

Tabor College Distinctives (Tabor Identity)

One component that shapes our identity is our (Overhead)

Theological perspective. It's important to understand who we are theologically. Tabor is a Christ-centered Liberal Arts College, founded and owned by the Mennonite Brethren Church. The term "Christ-centered" may have a deeper meaning than what quickly comes to mind. As we interpret the Scriptures and look at our world, we first look through the lens of Christ. So, Jesus' life, teachings and ministry color and shape the way we understand the Bible and our world. We go to Christ *first*. Then we see how the rest of Scripture lines up.

That means we are not only familiar with the "gospel *about* Christ" (freedom from sin through his death and resurrection). But we also lift up the "gospel *of* Christ" (What Jesus taught. How he lived. Ushering in a new kingdom and proclaiming liberation for the oppressed and marginalized.)

The MB church has been deeply influenced by the history and convictions of the broader Mennonite movement of which it is a part. The church has also been shaped in significant ways by evangelicalism.

Anabaptism

The first stream of influence is **Anabaptism**. As Mennonites we see *discipleship*, following Jesus, as the heart of the Christian faith worked out in daily life within a *community of believers*, the church. And, Mennonites are committed to *God's reconciling work through sacrificial love and nonviolence*.

Evangelicalism

The second stream of influence is **Evangelicalism**. As evangelicals, we believe that discipleship begins with a *conscious commitment to Jesus* and regeneration by the Holy Spirit; we hold a *high view of Scripture as the ultimate authority* for the community of disciples in matters of faith and practice; and we *proclaim Jesus' call* to reconciliation through repentance and faith.

Parallels

If we look across and compare these influences, we can make some interesting connections.

Personal commitment and Discipleship

First, as Evangelicals, we would characterize the Christian life as a *personal commitment to Christ*, and, as Anabaptists, we see *that* as the doorway to a lifelong commitment of obedience to Christ called *discipleship*. Jesus calls disciples to deny self, take up the cross and follow him (Mark 8:34). It's in this following that we are committed to Christ and transformed into his image. We can refer to this as the obedience of faith. As we obey Christ, we come to know him better. As we learn to know Jesus, we are compelled to obey.

Scripture and Community

Second, as Evangelicals, we find authority in Scripture (*sola scriptura*). As Anabaptists, we also believe that the interpretation of Scripture is the work of the Holy Spirit within the community of believers. Christians, guided by the Holy Spirit, enter into active dialogue with others in the Christian community and discover that God reveals the truth, giving people confidence to live in challenging, changing times. This is a "community hermeneutic." We believe that there is integrity in community.

Proclamation and reconciliation

Third, as Evangelicals, we emphasize the *proclamation of the gospel*, generally by word. As Anabaptists, we seek to proclaim the gospel in both word and deed. *Reconciliation* is at the heart of the good news. The gospel is understood as we being reconciled to God through Christ. It is expressed through our reconciliation with each other.

So, this confluence of our Anabaptist and evangelical heritage yields a faith of **radical discipleship**: a *personal devotion to Christ*, a *covenantal community of disciples*, a *biblical vision of the reconciling work of God*, and a *passionate commitment to act as God's agents in the world*.

So, at Tabor, our vision is to use the resources of the academic disciplines and community life to challenge and lead our students to see radical discipleship as a biblically faithful way of serving Jesus in various disciplines and occupations.

Now, being a part of Tabor College doesn't mean you must buy it wholesale, but you're invited to, at least, be sympathetic to this vision. At best you're invited to contribute to it.