

Appendix 1: Protocol agreement

The following "Agreement between the Conference of Bishops and the Global Mission unit on companion synod relationships in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" was recommended for preliminary approval at the ELCA Conference of Bishops meeting on March 9, 2009.

INTRODUCTION

God's purpose for the world is for it to be a reflection of that which God is: a community sustained by love where each of the persons of the Trinity dwells reciprocally within one another. Through Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we are called to participate in this mission through our proclamation, service and witness of how God continues to restore community with humanity and all of creation. The mutuality and reciprocity reflective of God's being shapes our response to and participation in God's mission.¹

To aid in the fulfillment of God's mission to create community, this protocol between synodical bishops and the Global Mission program unit defines the partners and principles involved in companion synod relationships, and outlines how to develop new initiatives within those relationships.

Since its inception early in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Companion Synod Program has grown rapidly. Due to this rapid growth and the evolving challenges, this protocol may require frequent revision.

I. PARTNERS

A. National Churches Who Are

Companions – Through The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the ELCA is in relationship with 140 Lutheran church bodies in 78 countries.² Each of these national churches has primary responsibility for mission and ministry within its territory. The ELCA also has bilateral (church-to-church) relationships with 80 of these national churches, which can include sending missionaries, providing grants or having a companion synod relationship.

B. Global Mission Program Unit – The Global Mission unit "shall be responsible for this church's mission in other countries and shall be the channel through which churches in other countries engage in mission to this church and society." The Global Mission unit stewards a complex array of activities, personnel and relationships, including missionaries, grants and scholarships for the purposes of "evangelism, witness, education, promotion of justice, service, relief, and development" in cooperation with ecumenical, global, regional and mission organizations (ELCA Constitution 16.12.B05).

C. ELCA Synods and International Companions – The Global Mission unit established, shapes and supports the Companion Synod Program as a way to deepen bilateral relationships.³ The Global Mission unit connects⁴ each ELCA synod with one or more Lutheran church bodies (called "international companions" in this Protocol). In some cases, these international companions will be national churches. In other cases, they will be synods, dioceses or districts of those national churches.⁵ ELCA synods are responsible for deepening relationships with specific international companions on behalf of the entire ELCA.⁶ Companion synod relationships are part of the wider work of the church for the sake of mission.

D. Bishops – The Global Mission unit has oversight over the Companion Synod Program. Bishops have oversight over how the companion synod relationships are carried out in their synods. Both the bishop of the ELCA synod and the bishop/president of the international companion share a significant and complementary role in developing this relationship, under the oversight of the Global Mission unit (and the national church of the international companion, when applicable). These two leaders set the tone and the manner by which the relationship emerges.⁷ For ELCA synodical bishops, this role arises from their constitutional responsibility to be

the “chief ecumenical officer,”⁸ to “exercise leadership in the mission of this church,” to “interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church,” and to “foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches.”⁹ These responsibilities include promoting interdependent relationships among the expressions of the ELCA, overseeing the church’s mission within the territory of the synod, and serving as a “sign of the unity of the church, between their respective synod and other denominational families and ecumenical organizations.”¹⁰

II. PRINCIPLES

- A. **Accompaniment** – “A walking together in solidarity that practices interdependence” in a way that honors each other’s integrity and wholeness.¹¹ The first priority is to pray for each other.
- B. **Patience** – Companion relationships take years to grow into true accompaniment, and sustainable programs are preferable to those that are short-term.
- C. **Mutuality** – ELCA synods and international companions working with the Global Mission unit and the national church body of the companions will establish priorities and agendas together. ELCA synods and the Global Mission unit learn from each other as they interact with companions.
- D. **Transparency** – ELCA synods and the Global Mission unit will inform each other of ministry undertaken with their international companions (such as volunteers or funds sent to or received from an international companion) in order to avoid duplication, competition and mixed messages. ELCA synods and the Global Mission unit commit themselves to engage in ongoing mapping of evolving relationships, and to seek mutual accountability for the management, allocation and distribution of resources.¹²
- E. **Sharing Information** – ELCA synods should try to communicate frequently with their international companions

through exchange of official visitors and prayer requests. ELCA synods should discuss with the Global Mission unit if they prepare to engage in ministry in other countries, within or outside of the international companion relationship (see section III which follows). The Global Mission unit will inform an ELCA synod if it engages in ministry within the territory of that synod.¹³

- F. **Preparation** – ELCA synods and the Global Mission unit are committed to provide quality orientation for visitors and personnel traveling to and from international companions.
- G. **Collaboration** – This is necessary in all companion relationships, particularly where more than one ELCA synod has the same international companion, or when an international companion is also a national church.¹⁴ Mutual planning between these synods and the Global Mission unit enhances the development of healthy, non-competitive relationships.
- H. **Representation** – Each of us represents all of us. Representatives of the ELCA synods are recognized as representatives of the ELCA in their international companion activities. Therefore, ELCA synods will exercise caution and diplomacy, recognizing that their speech and action are understood by companions to express the position and commitment of the whole ELCA. ELCA synods and the Global Mission unit commit themselves to formalizing relationships through agreements which both strengthen the companion relationships and also take into account the implications for the whole church.

