PASTOR SPOTLIGHT

Galen and Mary Lou Raber serve at New Covenant Fellowship, Apple Creek, Ohio.

Galen was ordained as Pastor on September 19, 2021, and is employed in sales for Alpine Structures. Galen and Mary Lou have four children: Terrell (24); Landon (23); Kyra (20); and Jamin (17).

Galen reflects on his spiritual/pastoral journey: "I accepted Jesus as my Saviour at age 13. I am thankful for the opportunity of growing up with Godly parents who taught me what is right. In March of 1999 I married my wonderful wife Mary Lou. We attended Bethel Fellowship for many years and have a lot of good memories of our time there. In the fall of 2018 Bethel started an outreach church. The question arose – 'Do we stay or do we go?' It was a difficult decision for us because our family had friends staying and friends going. After much prayer and seeking God's will, it became clear that God wanted us to step out in faith and go with the outreach, which later became New Covenant Fellowship.

Three years later in September of 2021 New Covenant had an ordination and God called me to the office of Pastor. I'm so thankful that God promises to be with us every step of the way. It is only by the grace of God that I can fulfill His calling.

I'm so thankful that my wife and children have been helpful and supportive of my ministry even when it takes time away from them. God has blessed me with a wonderful team of co-pastors who are a pleasure work with. Seeing each of them use their gifts to the glory of God is inspiring. Our congregation has been very supportive and a pleasure to serve. It is such a blessing to watch young Christians blossom and grow in their walk with the Lord."

Galen currently serves on the church mission board and participates in Bible studies with the church youth group. Galen also recommends *Daily Truth* by Kristen Schmucker and Sarah Morrison and *Leadership Promises for Every Day* by John Maxwell.

Thank you Galen and Mary Lou for your service to the Church of Christ!

ADC Church Profile —

As One Church was founded in 2021 in Midtown Detroit, Michigan. Membership is 14 with approximate Sunday morning attendance being around 40, including regular attendees, children, and visitors. The current commissioned church leadership team consists of Bryan Smucker and Joe Kuepfer.

AOC initially gathered on Detroit's West Side before moving to its current location in Midtown in 2025. AOC's focus in this central location is twofold: walking alongside neighbors in their city while maturing as disciples of Christ.

The church was formed out of a desire to live in Biblical unity "as one" followers of Jesus. Shaped by Anabaptist theology, AOC embraces historic non-resistance, peacemaking, enemy love, and obedience to Christ's teachings. AOC is focused on growing as disciples and being molded by the Spirit while creating a warm, culturally sensitive community for people of all backgrounds. AOC operates as an urban church community with a desire to function as a tight-knit family. AOC wants the love of Jesus to be something people experience among them - not something that is simply talked about. AOC's hope is that this kind of community draws people first to Jesus and then invites them to become part of a community where they can know others, be known, and actively participate in the life of the church.

AOC has partnered with Awake Café with the goal being to engage seekers, offer relational ministry, and build discipleship pathways for people connecting through the café side. AOC youth also participate in a senior center outreach at the Hamtramck Senior Plaza.

Several youth/children participate in Scripture memorization through involvement with Ohio Valley Bible Quizzing.

Interesting trivia: several AOC members participate in a guns-to-garden tools project that draws from Isaiah's words in chapter 2 verse 4 that in the latter days the nations will beat their swords into plowshares. Peace Forge uses blacksmithing to demonstrate the transforming power of Jesus and promote enemy love, peacemaking, and nonviolence.

Thank you, Pastors, for offering us this window into your inner-city church!

The ADC Disciple

P.O. Box 55, Walnut Creek, OH 44687

October 2026

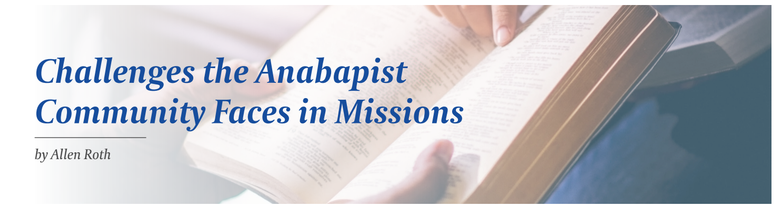
LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE
Lonnie Beachy – *Chairman*
Mark Miller – *Vice-Chairman*
Dave Nisly – *Secretary-Treasurer*
James Yoder – *Associate Member*

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

Volume #7, #4 October 2026

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.



