

Pages 1-2: Leader's Guide

Pages 3-4: 45-60 minute curriculum

Back Panel: Recruitment poster

ELCA Global Mission Recruitment: An Adult Education Resource

The church still needs international mission personnel. Organize a presentation to lift up the challenge.

Approximately 300 ELCA pastors, educators, librarians, technicians, administrators, medical workers, and other international mission personnel are engaged in God's mission in 40 countries from Bangladesh to the United Kingdom.

But more people are needed! You can help by **organizing a presentation on global mission opportunities for volunteers**. This resource contains everything you need to host a one-hour session with three objectives:

1. To encourage members of your congregation to examine their own call to serve as global mission volunteers.
2. To identify others who may be gifted for this service.
3. To become knowledgeable about the global mission volunteer program of the ELCA.

While volunteers are needed in many areas, this presentation focuses on **teachers**—one of the ELCA's more pressing international personnel needs.



Five years planned in Tanzania. David Fleeger of Peace Lutheran Church in College Station, Texas, has taught upper level math for three years at Kolila Secondary School in Old Moshi, Tanzania and will teach at Moringe Skoine Secondary School in Monduli for two more.

What:

A one-hour interactive presentation/seminar suitable for:

- an Adult Forum
- a follow-up activity after a Global Mission Festival
- a congregational Mission Festival

Goals:

- To understand the role of the volunteers in the ELCA's global mission
- To discover where ELCA international mission personnel are working and what they are doing
- To explore gifts needed for international service, especially teaching
- To identify potential candidates for service

Materials needed:

International Personnel Directory (distributed in the 2001 May/June Action Packet, or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2642 for a copy)
Copies of Handout A, "Global Mission Today: Walking Together" and Handout B, "Teachers Are Needed" (See inside)
Poster (on the back of this resource)
Downloaded position listings from www.elca.org/dgm/mission/resource.

Instructions for Session

1. Setting the Scene and Starting the Discussion - 10 minutes

In the center of your gathering area, place a globe, some colorful cloth, and a copy of the ELCA International Personnel Directory.

Begin the discussion by asking attendees for their impressions of missionaries. Have they ever met a missionary? What did that person do? Do they think a missionary has to be a pastor or doctor? Can an accountant or a teacher be a missionary? Encourage stories and brief reflections, especially from childhood.

Reflect for a few moments on your congregation's links with global mission. Has your congregation sponsored a missionary? If so, how did your congregation get involved with a particular person or country? Have members attended a Global Mission Event? How is global mission lifted up today in your congregation—through prayer, global songs and hymns, missionary visits, sponsorships, the World Hunger Appeal, or involvement in a companion synod relationship?

Bring this part of the discussion to a close by showing the International Personnel Directory.

2. Discussing Global Mission Today - 15-20 minutes

Pass out *Handout A*, "Global Mission Today: Walking Together."

Have participants read the handout aloud. Ask them how they react to the idea that a reduction in missionaries in Tanzania is a success. Do they agree or disagree? Some may feel that fewer missionaries is *not* a success. Discuss. Stress that because countries like Tanzania now have their own pastors, they need mission personnel, but with different skills and gifts. Pastors are still needed in countries like Senegal, where the church is small.

Ask participants what they understand the role of global mission to be in today's world. Has their understanding changed in the last few years? How does Handout A affect their understanding of the role of the missionary?

Encourage attendees to leaf through the IP Directory to see the countries, people, and types of service involved.

Ask the participants:

- In which countries can you find the most ELCA missionaries? [Slovakia, Cameroon, Japan, and Tanzania]
- What is the typical length of time of service? [3 months to 2 years]
- What are the most common occupations? [teacher and pastor]
- How many of the ELCA's 300 international mission personnel are volunteers? [88 in 2000]
- Given the changes in churches world wide, how might the type of missionary needed be affected?

3. Introducing the Concept of Volunteers - 15-20 minutes

To show how the ELCA is using volunteers, pass around the list of global mission service opportunities from the ELCA web site. Together, look at the breadth of skills requested.

Read aloud the stories of the volunteers below right, and then ask these discussion questions:

- Do you know someone who has served as an international volunteer? Recount some of their experiences.
- Discuss how teachers in schools in the U.S. make a quiet witness and impact on people. Give examples.
- What qualities do you think volunteers would need in order to successfully cross national and cultural boundaries?

Write suggestions on the board. (Suggestions: flexibility, adaptability; an attitude of respect towards the host country, people, church and culture; a spirit of openness to new approaches, ideas and avenues of service; a strong faith and commitment to the church; patience and perseverance.)

4. Taking Action - 5 to 10 minutes

Pass out and discuss *Handout B*, "Teachers are Needed." Spend a few minutes encouraging the participants to consider global mission volunteer service in their future. Have them fill out the "Discernment" section and read their answers.

Because contact information is included in Handout B, there's no need to collect names. Should one or two names emerge as strong candidates, encourage them to inquire for information.

Conclude the session by thanking participants for coming. Offer a brief prayer of thanksgiving for God's mission in the world and for the services offered by all missionaries.

**Post the
"Imagine the World"
poster prominently in
your congregation!**

Handout A

Global Mission Today: Walking Together

In 1955, there were 125 Lutheran missionaries in the Central Area of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT). Today there are two volunteers in what is known as the Central Diocese.

What a success story! Founded in 1963, the ELCT now has 2.5 million members, and trains its own pastors, bishops, and teachers!

The story is the same around the world. Churches established by Lutherans are flourishing. Their growth has been so phenomenal that of today's 64 million Lutherans, 10.6 million live in Africa and 6.8 million live in Asia.

However, this doesn't mean our job is finished. ELCA missionaries are still called by God to serve across geographical and cultural boundaries. They still proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, but now at the invitation of our companion churches and in ministries that they identify.