III. HOW TO DEVELOP NEW INITIATIVES

- A. **Step One: Companion Request** – ELCA synods and the Global Mission unit will develop new initiatives in the territory of an international companion only in response to that companion’s request. (If the international companion is a synod, diocese or district, the national church will also need to endorse the request.)
- B. **Step Two: Inform Partners** – To ensure effective ministry and to avoid duplication, ELCA synods and the

Global Mission unit will inform each other of these companion requests,¹⁵ jointly assess requests,¹⁶ and coordinate responses. ELCA synods will provide regular progress reports to the Global Mission unit, and the Global Mission unit will provide regular progress reports to and maintain communication with other ministry partners involved in related projects in international companions (for example, national churches, LWF, Lutheran World Relief, ecumenical groups, European churches and agencies, and other ELCA synods also in relationship with that international companion).¹⁷

- C. **Scholarships** – The Global Mission unit will inform ELCA synods of ELCA or LWF scholarships given to members of their international companions. ELCA synods will first consult with the Global Mission unit before providing scholarships to students from any other countries, to avoid duplication and provide consistent guidelines and expectations for scholarship recipients and donors.
- D. **Funding Requests**¹⁸ – Priority should be given to requests from international companions that build capacity for future ministry rather than funding an ongoing expense. For example, some international companions request ELCA synods to provide salaries for their pastors. This practice can encourage an unhealthy dependency and paternalism—and sow seeds of envy *between* international companions, when one receives salary support and others do not.¹⁹
- E. **Shared Personnel Placements** – A creative context exists today²⁰ for synergistic collaboration through shared personnel placements in international companions sponsored by ELCA synods and the Global Mission unit. Options include:
 - 1. **Short-term Volunteers (two weeks to three months)** – The ELCA synod conducts its own selection process, provides orientation using Global Mission unit materials, arranges for funding (for example, self-funding or sponsorships), and informs the Global Mission unit of this placement. In addition, ELCA

synods are encouraged to arrange for direct orientation at the Lutheran Center. ELCA synods are advised to consider issues relating to health insurance, evacuation, liability, housing, transportation and other matters, some of which are described in the *Companion Synod Handbook*.

- 2. **Mid-term Volunteers (three to nine months)** – The ELCA synod conducts its own selection process, provides orientation using Global Mission unit materials, and writes an endorsement letter to the international companion and to the Global Mission unit, attaching the volunteer's biographical material. In addition, ELCA synods are encouraged to arrange for direct orientation at the Lutheran Center. The Global Mission unit then appoints the volunteer as an ELCA volunteer missionary under a Letter of Agreement. In turn, the volunteer agrees to serve under the Global Mission unit *Personnel Policies and Expectations*. The Global Mission unit provides major medical insurance, including evacuation coverage, for all volunteers who request it, based on the availability of funding from the Global Mission unit's spending plan. Arrangements for all other provisions and financial support are developed between the volunteer and the ELCA synod.
- 3. **Long-term Volunteers and Compensated Personnel (nine or more months)** – The international companion, the ELCA synod, and the Global Mission unit will jointly develop a job description. If the ELCA synod identifies a person for this position, that person would make application for service with the Global Mission unit and go through the candidate screening process. Following this process, the Synod Council would then endorse this person to the Global Mission unit for service as a missionary in the international companion.
 - i. The Global Mission unit will provide orientation, medical and evacuation insurance, regular

communication with the continental desk, and assistance in securing visas and work permits. Further financial support will be provided by the ELCA synod or, in some instances, jointly by the ELCA synod and the Global Mission unit.²¹

- ii. For rostered people serving in stipendiary positions, the Global Mission unit will recommend to the ELCA Church Council a call to service outside the territory of the ELCA synod and the ELCA.²² Non-rostered people will receive a Letter of Agreement from the Global Mission unit.
- iii. The missionary will provide annual reports to the local bishop of the international companion, with copies to the national church office, the ELCA synod and the Global Mission unit, and will serve under Global Mission *Personnel Policies and Expectations*. As with other ELCA missionaries, the Global Mission unit will be the employer of record, provide contractual details of employment through a Letter of Agreement developed jointly with the ELCA synod, and will provide for support, care and supervision.