Challenges the Anabapist Community Faces in Missions

by Allen Roth

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair…" (Charles Dickens, Tale of Two Cities). This quote seems very appropriate, having just reviewed the strengths and resources of conservative Anabaptists for engaging in the massive opportunities for world missions and as we now look at the challenges within and without our communities. What are some of the challenges we face?

The first challenge to consider is revising the **mindset** of our people from "missions is over there" to "missions begins right here". While past generations grew up reading biographies of great missionaries in countries "over there", the majority population of North America has experienced a major cultural shift. North Americans are now from everywhere. Perhaps this seismic change has not yet fully impacted us since a majority of conservative Anabaptists live in rural areas and small towns of America and Canada where the ethnic diversity is still rather minimal. The ethnic composition of the US and Canada is changing radically, but our mission mindset has not kept pace with this new reality. Our blindness to and neglect of this vast mission opportunity is largely due to our aversion, as a whole, to living in cities. We have forgotten that both the New Testament and Anabaptist churches were birthed in cities!

A second challenge as conservative Anabaptists flows out of our **focus on discipleship**. Disproportionately fewer evangelistic gifts are being identified and encouraged. Discipleship is great; it is Biblical. But certainly it must reach far beyond our children and grandchildren. I frequently observe reluctance to verbalize the Gospel and to call for a decision. We excuse ourselves from pro-active verbal witness with "I will let my life be a witness." This is true—but only part of the truth, for none of us is good enough that if people will just watch us, they will be saved! We should "…study to be quiet, and do [our] own business" (I Thess. 4:11) but without becoming "the quiet in the land" about our faith. We need to be reminded of the axiom that "the potential of any movement to grow is in direct proportion to its ability to mobilize its members to share its message" (source unknown). In regard to boldly sharing a message, the Jehovah's Witnesses have been "more Anabaptist" than modern Anabaptists!

Related to the second challenge is the fact that our North American Anabaptist movement is composed primarily of a large **second-generation Christian majority** (descendants of Anabaptist Christians) with its unique traits. A Biblical example is the contrast between Paul and Timothy. Paul: first generation, changed from night to day, bold, pro-active, apostolic. Timothy: raised from childhood with a believing mother and grandmother, shy, hesitant, tendency toward embarrassment about open identification with the faith, reserved, pastoral. Perhaps more of the members of our churches would fall in the "Timothy" category than in the "Paul" category. The "Pauls" among us tend to stir up the pot and make us feel uncomfortable. Added to this is the lack of training and role models for evangelism in our churches, making it difficult for our members to be mentored in pro-active outreach. As a result, because most of our people are second-generation Christians, we have strong family connections and extended family networks. We have few deep relationships outside our circles, little time and motivation to befriend the lost around us and are hesitant to leave home for a vocation in missions.

> ***"… if we are so separate that we do not befriend the lost, how can we win them to the Master?"***

Anabaptism began as a counter-culture movement. That was and still is a strength. Our strengths, however, are followed closely by our weaknesses. Here is our challenge: how do we

fulfill the Scriptural injunction to **be separate from the world but actively evangelize the world?** We cannot effectively win the lost if we do not befriend them, but how do we do that without us and our children becoming like them in unbiblical lifestyle applications? This is the age-old challenge of incarnation versus confrontation, being "in the world" without becoming "of the world." The liberal end of the Anabaptist movement gravitates toward incarnation; however, we have not seen them effectively win the world. Rightly so, I believe, we are critical and suspicious of where that movement has taken our Anabaptist brothers who have gone that direction and who have become like the world. Those of us on the conservative end of the spectrum gravitate toward the confrontation of culture. But if we are so separate that we do not befriend the lost, how can we win them to the Master?

A major challenge in our church communities, I believe, is **to sort out what is culture and what is Bible**; what is Biblical command and what is counsel; what are the "first things" (non-negotiables), and what are the "second things" (negotiables). This becomes exceedingly challenging as we try to integrate first generation Anabaptists, retain youth who have grown up in our churches and honor the older people whose formative years occurred in times very different from the present. Add to that mix the individualistic mindset and lifestyle of North American culture that have deeply influenced all of us and you have a brew of sufficient strength to challenge even the sturdiest pastor in our churches!

While our churches struggle to sort out those issues in both creative, yet faithful ways, in the complex tangle of relationships and emotions, we are confronted also with **a growing tendency to minimize the importance of the local church and of commitment to responsible membership**. These struggles and realities decrease the motivation within many to plant new churches and specifically, conservative Anabaptist churches. If we are not certain what we believe and cannot articulate with clarity why we believe what we do, how can we "drum up" sufficient zeal and endurance to embrace the challenge of missions in a pluralistic, skeptical, multi-cultural world?

