



## Sharing the Good News!

Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church of Christ

### AFTER EASTER, THEN WHAT?

The answer to this question is found in the international miracle of the soon-to-come Pentecost, with its birth of a mission movement that swept across the Roman Empire within just a few centuries, and which now numbers more than 2,000,000,000 faith adherents (fully one-third of the world's total population).

From its inception Christianity has always been a *world* religion. Its global vision extends in time from God's ethnic-transcending promise to a bewildered Abraham and Sarah ...

“I WILL MAKE NATIONS OF YOU” (Gen 17.6 NRSV)

... through the national-barrier-breaking missionary mandate of Jesus ...

“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS” (Matt 28.19 NRSV)

... to the astounded Apostle Peter and the early Church ...

“GOD SHOWS NO PARTIALITY, BUT IN EVERY NATION ANYONE WHO FEARS HIM AND DOES WHAT IS RIGHT IS ACCEPTABLE TO HIM” (Acts 10.34f NRSV).

This means that local churches do not exist for their own sake. And they cannot afford to focus solely on their own needs and concerns. To do so would constitute a betrayal of our baptismal vows of *furthering Christ's mission in all the world*. (Yep, it's right there in the bapt. liturgy!)

Since Christ's Church *by definition* is meant to embrace a global vision for mission, this means that every *local* church needs to be or ought to become a **GLOCAL Church** (*GLOBAL + LOCAL = GLOCAL*)!

So how about your congregation? Is it a **GLOCAL Church** yet? Here are some practical ways it might become a little more “glocal” in its missional emphasis:

(See next page)

### Toby's Top Ten List of Ways to Become a More GLOCAL CHURCH:

1. **GET CONNECTED TO A UCC MISSIONARY.** *They pass through our Conference from time to time...why not invite one to join you for a discussion one evening?*
2. **FIND OUT ABOUT UCC MISSION PROJECTS (SUCH AS CHILD SPONSORSHIP) IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES.** *John & Kathy Dech went to India to see such a program, and they can come to your church to tell you about it (with slides!).*
3. **COLLABORATE WITH ANOTHER CHURCH TO HELP RESETTLE A REFUGEE FAMILY.** *This is what my home church, St. John's of Laurys Station, did a few years ago...and we're still close to them and helping the children with tutoring.*
4. **COLLECT MATERIALS TO HELP WORLDWIDE DISASTER VICTIMS PUT THEIR LIVES BACK TOGETHER.** *A number of our churches do this for Church World Service.*
5. **PURCHASE (AND HELP SELL) ATTRACTIVE HANDCRAFTS CREATED BY POOR ARTISANS IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES.** *Talk to our SERRV rep, Sharon Laub.*
6. **SUPPORT A LOCAL MISSION PROVIDING BASIC HUMAN ASSISTANCE TO OUR MOST NEEDY NEIGHBORS.** *The Lehigh County Conference of Churches works with people from all ethnic and social backgrounds.*
7. **SEND A TEAM ON A SHORT-TERM MISSION PROJECT TO A 3RD WORLD COUNTRY.** *This was a life-transforming experience for my son [to Honduras] 9 years ago.*
8. **ORGANIZE A LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN TO PERSUADE THE UN AND USA TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE IN ADDRESSING THE GENERAL HUMAN RIGHTS CRISES IN:**
  - Darfur
  - Eastern Congo
  - Zimbabwe
  - Myanmar
  - North Korea
  - Sri Lanka
  - You fill in the country*
9. **... OR TO ADDRESS THE SEXUAL ABUSE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS (INCLUDING SEXUAL ENSLAVEMENT) IN A GOOD NUMBER OF COUNTRIES—INCLUDING OUR OWN, BELIEVE IT OR NOT!**
10. **OPEN YOUR CHURCH FACILITY FOR FREE TO AN ETHNIC CHURCH GROUP.**

It really isn't very difficult to figure out how to be a **GLOCAL Church**. As you can see, opportunities to minister **glocally** are abundant!

The hard thing is to want to **be** a **GLOCAL Church**. This takes nothing less than a frank willingness to allow God's *After-Easter* Spirit to recalibrate the cadence of our hearts, so that they beat in synchronous rhythm with Jesus' own **GLOCAL** heart.

Toby Holleman, Associate Conference Minister

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