IV. AREAS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

- A. **How do we receive** the expertise and gifts of international companions in order to enhance the mutuality of the companion relationship? This may involve creating tools and formats for ELCA synods and international companions to jointly engage in asset mapping, gift assessment and planning for mission.
- B. **How do we develop communication tools** for ELCA synods and the Global Mission unit to share information in a manner that is simple and accessible (for example, through the internet)?
- C. **What is the role of congregations** within companion synod relationships and in other global relationships (for

example, with congregations or mission organizations in other countries)?²³

- D. **How do we share concerns** that surface about relationships, interference or involvements in our international companions by other churches outside of the ELCA or LWF (for example, by other Lutheran bodies)?
- E. **How do ELCA synods invite, welcome and utilize personnel** from our international companions to engage in ministry in their synods?

¹ The accompaniment model assumes a "relational missiology" based on the New Testament understanding of *koinonia* and the doctrine of the Trinity. See Rafael Malpica-Padilla, "Accompaniment as an Alternative Model for the Practice of Mission," www.trinitylutheranseminary.edu/publications/TSRvol29.2.

² As of March 1, 2006.

³ The Global Mission unit staff includes associate directors for companion relationships who provide guidance and support for companion synod relationships through resources, events and consultations. They work with the Area Program Directors of the four continental desks (Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, and Africa) to coordinate ELCA companion synod relationships with the ELCA's wider church-to-church commitments.

⁴ The original process for establishing a companion synod relationship was for the Global Mission unit to determine which potential companion churches were available to engage in a companion relationship, to speak with interested ELCA synods about their options, and to communicate their selection to the international companion for concurrence and approval. Increasingly this process involves mutual conversation and concurrence between an ELCA synod and a potential international companion.

⁵ In 2008, 26 ELCA synods have one companion synod relationship; 27 synods have two; seven synods have three; two synods have four; and two synods have five, for a grand total of 122 relationships with international companions in 63 national churches (almost half the total number in the LWF) in 52 countries.

⁶ This may lead to a variety of combinations of bilateral (church-to-church) and companion synod relationships. For example, the Lutheran Church in Malawi is a national church with a bilateral (church-to-church) relationship with the ELCA. It is also in a companion synod relationship with the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin.

⁷ See the article "Some thoughts about being companions," by former bishop Gary Hansen on p. 65 of the *Companion Synod Handbook*, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Global Mission; see also p. 6 for further discussion of the role of bishops. For further reading on the role of bishops, please

see "Advice and Principles for Companion Synod Relationships as Written by Synodical Bishops – March 2006," in which former bishop. Gary Hansen summarized bishops' comments.

⁸ ELCA Constitution 10.31.5.

⁹ ELCA Constitution for Synods S8.12.h.5.

¹⁰ "Relational Agreement Among Synodical Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," p. 2, section I.

¹¹ A further description of accompaniment may be found in *Global Mission in the 21st Century: A Vision of Evangelical Faithfulness in God's Mission* (ELCA Division for Global Mission, 1999), www.elca.org/globalmission/policy/gm21full.pdf, or in the article "The Road to Emmaus: A Model of Accompaniment," by Bp. Richard H. Graham, Jan. 2008, and other materials on the Global Mission unit's Web site.

¹² This may involve more collaborative efforts in the transfer of funds to the companion through the Global Mission unit to ensure compliance with such legislation as the U.S. Patriot Act.

¹³ This provision arises from synodical bishops' constitutional responsibility for "oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments" within the territory of the synod (ELCA Constitution for Synods S8.12.h.1), and is similar to the current practice between bishops ("Relational Agreement among Synodical Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," section III.A). Global Mission staff will inform bishops when they preach or teach in a synod congregation, for example, a missionary on home leave or a regional director commissioning a missionary. If staff of the Global Mission unit serve on the board of an educational or mission organization on the territory of that synod, they would not necessarily need to inform a bishop of their presence or activities unless it impacted ministry in that synod.

¹⁴ For example, the national church in Peru, the Iglesia Luterana Evangelica Peruana has a bilateral (church-to-church) relationship with the ELCA and also has companion synod relationships with the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod and the La Crosse Area Synod.

¹⁵ The Global Mission unit's initial point of contact in a synod will be the bishop, who may refer the proposal to a synod volunteer, committee or staff member. A synod's initial point of contact in the Global Mission unit will be the associate director for companion relationships for the appropriate continental desk, who may coordinate a response to the proposal or refer it to the appropriate person.