Another challenge we face as conservative Anabaptists is our **homogeneity as a denomination**. By this I mean that in the US and Canada, most of our churches are mono-cultural. Most of us are middle class whites. Most of us trace our roots back to Swiss/Dutch/Germanic roots. This is not bad, but we "walk with a limp" when we speak of the Gospel being for all people and breaking down barriers between all people. Our Gospel becomes very suspect when the prospect of racially mixed marriages arises. Our homogeneity militates against us when we try to integrate people from other cultural, social and racial backgrounds. People in the receptor cultures where our missionaries work wonder at times why all the missionaries are "white" if the Gospel overcomes color barriers. And they have good reason to wonder and to ask those questions that make us squirm. This is a challenge we face.

Let us add to that one our **ambivalence about higher education** which results in a scarcity of qualified personnel to enter restricted access countries. Most of the remaining unreached people groups live in nations that will not issue religious worker visas, so to enter we need more people with professional skills. But after they get their degrees, will they still "be on our page" or will they have lost their conservative Anabaptist values and commitment in the process? And will they be saddled with debts that inhibit them from ever getting to a field of missionary service? So we find ourselves "caught between a rock and a hard place"…we need more people to get advanced degrees, but we suffer huge losses to our movement by the time they have gotten those degrees. Yet if they do not get adequate training, they often cannot enter the fields of unreached people groups.

The next challenge we face illustrates that sometimes our blessings have a "shadow side" to them. As a movement, we are no longer poor, lower class citizens. We have prospered. We are better educated. But I suspect that our **increasing prosperity** results in greater difficulty for us to "climb down the ladder" to serve with humility for the long haul in developing countries among the poor. In our prosperity with so many comforts and technology to make life easier for us, do we still have the same readiness to embrace suffering as did those first Anabaptists? Are we able to prosper and still sustain zeal for sharing the Gospel? Will we actually be willing, ready and equipped to go to the hard places of the world, and to encourage our offspring to go there for the sake of Christ? When we do go, how can we make wise use of our many resources to help those in need without creating unhealthy dependencies? Will we be able to see those who are not materially "needy" as being truly in spiritual need and deserving of the Gospel as well? Do we know how to give the Gospel when a "hand out" is not needed?

Closely related to the above is getting past the **"short-term" VS mentality** to embracing missions as a vocation. During World War II an agreement was made with the US government to allow for short term, conscientious objector service in lieu of participating in the armed forces. This was a good thing for our people, worthy of imitation in all countries of the world. However, now we have begun to think that the "normal" thing is to do your two years of "VS work" (sometimes it is even shorter), then return home to "normal" life. How will we ever develop proficiency in language and deep understanding of the receptor cultures when we cycle our workers in and out of their mission communities on a short term basis? And how do we expect to get long term results on the field with short term commitment? We would never embrace such a model for leadership in our sending churches! And we are even willing at times to bring people with long term commitment to missions back to their sending church to provide leadership at home! We need to raise up vision for long term missionary service as a worthy vocation. Once we see the worth and challenge of missions as a career, we may be more willing to pay the necessary price to acquire the training that is needed for effectively confronting the challenge of cross-cultural missionary work.

Anabaptism began in an atmosphere of suspicion, persecution and ridicule. The words *Anabaptist* and *Mennonite* were pejorative. Even today one frequently hears negative comments about someone "becoming a Mennonite" even though they may express respect for Mennonites being "good people". Many times we as Mennonites grow up **feeling inferior about our heritage and our convictions**. Since many of us do not have formal higher education, we often feel intimidated by educated, wealthy, mainstream North Americans, including Christians of other denominations. On the other hand, we may develop attitudes of superiority toward others because of our rich heritage. Both attitudes hinder us in effectively recruiting and sending out workers for fruitful ministry.

The increased interfacing of our people with Christians and missions of other denominations and more exposure through technology bring with it the blessing of access to broader information, experience and resources for missions as well as being able to serve as a challenge to other Christians, for we do have something really wonderful to share with them. The accompanying challenge, however, is heightened expectations for our churches and agencies to "keep up" with what other groups are doing and the potential weakening of our convictions as Anabaptists. One option not available to us is to prohibit this exposure. We are no longer, if we ever were, an island unto ourselves.

In view of the many and varied challenges listed above, I believe it is vitally important to nurture networking with like-minded Anabaptists who are also active in missions in order to avoid competition, duplication and waste of resources, encouraging one another, learning from one another and praying for each other. The challenge facing us is to **network while maintaining mutual respect and faithfulness** to our respective understandings and applications of Scripture.

