the list goes on endlessly.

   But friends, the solution has never, and will never be found in the power of earthly governments. It is only found in Jesus Christ because He is the source of love.

   - Love, not MAGA, will triumph over sin!
   - Love will win over the abortionist, not only protesting them!
   - Love will invite the transgender into our homes, not only debate them!
   - Love will embrace the ungodly, not discard them!
   - Love, not the sword, will win in the end!

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And so, I urge you to spend less time listening to voices on social media that might create higher walls of hostility and immerse yourself in Jesus who is able to fill our hearts with love in ways that will reach across the aisle to break down hostile walls. May God give us wisdom!

I want to close by acknowledging that we are living in perilous times and I'm going to suggest that we spend a few minutes in silence examining our own hearts. I urge each of us to ask God to fill our hearts with His love so that we can leave His footprint wherever we go.

I also believe it would be right for us to pray for Charlie's grieving widow and her two children. The injustice done toward them has lasting impact. They will need the grace of God to forgive the person who killed their father and husband.

And I also believe we ought to pray for the one who pulled the trigger. He is someone's son; he's someone's child who lost his way. Perhaps his action is the product of the morally nefarious propaganda being shoved into the hearts of our children in the public school system. Pray for his repentance and pray that he would come to peace with God. It is not a crime that can't be forgiven.

Finally, we're instructed to also pray for the leaders of this land and for God's peace to rest on all His people!

Used with permission.

James Yoder serves as lead pastor of Berea Christian Fellowship in Nappanee, Indiana. He and his wife, Gladys, have six children.

ADC Church Profile —

Bethel Fellowship Church, Millersburg, Ohio was founded in 1960.

Current membership is 225 with 100 children in Sunday School!

The current pastoral team consists of Jud and Amy Schrock, Lead Pastor; Jared and Sara Beachy, Travis and Rhoda Yoder, and Mark and Betty Yoder, Pastors; and Joe and Linda Weaver, Deacon.

In 1958 a few families met for Bible study in homes. The first services were held in a small school house named Boyd's School. In 1960 the first structure was constructed at the church's current location.

Bethel is involved in local jail services as well as nursing home visitation. Some youth are involved in a local children's ministry in Millersburg. Bethel is blessed with members who serve their community by helping many people in various ways.

Interesting trivia – Bethel has had three sanctuaries for worship. The latest remodel took fourteen months which culminated with the first service in the new auditorium taking place May 18, 2025.

Announcement – Bethel is planning to have a homecoming on October 26th from 4-6 PM for anyone connected to the church. This will be followed by an evening service.

PASTOR SPOTLIGHT

Paul Kim and Esther Eichorn serve at Agape Christian Fellowship, Berlin, Ohio.

They have two children – Zachary, married to Jaimie Miller; and Kendrick.

Kim was ordained as a Pastor June 13, 2021 and serves as an Assistant Administrator of Christian Aid Ministries.

Kim reflects on his pastoral journey: "I accepted the Lord as my Savior at a young age, and as I grew older, I understood what it means to follow Him. I remember while in instruction class, the minister teaching us asked if we would be willing to serve should God ever call us to the ministry. It struck me then that God was calling me.

"However, since I was an adoptee, rejection stood in my path for growth, and it was hard to understand how God loved me if my own mother could reject me. I'm glad that we can choose the healing of acceptance coming from our Savior, who also was rejected yet loves all who call upon His name!"

Paul serves ADC as the secretary of Impact International.

May God richly bless you Kim and Esther for your service to the Church of Christ!

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