My history. The truth is, I didn’t really grow up in the church. Our family had Methodist ties, but we were basically Easter and Christmas church attenders at the church where my father had attended Methodist Youth Fellowship. He was officially a member (and became a more regular attender much later in life). My mother was not at all religious; the closest thing she had to a religious belief was that it was sure to rain between the hours of noon and 3 p.m. on Good Friday.

I “accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior” at fourteen when I attended a Southern Baptist Church one Sunday — they were on me quick, I tell you — but our family moved “up north” just a few weeks later, so I didn’t create any connection to the Southern Baptists. I did start attending an independent, baptistic, fundamentalist church which was nothing but good for me. The pastor and his wife (Larry and Cheryl Nelson), who were in their twenties, had a heart for young people, and they gathered a group of high school students and taught us the Bible, how to sing, and helped us grow up. I was baptized as a member of that church (which my mother opposed). Because it was so independent, I didn’t develop any denominational loyalty.

When I went off to college, I did not take much thought about what it would mean for my faith. After looking around for a church for a term or so, I discovered Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, and that became a major influence on my life. Many of the IV members and staff attended University Reformed Church (a Reformed Church in America) where Tom Stark was the pastor. URC and IV patiently helped me grow more mature in my Christian faith. Much of the good teaching I had at IV and URC was in the Reformed tradition, including Tom Stark, John Gerstner, Edmund Clowney, J.I. Packer and John R.W. Stott. By the time I left college, I was a convinced five point Calvinist. I liked to say that the Baptists had taught me to recognized Jesus as my Savior, but the Reformed had taught me to recognized Jesus as Lord. I met my wife at University Reformed, and gave her the least romantic wedding present in the history of the world — a copy of Calvin’s *Institutes*. While I was pursuing a master’s degree, we attended an Orthodox Presbyterian Church (which also had similar connections to the Inter-Varsity chapter there), and, for the next ten years, attended various reformed churches (except for a year in Barcelona, where Inter-Varsity connections led us to a Spanish Baptist church pastored by a British man, David F Burt, who helped found the Spanish equivalent of Inter-Varsity).

In was not that we were dissatisfied with Reformed theology that we started attending a church affiliated with Mennonite Church USA and the Church of the Brethren. (These days, it is only associated with the Mennonites). Rather, I started studies towards a PhD in computer science at Northwestern University, and, at the same time, we felt a strong call to investigate living in community, and, through friends and a significant book (*Living Together in a World Falling Apart*, by Dave and Neta Jackson), went to Reba Place Church in Evanston, Illinois. We actually arrived expecting to “join the commune,” but Reba Place had, in the time since the book had been written, established a “regular” church in addition to its communal fellowship. They were separate organizations with differing requirements, and it certainly made sense to explore the church before joining the fellowship. In the end, for a variety of reasons, we did not join the fellowship, although we did live for a significant time as part of a household. I began to learn more about the origins of the Anabaptists, and how they thought and acted, and, by the time we left Evanston to return to Kalamazoo, Michigan (my wife’s home town) we were, more or less, Mennonites. There was no Mennonite church in Kalamazoo, so we attended a church some 40 minutes away. Eventually, we thought it possible to start a Mennonite church in Kalamazoo, and so, for the past eight years or so, Kalamazoo Mennonite Fellowship has been meeting in our home. As the nominal leader of the church, I’ve had more responsibility to learn the Anabaptist way of looking at the world, and to get a deeper understanding of Anabaptist theology and practice.