¹⁶ The "Project Assessment" on p. 19 of the *Companion Synod Handbook* is a useful tool. Other questions to consider include: Will this initiative enhance the missional capacity and impact of the companion synod, the national church, the synod and the Global Mission unit? Has there been adequate consultation between the companion synod, the national church, the synod, and the Global Mission unit, as well as any other ministry partners (for example, LWF, LWR, and other mission organizations)?

¹⁷ Since companion synods and national churches often have multiple partners, a commitment from one in a capital expenditure can sometimes "leverage" other support. For example, in Liberia, Global Mission agreed to provide half the funds needed for a vehicle, joining with another European church partner that has had a long-standing relationship with the Liberian church. That purchase "leveraged" a commitment from the European Union of four times the dollars spent—60,000 Euro—for programmatic costs relating to the expansion of primary health care around Curran Hospital.

¹⁸ Further information is available in the "Pamphlet for Bishops on Global Relationships" (ELCA Division for Global Mission, August 24, 2001) distributed to the ELCA Conference of Bishops, October 2001, Exhibit K, Part 2.

¹⁹ For further discussion of this principle, see pp. 16–17 of *Global Mission in the 21st Century* (ELCA Division for Global Mission, 1999).

²⁰ Global travel and communication are exploding. New patterns of global service are emerging. Pastors are taking sabbaticals overseas. Synods and congregations are sponsoring mission trips to international companions or to countries in which a national church is located (for example, "Thrivent/Habitat Builds Worldwide"). Synods are inviting international companions to send missionaries and to exchange pastors.

²¹ For example, a pastor was sent for two years to Lithuania, with \$28,000 per year provided by the Grand Canyon Synod and \$21,500 per year by the Global Mission unit.

²² ELCA Constitution 7.44.A05a.

²³ A simple survey to assess the extent of congregational global involvement may be the first step, followed by the development of an ongoing reporting mechanism. This may resemble a greatly simplified parochial report, with results tabulated and shared between synods and the churchwide organization.

Appendix 2: Some thoughts about being companions

–Gary L. Hansen, *former bishop, North/West Lower Michigan Synod*

1. Our global mission relationships take time to grow into true accompaniment. That is, we walk with our partner seeking to step at their pace, seeking to see and understand their present context.
2. The role of a bishop or president in each church is understood by most as a critical one; to represent a wider set of concentric circles is viewed as of great importance.
3. The role of bishop or president goes beyond sending individuals from our synod to another part of the world. It also includes providing oversight to a fabric of relationships and understandings.
4. Our relationships grow when we understand that gifts are being unveiled and offered to us through sisters and brothers in our companion churches. In my synodical ministry it is helpful to ask what have I received as a gift that informs what I am doing.
5. Many will find it helpful to sharpen and define the purposes of each companion church visit, both ways: stewardship, lay Bible study, structured for mission, and so forth.
6. In our society many of us seek to be doers (at least I do) in companion visits. It is important that we seek to nourish both the doing and the being within us.
7. Groups from our synod seek to be a great gift and to learn much.
8. Occasionally, one can be tinkering in something wider or deeper than we understand; keeping the ELCA Global Mission area program director up to speed with what we are planning/doing/hearing is of great help.
9. Gifts carry great meaning beyond their apparent value. In some cases they become “cargo” with all kinds of expectations or “trappings” attached that are real or not real. As citizens of the U.S., many of us need lifelong learning to understand the complexities of this.
10. A helpful response as a companion church is to grow in the understanding we have of each other’s context; to advocate and be aware of justice issues, crises or persecution means reading and discussion.
10. Transparency is a 12-letter word that reminds us how valuable it is to have all the people who might be involved know what we are up to, what we are thinking or planning.

An illustration might help.:
Joseph Campbell once said, “Where we thought to travel outward, we shall come to the center of our own existence. Where we had thought to be alone, we shall be with all the world.”

Appendix 3: Sample companion synod covenant

Companion Synod Covenant

between the **Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church in India**
and the **South Central Synod of Wisconsin, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

VISION

The companion synod relationship exists for the purpose of strengthening one another for life and mission within the body of Christ. It offers us the privilege of participating in the life of another church through prayer, study, communication, and exchange of people and resources. It opens our eyes to the global challenge that Christ offers us today and calls us to deepen our commitment and discipleship as individual persons and as a community of faith.

MISSION

Through the companion synod relationship, as “walking partners,” we will:

- be a part of the vision, life and mission goals of one another;
- be renewed and empowered in faith and commitment to mission by one another’s witness to Christ;
- be educated and challenged by encounters with one another’s joys and sorrows; and
- encourage one another to participate in each other’s ministries through prayer, communication and exchange of resources and people.

