

“Grassroots” Response to Unleashing the Laity



Over the last three years, I have repeatedly stated that the headquarters of The Alliance is the local church. Our mandate at the National Office is to serve the local church, to assist the local church in carrying out its Great Commis-

sion ministries. Grass roots ministry flows from our local churches to U.S. neighborhoods and to the nations of the world.

Grassroots ministry is accomplished mostly by the laity of the C&MA. There remains a huge, untapped ministry potential among our laity. I have called it the sleeping giant. I was asked recently, “What does it mean when you say you want to be a champion of unleashing the laity?”

When I asked a layman friend to answer the question from his perspective, I liked his response so well that I want to share his words with you.

I like the term “unleashing the laity” because it carries the image of the pent-up potential that is stored in our churches. It is not a static picture. Think of a dam breaking; the water rushes out, and things are never the same.

We acknowledge that the vast majority of people in The Alliance are laypeople, men and women, and we believe that every follower of Jesus Christ must be engaged in Kingdom work. The stakes are simply too high to settle for anything else.

Also, we acknowledge that adequately resourcing Alliance work around the world will remain a huge challenge. Having laypeople more actively in-

involved in ministry provides a secondary benefit. Laypeople will continue to work at their jobs, run their businesses, and spend their retirement income to support themselves while they minister. More people will be reached and disciplined, which will reduce the pressure on church staffs to expand in number.

What will The Alliance look like when the laity is unleashed?

- People will be reaching their neighbors and family with the gospel because they will have a better understanding of God’s heart for the world, and their churches will grow and have a Great Commission focus.
- Church finances will increase because a better understanding of the role of the laity will also include a grasp of the principle that “God owns it all.”
- Pastors will focus on their main tasks, including raising up and training leaders because laypeople will begin taking up ministry roles in greater numbers.

These thoughts about unleashing the laity were “just a start” in his words. One of our core values states, “Completing the Great Commission will require the mobilization of every fully devoted disciple.” I trust the Lord will guide and empower us for service as we multiply ministry by unleashing the laity.

Living the Call Together,

Gary M. Benedict
U.S. C&MA President