

## The Courage to Love...In the Stories we Tell

Introduction By Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, March 14, 2025



### Sharing Stories

*How Does Your Story Fit into the Larger  
Anabaptist Narrative?*

Graphic source: <https://anabaptismat500.com/anabaptism-at-500-tool-kit/>

The theme “The Courage to Love” takes on deep, significant meaning when we reflect on the origins of Anabaptism 500 years ago. This evening the worship focus laid out for us invites us to reflect on how our story fits into the larger Anabaptist narrative.

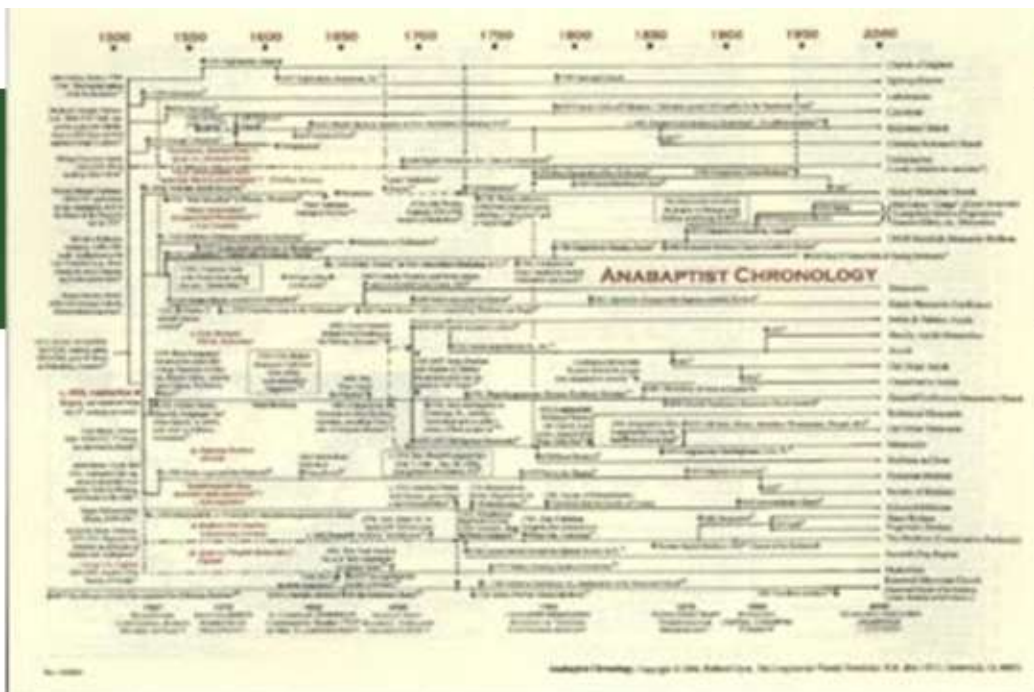
As Adela mentioned in her opening words, it was 500 years ago in Zurich that the first believer’s baptism of the Anabaptist movement took place. On January 21, 1525, Anna Manz, the mother of the better-known Felix, opened her home to a dozen young people—and probably fed them well! At that meeting they baptized each other as adults as an act of renewal and recommitment to Jesus.

As you can see from the picture that follows, this event was just one part of the early Anabaptist movement. There were many strands that fed into the Anabaptist expression of Christian faith that emerged. At the top you see Zurich, while to the left you see arrows coming from the Netherlands. There were many strands that mixed and influenced each other as different threads emerged. .



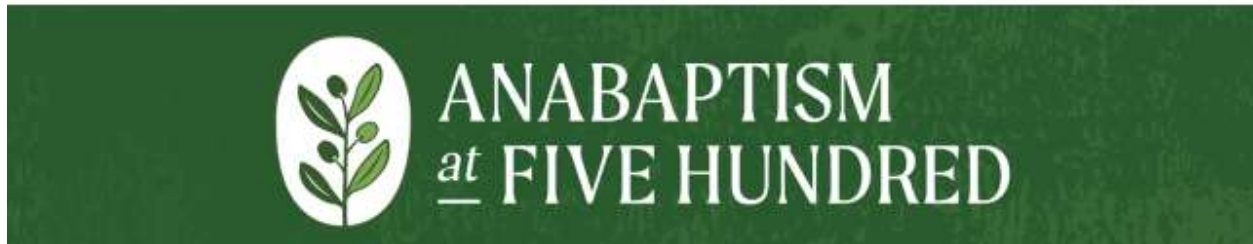
Graphic source: <https://www.eldrbarry.net/heidel/slide/32-refs.htm>

The slide below gives an even more confusing picture! It tries to capture many of the threads of Anabaptism over the last 500 years. Don't worry if it looks blurry—that's part of the point! It shows how complex our history has been, with all its many threads!



Graphic source: <https://www.masthof.com/products/anabaptist-chronology-chart?variant=1192975284>

But even though it's a monumental task to chart out all the streams of the Anabaptist movement, it is a movement that draws us back to the core, to Christ as the centre. It's like a vine, that can trace all its many branches back to one main trunk.



Graphic source: <https://clipart-library.com/clipart/1131217.htm>

It draws us back, not to an event from 500 years ago, but to Jesus. In John 15:5 Jesus says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit." This is the call that joins all those many strands of Anabaptism together.

The other aspect of this image is that no matter when a person or movement becomes part of the vine, whether it is grown out of some historic connection or grafted on, they become fully part of the vine.

This evening we have 3 people who will share about how they fit into the Anabaptist story—what draws them in and guides them for today. First we'll hear from Caleb Kowalko, who is pastor at First Mennonite Calgary. We will then hear from Reuben Tut, pastor of the Edmonton South Sudanese Mennonite Church, and we will conclude with Doug Klassen, who is the Executive Minister of Mennonite Church Canada.