EXPRESSIONS

- Share with each other statements of vision and mission for greater understanding of one another.
- Continue to embrace and practice transparency and mutual accountability in our ongoing relationship as partners.
- Be “walking partners” with one another as we pray for each other weekly.
- Be alert to the needs of each other as we communicate regularly through e-mail, newsletters and visits.
- Encourage congregations of each synod to become “companion congregations” as a means to grow in relationship with one another. Begin with 10 congregational partnerships.
- Develop exchange programs with mutually agreed upon scheduled visits to focus on:
 - healthcare;
 - education, both secular and theological;
 - youth; and
 - women to women.
- Consider support of project possibilities, such as Rural Development and the NELC Don Bosco School, evaluating long-term sustainability.
- Explore possibilities for marketing weavings and tea through fair trade.
- Create a second devotional booklet with submitted writings from both the NELC and SCSW.
- Review annually this covenant as an expression of our developing relationship.

Initiated at the Joint Synod Consultation, Chennai, India, October 11–12, 2005:

NORTHERN EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH IN INDIA (NELC)
Bishop _____

SOUTH CENTRAL SYNOD
OF WISCONSIN (SCSW-ELCA)
Bishop _____

Appendix 4: Sample application

Application for Companion Delegation Trip

BASIC DATA

Last name	First	MI
-----------	-------	----

Address

City	State	Zip Code
------	-------	----------

Home Phone	Work Phone	E-mail
------------	------------	--------

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Describe your reasons for wanting to become a member of the delegation to our companion.

Our companion synod relationship is one of accompaniment, i.e. walking together. Please share your ideas about examples of how this accompaniment might be expressed with our brothers and sisters in _____.

List your travels outside of the United States, your experience in or with other cultures, and your education, background and skill level in speaking another language.

Suggest ways you might be able to share this experience with other members of the synod once you are home (for example, with church or community groups).

HEALTH INFORMATION

General health _____

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair

Do you have any:

Allergies?

Dietary restrictions?

Physical challenges?

Emotional challenges?

If yes, explain: _____

Are you currently under a doctor's care and/or receiving prescribed medication of which we should be aware?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please explain and list medications: _____

Are you covered by medical insurance?

- Yes
- No

Are there any other special considerations we should know about?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please list: _____

APPLICANT REFERENCES

1. Pastor's Name _____

Congregation _____

Phone _____

Address _____

2. Name _____

Occupation _____

Phone _____

Address _____

EXPECTATIONS FOR TRAVELERS

1. Timeline:
 - a. A completed application form by January 31;
 - b. Screening interview on February 13, 14 or 15;
 - c. Group preparatory meetings prior to the trip:
 - i. 6–9 pm on March 14;
 - ii. 6–9 pm on April 6;
 - iii. 9 am–5 pm on May 6;
 - iv. during June–August as needed and
 - v. Sept. 9 and/or Sept. 16 (time TBD);
 - d. Commissioning on June 3 during synod assembly; and
 - e. Contribute to ongoing education in the synod regarding Global Mission and our companion after your return.
2. Flexibility, teamwork, good health (see note below), strong faith, a sense of humor, sensitivity to cross-cultural differences and a willingness to serve as a representative of the synod and the ELCA.
3. Each traveler is expected to contribute a minimum of \$____ of the total travel costs (estimated to be \$____) and to help secure sponsors for the group (you will be provided sponsorship letters and other helpful resources).
4. Secure a valid passport with necessary visas, vaccinations, spending money and miscellaneous expenses.
5. Check that you have adequate health insurance. We encourage obtaining medical evacuation insurance for the duration of the trip. (This is not costly and can be arranged through the group.)

Note: At the interview, please be prepared to discuss any health or family considerations that might affect your ability to travel. If there are health considerations, please submit a letter from your health care provider regarding any health and fitness issues that might be impacted by travel to an underdeveloped country.

Dear Bishop _____,

I have prayerfully considered the opportunity to visit our companion in _____, and I understand and agree with the expectations listed above. I am interested in interviewing to be a member of your delegation.

Applicant signature

Date

Please mail this application by January 31, 20XX, to:

Questions? Please
contact: _____

Appendix 5: Sample trip evaluation

I. Goals

To what extent have you increased your understanding of:	(Very much)		(Very little)			
a. the cultural, religious, historical and political realities in this part of the world	6	5	4	3	2	1
b. the role of the churches in the country of your companion	6	5	4	3	2	1
c. the extent to which various “-isms” affect individuals and societies	6	5	4	3	2	1
d. the interconnections between global and local issues	6	5	4	3	2	1

II. Content

How do you rate the following?	(Very much)		(Very little)			
a. Pre-trip orientations, discussions and reflections	6	5	4	3	2	1
b. Hearing from our companions	6	5	4	3	2	1
c. Visiting various projects	6	5	4	3	2	1
d. Devotional and spiritual aspect of the tour	6	5	4	3	2	1

III. Your personal reactions

- What new insights have you gained about yourself during this trip?
- What were the most satisfactory parts of the trip for you? Why?
- What were the least satisfactory parts of the trip for you? Why?
- What will you most remember from this trip one year from now?
- Do you have any additional comments on your experience?