Today missionaries serve in very specific roles identified by the host church. In 2000, 300 ELCA missionaries served in 45 countries. And in Tanzania, ELCA missionaries support the ELCT as teachers, librarians, counselors, and accountants.

Many of those missionaries are volunteers. In Liberia, a volunteer spent three months renovating a hospital. In Bangladesh, a nurse served at a health clinic for six months. Ten volunteers taught at the Lutheran High School in Bratislava, Slovakia during the 2000-2001 academic year. In Russia, a pastor taught pastoral care at a seminary.

Why are these volunteers important?

- Because they help the ELCA accomplish its mission of engaging its members and resources in global mission in evangelism, witness, education, promotion of justice, service, relief, and development.
- Because as they are enriched by new experiences and relationships, they begin to understand the world, the church, and themselves in a new light. Their witness makes them a voice for the world and often deepens a congregation's interest and involvement in global mission.
- Volunteers with specialized skills let the ELCA respond to more requests from companion churches. The ELCA can fund a limited number of salaried or stipend positions. When companion churches ask for additional help, volunteers fill the gap.

Together, mission personnel and host churches "accompany" one another on their faith journey, supporting one another through their presence, prayers, and fellowship.



Journalism teacher assists with voter education. As a volunteer journalism teacher at Iringa College of Tumaini University in Tanzania, Paul Bjerck (Augustana Lutheran, West St. Paul, Minnesota) helped launch a voter education project that reached 138,000 voters in some of the most remote parts of Tanzania. Above, his apartment building.



#

Volunteer Stories

Dixie Steffey

After graduating from Queens College, Dixie Steffey taught for part of a summer at Tai'an Teacher's College in Tai'an, Shangdong Province, China. There she and other ELCA teachers taught English to middle school English teachers from rural areas. Classes met from 8:00 to 11:00 am, dismissed for a long lunch break, and met again from 3:00 to 5:00 pm. Through small group activities, she encouraged each teacher to participate in conversation. Afternoon classes focused on culture talks, games, or movies.

While teaching is not evangelism, "our witness was our presence and our attitude," she said. "One day in class I read 1 Corinthians 13, as an introduction to the topic of love and marriage. They understood the truth of the words and considered it a beautiful poem filled with wisdom."

After hours, Dixie plunged into day-to-day life in Tai'an. "I expected to have an experience shaped by China and instead experienced the shape of me brought to light by my time in China."

From her summer, she gained "contrasts, spirit, and flexibility—situations I highly recommend to the hardy of soul and a challenge to those not sure of who they are or for what they stand."

Handout B

Teachers Are Needed

Teachers who can teach English are frequently requested by our companion churches. Because English is a tool required for participation in the world today, companion churches want their leaders, students, and members to use it effectively.

Teaching English may not sound like evangelism, but teachers play a key role in witnessing for Christ. Even in China, where “missionaries” are officially not allowed, teachers can witness by providing an example of Christian life, values, and ideals, and by answering questions about their faith when asked. And the witness of “strangers” from another culture can provide a dynamic, creative edge to the sharing of God’s love.



New ways to see the world. Like their students, ELCA teachers in China travel by bicycle.

Discernment

What strengths would you bring if you became a global mission volunteer?

Who in your congregation might be a possible volunteer? List others you know who might be interested in teaching in a companion church.

Resources on Global Mission

To find out more about ELCA volunteer global mission opportunities, visit www.elca.org/dgm/mission/ or call (800) 638-3522 ext. 2648.

Visit www.elca.org/dgm for country packets on countries where the ELCA works with companion churches and web sites where international mission personnel tell about their work.

Jack and Mimi White (in their own words)

Invariably we are asked about the best part of teaching in Bratislava, Slovakia at the Evanjelicke Lyceum. Our answer is always “the kids!”

Of course there were challenges. Mimi had taught chemistry for over thirty years. Jack was a seminary professor for the same period. A shift to teaching American and British literature and English grammar meant long hours of preparation in new fields, and in the beginning, fatigue at the end of the day. However, the kids were worth every effort. They wanted to learn.

Every day in Slovakia was an adventure. At retirement we knew that we were ready for a different experience (but not for the rocking chair). We lived in a four-room flat, walked 20 minutes each way to and from school, ate well, stayed healthy, and did not miss a single day of school.

At every turn we found helpful, kind people who were glad for our presence. Our gray hairs earned us a seat on the crowded buses every time. Slovakia was a welcome change from what we had known. It became home for us.

IMAGINE THE WORLD...



In Slovakia and elsewhere, ELCA teachers develop close relationships with their students.



Volunteer teacher Phyllis MacMurphy used Beatles lyrics to introduce students in Japan to American English idioms.



Teachers, health care workers, pastors, accountants—volunteers bring gifts of all kinds to ELCA companion churches.



...as a volunteer!

Just graduated? Seeking a sabbatical? Retiring early?
Consider volunteering for global mission service!

Why?

- offer your gifts and abilities
- learn and grow
- see life and the world through new lenses

What?

- 2-month to 2-year positions available
- opportunities for teaching, health care, building trades, pastoral ministry, ESL, computers, finance, library science, and more
- international medical insurance and housing are provided
- for current openings, visit www.elca.org/dgm/mission

When?

Just say when!

"If you feel called to share your gifts in this way, go for it. Live your faith!"

Norma Pearce, Amity volunteer
in China, summer 2000

"I return with some of the most amazing experiences of my life, feeling more blessed than I have ever been, full of more love and joy than I can ever remember."

Erin Gerber, 2000-2001 Young Adult
in Global Mission participant in England

More information
(800) 638-3522, ext 2648
dgmSERVE@elca.org
www.elca.org/dgm

Division for Global Mission
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

