

Greetings from the end of the earth!

A campus pastor shares how he has opportunities to witness to all nations—even while in Michigan.

Glenn L. Schwanke

What did the disciples think when Jesus told them to go as his witnesses “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8)? The twelve timid men had just been assigned the world as their mission field.

Did the apostles succeed? The book of Acts tells us that the apostles carried the testimony of Jesus out from Jerusalem and down the dusty footpaths of Judea and through Samaria.

From there, they took Roman roads and ships to Asia, Italy, and parts of Europe. Thomas may have even reached India.

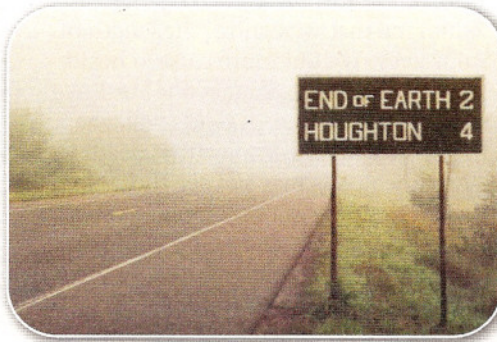
But to the ends of the earth? Isn't that saying a bit much? Hardly. I live and work two miles *beyond* the end of the earth, and I know for a fact the Lord's life-giving gospel has gotten this far!

Perhaps I should explain. For the past 16 years, I've served as a WELS campus pastor in Houghton, Mich. If you look for us on a map, you'll find us in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, nestled in the middle of the Keweenaw Peninsula, which juts up into Lake Superior. We're about four hours away from big cities like Green Bay, Wis., or Duluth, Minn.

Ours is a pristine area of forests filled with deer, black bear, wolves, and a few moose. Yet here and there stand ruins as silent witnesses to the booming copper industry from which our area, the Copper Country, gets its name. The copper mines are all closed now. The last one shut down in 1996, the year my family and I arrived. The largest remaining employer in our region is Michigan Technological University, a college founded as The Michigan School of Mining. It was placed in this most unlikely location so it could serve the industry all around it.

It is here, on the northern fringe of “Da UP,” where we witness to the world. Visit a Houghton coffee shop downtown, walk the main street, stroll through the college campus, and you can see women in saris and men in Nehru jackets. You can chat with folks from mainland China, Russia, India, Brazil, and a host of other countries. They are all in Houghton, Mich., studying or teaching at Michigan Tech.

It is here that I met Nielima, an Indian student with a winsome smile and cheerful outlook on life. That struck me, because Nielima often told me about the struggles of everyday life in her native country, about the caste system, and about the dangers of confessing her Christian faith



there. One Sunday after church I greeted her, “Nielima, I pray today you'll have a good day.” Her response? “It's already a good day, Pastor. I was in his house to hear what his Son has done for me.”

This is campus ministry. It's Nielima, Xu, and Marissa. It's Michael, Megan, and Rachel. It's young men and women from around the world. It's your sons

and daughters studying at some university somewhere. It's witnessing for Jesus and carrying his message to the ends of the earth.

But *two miles beyond* the end of the earth? Did I ever explain that? Several decades ago, some MTU engineering students—inventive, mischievous, and somewhat bored—fabricated a road sign that looked just like an official Michigan Department of Transportation sign. Those students even erected it in the correct location alongside the highway. It read, “End of Earth 2 (miles); Houghton 4 (miles).”

Glenn Schwanke, pastor at Peace, Houghton, Michigan, serves as campus pastor at Michigan Technological University.

**CAMPUS
CORNERSTONE**