Thank you for sharing your comments and suggestions.

Name (optional) _____

Appendix 6: Sample letter of invitation to guest

April 15, 2008

[Title] [Firstname] [Lastname]
[Address]

Dear [Title] [Lastname]:

We are pleased and honored that you have accepted our invitation to be a presenter at the ELCA 2008 Summer Missionary Conference (SMC) which will be held from July 25 to July 28, 2008 at Carthage College Wisconsin. This annual event gives our new and retiring mission personnel an opportunity to meet, along with continuing mission personnel on home leave together with Global Mission staff for a short conference. Our objective is to provide the Global Mission community with the opportunity to share information needed by all of us so that we work together more smoothly to carry out the mission with which we have been entrusted. We hope that both missionaries and staff leave the event inspired and with an enhanced ability for service in global mission. The conference will have about 160 adults including missionaries, Global Mission staff, children plus presenters. I am attaching a copy of the schedule of events so you will be able to get a better feel for just exactly what we are planning to do this year.

We will make your travel arrangements. We will reimburse you for all travel-related expenses. A single dorm room will be reserved for you at Carthage.

There will be 3 track sessions, one per day, held throughout the conference. We focused our track planning on broad strokes which take into consideration the themes of our strategic planning on capacity building. Missionaries and staff will chose one track to follow for in-depth capacity-building around that theme.

Overall track objectives are to create/provide and in-depth education program for DGM staff and Mission Personnel that:

1. provides an opportunity for cross-context (country/region/continent) sharing of experiences and knowledge
2. introduces expertise on critical issue topics of global mission and service
3. facilitates an application of knowledge and skills in contexts of service

We hope this answers many of the questions you have since you so graciously agreed to be part of this. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Just to summarize our requests at this time, we will need from you:

- 1) brief track description
- 2) your audiovisual needs for the track sessions

Looking forward to seeing you at the SMC!

Mary Campbell
Global Mission
Associate Director for Companionship, Education and Advocacy (Latin America)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
8765 W. Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631

Appendix 7: Sample official invitation addressed to consulate

April 24, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

Pastor [Firstname Lastname] of the [church body name] has been invited by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to visit and participate in events from July 3 to July 20, 2005. This trip to the United States has been organized so that Pastor [Firstname Lastname] may:

- serve as a keynote speaker and workshop leader at the Women of the ELCA 6th Triennial Gathering in San Antonio, Texas, July 3–10, 2005;
- visit the Florida-Bahamas Synod staff and leadership in Tampa, Florida, July 11–13, 2005, to strengthen relationships;
- attend the ELCA Global Mission Event, July 14–17, 2005, in Fargo, North Dakota, to do presentations and workshops; and
- visit the Evangelical Lutheran Church offices in Chicago, Illinois, to work with the staff of the Latin America/Caribbean desk and other staff of the Global Mission unit, July 18–20, 2005.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – Women of the ELCA and the Global Mission unit will be responsible for Pastor [Firstname Lastname]’s travel, lodging, food, expenses and medical insurance during the time that [she/he] is in the United States of America from July 3–20, 2005.

We would appreciate any help that can be given to Pastor [Firstname Lastname] to obtain a B-1 VISA and any other necessary travel documents for [his/her] visit to the ELCA synods and participation in the summer 2005 events of the ELCA.

Thank you for your assistance.

[Firstname Lastname]
Global Mission
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
8765 W. Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631

Appendix 8: Visas

This section is provided for your background information, so that you can be aware of the challenges faced by your companions when they visit you and offer information and assistance to them as needed. The entire process of obtaining a visa to study, conduct research or work can be overwhelming for an international guest.

Non-immigrant visas

International students, research scholars, professors, exchange pastors and most visitors need a visa to enter the U.S. Visas are issued by the U.S. State Department. Non-immigrant visas are issued for a temporary visit or residence serving a particular purpose.

Applying for a visa

To gain entry into the U.S., one must be:

- Healthy—No inoculations are required to enter the U.S., unless one has been recently in a country with epidemics such as cholera or yellow fever. The Department of Homeland Security has issued a rule providing for entrance into the U.S. by persons infected by HIV on a limited and categorical basis
- Law-abiding—Criminal behavior is grounds for deportation.
- Able to financially support oneself during the period one plans to be in the U.S.
- Committed to leave the U.S. after studies, research and work are completed.