The following challenges are not at all new to conservative Anabaptists, but as we become more pro-active in missions and as cultures move ever farther away from Judeo-Christian values, we will face them with greater frequency: implementing nonresistance in countries with required military service; resolving issues of divorce and remarriage; teaching true beauty without external adornment in cultures where lack of adornment is very shameful; teaching and maintaining gender distinction in clothing; and upholding Biblical roles of manhood and womanhood.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the opportunities lying before the conservative Anabaptist movement have never been greater. The resources within the movement have never been more numerous than those we now possess. The tools for fulfilling the Great Commission have never been so advantageous. Yes, the challenges we face are formidable. Yet Christ is still seated on His throne. He is still at work fulfilling His promise to build His Church against which the gates of Hades cannot stand. The Spirit of God is still available to empower His people to move forward. The Gospel is still the power of God to save those who believe. The Word of God is still alive and powerful to convict, instruct and transform. And what is more, we have read the last chapter and know how this titanic struggle is going to end—"a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Rev. 7:9,10 NKJV)

Allen and Carolyn Roth have been involved in church planting, pastoring, leadership training and teaching since 1978, first in Managua, Nicaragua, and later in Brooklyn, New York since 1986, where they are currently active members of Followers of Jesus Mennonite Church. In addition, they are involved in a teaching ministry, serving at Elnora Bible Institute (IN), Faith Builders (PA), the Institute for Global Opportunities (Thailand) and the Ministry Training Center (Queens, NYC). They have three children and ten grandchildren.

Missions: *Update*

This past July marked two years that I've had the privilege of serving with Impact and it has been rewarding work. I love to look back and reflect on where God has led us and what He has brought our way. I often think about the support of the ADC churches and am overwhelmed with gratitude. We can only do what we are doing because of you, and you have reinforced my belief that we can do so much more together than we can as individual churches.

Awake Café is a good example of that. Earlier this year, we shared with the churches the opportunity to purchase Awake Café in Detroit. We knew it was a significant undertaking, but we also felt it was an opportunity worth pursuing. Through the generosity of churches and individuals across the ADC, the funds came together, and on July 15, Impact officially closed on the property.

Thank you to each of you who gave and prayed. We are grateful for God's provision and for the way He provided through so many of you working together.

Matthew and Melissa Kauffman are serving as directors of Awake Café and are working to get the café up and running. Our hope has always been for Awake to become more than simply a coffee shop. We want it to be a place of ministry and connection in the neighborhood, a place to train and equip people for urban ministry, and a practical example of business being used for Kingdom purposes.

Another goal for Awake is for it to become a place where our churches can send youth for service. Awake currently has openings for baristas, and we welcome anyone interested to apply. It's an opportunity to work at the café, live and serve in an urban setting, and gain firsthand experience in urban ministry. If you or someone you know may be interested, please contact Melissa at 617-939-8737.

There is still plenty of work to do, and we are learning as we go, but we are grateful for what God has provided and look forward to seeing how He uses Awake Café in Detroit.

Tim Byler, Director

Stay Connected with Impact International!

Want to stay up to date with what's happening at Impact International?

Join our WhatsApp group for ministry updates, prayer requests, news, and ways to stay connected with what God is doing around the world. Scan the QR code to join!

Albania VBS

by Kaitlyn Troyer

This past July, a team from several American churches traveled to Albania to help Saimir Braho and his church put on a VBS for children from the capital city of Tiranë. The time with the children was full of singing, crafts, snacks, and Bible stories. The kids loved to speak English to us and attempted to teach us some Albanian words. We were grateful that patience and good-natured laughter abounded among all the Albanian speakers as we put forth our best effort to replicate their unique language.

The people from the church took the American team on adventures all over the city, and we learned much about the culture and history of Albania, specifically about the communist regime, its fall in 1991, and the aftershocks of this oppression that still reverberate throughout the country. However, among the myriad activities we participated in on this trip, one notably stood out to me.

We began and ended our time in Albania by participating in communion with their church – initially as strangers sharing nothing but a fellow belief in Christ, and lastly as friends forever bonded through our time working together to advance the Lord's kingdom. Billy Graham articulates it well: "The church isn't just a particular building or congregation, but the spiritual fellowship of all who belong to Jesus Christ. If we belong to Christ, we also belong to each other." God opened my eyes to this concept in a fresh way during this week, and I will always remember fondly the time we spent connecting with God's church in Albania.

iMPACT INTERNATIONAL

PO Box 21
Sugarcreek, OH 44681
www.impactintl.org