

Epiphany Devotion: The Light and Love of the World

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Nyíregyháza, Hungary

Song: Csendes éj (Translation: Silent Night)

Language: Hungarian

Artist: Csányi László, Budapesti Gyermekkar (Translation: Budapest Children's Choir)

Album: Mennyből az angyal - Pásztorok, pásztorok (Translation: The Angel From Heaven -  
Shepherds, Shepherds)



As I sat in church here in Nyíregyháza, Hungary, on Christmas Eve -- not fully understanding the words being spoken, but trying to follow along -- I found myself missing my home congregation where I have spent every Christmas Eve for the past 23 years of my life. But then, like the light of hope and comfort I was needing, we began to sing my favorite Christmas hymn.

I was suddenly overwhelmed with emotions and began to silently cry while I sang. I found myself missing my home even more, but also feeling the most connection to them since moving to Hungary months earlier. The words were not in the same language, but they were just as beautiful. The music was just as I always knew it to be.

This got me thinking: Isn't it beautiful? Isn't it beautiful that here I am, across the world from home, and yet, I am still connected?

Jesus connects us. He connects us to everyone who follows him around the globe. There isn't a continent on this planet not touched by Jesus' love. I would place my bets that most church communities also sang "Silent Night" on Christmas. It brought me a comfort I didn't know I needed. It brought me comfort that as different, or as distant, as we all are, we are still singing the same songs, learning the same lessons, celebrating the same miracle, and all bound together by love.

***The LORD had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.' (Genesis 12:1)***

***<sup>10</sup> On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,  
<sup>11</sup> which said: 'Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.' (Revelation 1:10-11)***

Worldwide we are in celebration of Jesus and his birth. The world is filled with love and excitement as we enter into Epiphany. The light of the world, Jesus, brings us all together. Since the times of the Old Testament, the connection between nations has been there. In the New Testament, Christianity spread far and wide. We have stories of Jesus being in relationship with those of other cultures (ex. John 4), the Church in Egypt (modern day Coptics), Joseph fleeing to Egypt (Matthew 2:13), and all of the nations Paul wrote letters to. Since then the bible has been translated into roughly 670 languages! (see [link](#) for source). The church has always been global, widespread. But we often get stuck in our smaller immediate communities and forget that the global church exists. Generally, we do not spend enough time exploring our global church. I think in order to fully appreciate what our home communities have to offer and what we experience there, we need to explore and venture to the other communities. This could mean going to a Lutheran service in another country. But it can be as easy as attending a service of another denomination, or perhaps visiting a Jewish or Muslim congregation.

We have to stop thinking that the church is just what is in our pews on Sunday mornings. We need to appreciate and love the church global.

*Mother God,*

*As we learn about and explore the world around us, and as we grow and expand our faith and understanding, help guide us. Help us learn to welcome those from your global church into our communities. Open our hearts and our minds to the love and culture of our global siblings. Your love for us is never-ending.*

*Amen!*

Devotion questions-

1. How have you experienced multicultural Christianity? How can you branch out and expand your global church view?
2. How do you welcome those of the global church into your community?



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My mentor Erszebet Molinar and myself at the Advent Market.



The Central Europe Cohort (serving in Hungary and Serbia) in Chicago as we were preparing for our YAGM year.