All visa applicants should apply at the U.S. embassy or consulate with jurisdiction over their place of permanent residence (home country or the country in which one permanently resides). Although visa applicants may apply at any U.S. consular office abroad, it may be more difficult to qualify for the visa outside the country of permanent residence.

When applying at the consulate for a visa:

- Pay a non-refundable application fee and, if required, an issuance fee as directed by the U.S. consulate. (The money will not be refunded if the visa is denied.) Retain the receipt for each application, including for each child listed in a parent's passport who is also applying for a U.S. visa.
- Complete and sign an application Form DS-156, together with a Form DS-158.

These forms are free at all U.S. Consular offices.

- All males aged 16–45 must complete form DS-157.
- Possess a passport valid for travel to the U.S. with a validity date at least six months beyond the intended period of stay in the U.S. If more than one person is included in the passport, each person desiring a visa must make an application.
- Bring one or more photographs 1 1/2 inches square (37x37mm) for each applicant, showing full face, without head-covering, against a light background.
- F applicants should bring a Form I-20A-B obtained from the host school; J applicants, a Form DS-2019 obtained from the sponsoring school or agency.
- Show evidence of sponsorship or proof of other funds available to cover expenses while in the U.S.
- Prove to the consular officer that the visit is temporary and that the intent is to return home after the legal authorized stay. For example, the applicant must prove strong ties to permanent residency in his/her own country, show no intention of leaving his/her own country, and prove that he/she will leave the U.S. when program or visit is complete.
- Take as much evidence as possible to show that there are ties to the home country: ownership of property; proof of immediate family based in the home country, such as parents, brothers, sisters; evidence of a mortgage payment; letter from a future employer stating that there is a specific job offer when returning home; other assets that show or prove that the intention is to return to the home country.
- Undergo security clearance procedures.

Length of stay

All visas differ in length of stay in the U.S. The expiration of the visa does not necessarily have any relationship to the date stamped in the passport. Non-immigrant visas are void as soon as a non-immigrant overstays the visa.

Entering the U.S.

A visa does not guarantee entry into the U.S. The visa allows a foreign citizen coming from abroad to travel to a U.S. port of entry and request permission to enter the U.S. The Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Transportation Security (BTS) has authority to permit or deny admission to the U.S. A U.S. immigration officer of the BTS, not the consular officer, determines the period for which the bearer of a visa is authorized to remain in the United States. At the time of entry, a Form I-94 notes the length of stay permitted and is validated by the immigration official at the port of entry.

Travel and insurance

The visa holder should notify the issuing Designated School Official (DSO), the Responsible Officer (RO) or Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) who signed the I-20 or DS-2019 form, employer or designated companion synod staff representative when he or she is planning to travel outside of the United States, to request a visa extension, to change current visa status or if a referral to immigration counsel is needed. Contact the DSO or RO/ARO for ELCA-sponsored health insurance policy concerns and issues. The ELCA international health insurance plan does not cover persons while they are in their home country.

Dependent children 18 years and older are excluded from the ELCA-sponsored insurance plan.

Taxes

All visa holders must comply with applicable tax filing laws. F and J visa holders specifically are required to file a Form 8843 report with the Internal Revenue Service along with other applicable reports. Normally, the tax reporting and payment deadline is April 15 for federal, state and local governments for the previous calendar year. See government publications 519 and

535. See Rev. Rule 67-159, 1967-1C.B.280 and Treas. Reg. Section 31.3121 (b) (19)-1 (a) (1) for exceptions of FICA (social security) taxes (check for tax treaty benefits). The DSO or RO/ARO will be able to give the non-immigrant a referral to a tax accountant or attorney who specializes in non-immigrant taxes. ELCA Global Mission Leadership Development staff and ELCA seminaries staff provide information and assistance to sponsored international students, research scholars and professors.

Types of visas

Official ELCA visitors, sponsored students, professors, research scholars, camp counselors and companion synod visitors/exchange pastors coming to the United States will most often apply for one of these four types of visas:

1. B-1/B-2 visas: Business/pleasure

General. B-1 visitor for business or B-2 visitor for pleasure may be admitted for one year and may be granted extensions of temporary stay in increments of not more than six months.

Any B-2 visitor who is found to be admissible will be admitted for a minimum period of six months, regardless of the request, provided that any required passport is valid as specified in section 212 (six months beyond the intended departure date) Exceptions to the minimum six-month admission may be made only in individual cases.

May have multiple entries.

B visa holders are prohibited from accepting employment or enrolling in studies.

People on business visas cannot be paid by any source located in the U.S.

Visitors must not engage in any business activities.

B visa applicants should apply for the visa in their home country.

ELCA-sponsored B-1 and B-2 visitors are required to carry health, accident,

repatriation and medical evacuation insurance coverage.

