



THE GLOBAL CHURCH SHARING FUND

“At the moment, your surplus supplies their need, but one day your need may be met from their surplus” (II Corinthians 8).

The Global Church Sharing Fund was established in 1997 at the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Calcutta. Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Mutual Aid and individual donors made initial contributions totaling one million dollars (US). Anabaptist churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America receive Global Church Sharing funds for ministries that advance the life and mission of their churches.

Why is the fund necessary?

From 16th century European origins, the Anabaptist family has spread around the world into over 70 countries. Global membership surpasses 1.4 million baptized believers in 13,000 local churches and 200 national conferences of churches. The majority — at least 60% — are African, Asian and Latin American. These sisters and brothers give us many gifts, renewing the life of the global Church while extending God’s kingdom. They are the ones who will lead in determining what it means to live as Anabaptist Christians in the 21st century.

Sadly, deepening economic disparity accompanies this wonderful global transformation. Most numerical growth in the worldwide family of faith is taking place among people who are financially poor. 95% of our wealth remains in the hands of North Americans (88%) and Europeans (7%).

Recognizing these facts of life together in the global Church and inspired by the biblical teaching of “Jubilee” (in Leviticus 25, for example), Mennonite World Conference set up the Global Church Sharing Fund. The aim is to put into action the Apostle Paul’s words to the Corinthians: “There is no question of relieving others at the cost of hardship to yourself; it is a question of equality. At the moment, your surplus meets their need, but one day your need may be met from their surplus. The aim is equality; as Scripture has it, ‘Those who gathered more did not have too much, and those who gathered less did not have too little’” (II Corinthians 8:13-15).

How are the funds used?

Anabaptist churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America receive Global Church Sharing funds through a “fair share” allotment to be spent to advance the life and mission of their churches. MWC staff administers the fund and monitors its use, under the supervision of the MWC Executive Committee, which is accountable to the MWC General Council.

Both the gift and the power to decide how to use the gift are given to those who receive Global Church Sharing funds. Mennonite World Conference believes that the churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America can best determine how the gift will further God’s mission in their circumstances.

The churches of the global South have so far used Global Church Sharing funds in a great variety of ways, including: translation and publication of materials; scholarships for students; upgrading computer systems; purchase of church supplies, purchase of bicycles for evangelists; vehicles for church supervision and administration; payment of membership dues to mission and church organizations; transportation costs; evangelism and leadership training; buying land; construction and repair of church facilities; promotion of Anabaptist identity and belonging, pastoral salaries and retreats, and retired pastors endowment fund.

How can you participate?

Members of Lancaster Mennonite Conference congregations are encouraged to participate by sending monthly, quarterly, or annual contributions totaling 1-2% of their income to Global Church Sharing Fund, Lancaster Mennonite Conference, 2160 Lincoln Highway East # 5, Lancaster, PA 17602. The Conference Office will then forward these funds to the Mennonite World Conference for the Global Church Sharing Fund.

Alternatively, congregations may wish to collect funds from their members and send them to the Conference Office in one lump sum.

May 19, 2006

Larry Miller
General Secretary
Mennonite World Conference