2. F-1/F-2 visas: Students (and qualified dependents)

F-1 visas are issued to students who enter the U.S. to study at colleges, universities, language schools, or seminaries. F-2 visas are issued to qualified dependents.

Visas are valid for the duration of full-time studies, plus 60 days within which student and family must leave the U.S.

Students must have an I-20 form from the institution where they will study and be able to demonstrate that they are proficient in English.

Immigration regulations are very strict with respect to working while carrying a student visa. F-1 status, which is the most common status for full-time international students, allows for part time, on-campus employment (fewer than 20 hours per week) with permission from the Designated School Official. F-2 visa holders are not authorized to work. Spouses remaining on an F-2 visa are not authorized to engage in studies for credit, or enroll in public college/university adult education programs.

All F visa holders must comply with federal and state income tax regulations.

All F visa holders must carry health insurance meeting the F visa regulation requirements. (Dependent children 18 years and older are excluded from the ELCA-sponsored insurance plan.)

3. J-1/J-2 visas: Exchange student/professor/research scholar/short-term scholar/camp counselors (and qualified dependents)

J-1 visas are issued to exchange visitors for several different categories. J-2 visas are issued to qualified dependents.

J visa holders under ELCA sponsorship must be accepted in a program as a student, professor, research scholar, short-term scholar or camp counselor only. The period

of stay differs according to the category, plus 30 days within which the visa holder/dependents must leave the U.S.

J visa applicants must have a DS-2019 form in hand prior to applying for a J-1 visa.

J visa holders may work only if permission is obtained from the Responsible or Alternate Responsible Officer issuing the J-visa documentation. J-2 visa holders may request work authorization from the Bureau of Citizenship & Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security. Employment may be authorized for the duration of the J-1 validity or four years, whichever is shorter.

All J visa holders must comply with federal and state income tax regulations.

ELCA-sponsored J visa holders are required to obtain the ELCA-approved health, repatriation and medical evacuation insurance, which meet and surpass the J visa requirements.

4. R-1/R-2 visa: Exchange pastors (and qualified dependents)

R-1 visas are issued to religious workers (usually clergy). R-2 visas are issued to qualified dependents.

R visa applicants must have a letter of invitation or job offer listing all duties and activities they are expected to perform along with showing they have adequate financial support for the participant and family during the duration of stay. The R applicant must have certification from the designated church official in the home country stating that the applicant has been a Lutheran in good standing for two years. The R visa applicant should also present a copy of the host's tax-exempt status, and be prepared to show that their educational level is appropriate for performing the tasks assigned.

R visas are valid for the duration of the specified employment offer for a period up to three years. The R visa may be renewed for a maximum of two years.

R-2 visa holders are not allowed to work. Government regulations regarding studies for spouses are not defined.

R visa holders must comply with federal and state income tax regulations.

The ELCA requires R visa holders to carry health, accident, repatriation and medical evacuation insurance coverage.

Appendix 9: Accompanying your companion's scholarship students

Background: Each year, between 50 and 75 students are supported by the ELCA International Scholarship Program from companion churches (national Lutheran church bodies) across the world. These scholarships are part of a leadership development initiative, whereby the students are given the opportunity for deeper studies that will prepare them for future ministry in their home context. You are invited to participate in the life of these students during their years of study in the U.S. or another foreign country away from home.

Be connected!

Welcome them

- Send an email or a letter. Congratulate them on their scholarship, and welcome them to the U.S. (or other country of study). Be sure to introduce yourself and your synod or organization!
- Publicize their arrival and contact info. Make information available so that others can connect to the student, too.
- Pray for these students. Ask that God would bless their time of study.

Hear their story

- Invite them to visit in your synod, your congregation, your campus, and so forth. They are not only students, but also missionaries – called and sent by their church, to mutually give as well as receive. Make connections. Listen to their stories. Invite them to preach or teach. Consider having them present at a synod assembly.
- Offer to host them for a weekend or holiday. It might be to make a presentation, or just to “get away” for a while.
- Find opportunities to share what they are doing. If the students send out newsletters, emails, or e-letters, include these in your synod and congregational newsletters.

Get involved

- Welcome them to events. Perhaps a Global Mission Sunday or Global Formation Event in your area.
- Encourage them with a care package. A little care goes a long way. You might designate a family or an individual to do something special for the student each month, or a few times a year.

Keep in touch

- Continue the relationship after their studies. After the student returns home, mutual communication will strengthen your own relationship, as well as communication between the ELCA and their home church.

For a current list of international students, contact Tammy Jackson, Director for International Leadership Development, at 773-380-2639 or tammy.jackson@elca.org.