



**GUIDELINES**  
for Leading Your Congregation

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# MISSIONS

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*Reaching the world*

*Your Handbook for the Chairperson of Missions  
or Global Ministries in Your Congregation*

*Revised by Dr. John Edward Nuessle for the  
General Board of Global Ministries*

## MISSIONS

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# Our Identity, Call, and Mission

**A**bout now a small voice in the back of your mind may be whispering, “What am I doing here? To what have I said yes? What is my role?” At the same time you may be aware that your congregation has extended to you a *call—a call to serve*. And you have said *yes—yes to leading in a vital mission*.

***The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.*** You have agreed to serve as a leader bringing your unique passions, gifts, and abilities to the church. When the leaders focus on the church’s purpose—*its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ*—and link that purpose to the passions of the people, amazing things can happen.

***The fundamental way we fulfill our mission is to reach out to people in the name of Jesus Christ, to relate people to God, to nurture and strengthen them in their journey of discipleship, and to send them into the world to be the church—inviting and receiving others in the name of Jesus Christ. We call this the primary task of The United Methodist Church.*** Effective leaders keep the whole of the primary task in their sight, working to keep all of its aspects in concert.

***Leaders in the church must be first, and foremost, spiritual leaders*** who model and embrace Christian discipline and teaching. *By practicing the means of grace—prayer, fasting, studying Scripture, corporate worship, celebration of the Lord’s Supper, Christian conversation, and acts of mercy—church leaders stay tuned to the mission of the church and live out the primary task.* Members and would-be members should be able to look to a congregation’s leaders for spiritual example and direction because true leaders are known by their fruits. People’s lives are changed through their influence.

***Leaders use their gifts and talents to enable others to use their gifts and talents to the fullest potential.*** The flow of information, inspiration, guidance, and vision from leaders is an encouragement to others on their spiritual journey. Leaders help others to see new possibilities. When leaders are focused on the mission of the church, community is built and ministry occurs. The church focused on God is alive with creative energy aimed at transformation.

## Four Essential Leadership Functions

***Church leaders support and strengthen the church when they pay attention to these leadership functions: (1) help people discover the current***

*reality in which they live; (2) bring together the congregation's understandings of current reality and desired reality into a shared vision; (3) develop the plans to help the community move from current reality toward the reality of its shared vision; and finally, (4) monitor the whole work of the church as the congregation moves with God's guidance toward its vision.*

### 1. Discovering Current Reality

Accurately describing current reality—the way things are—may be the most important function of leadership. The booklets in this Guideline series offer suggestions for leaders to pay attention to the various committees of the church's ministry. In addition, it is critical for church leaders—lay and clergy—to spend time together discussing the ministry of the whole congregation. The conversation needs to include attentiveness to God's guidance and everything that describes a congregation's "what we are, here and now." Because God is always doing a new thing, this job is continuous. When we pay attention to change, we provide a base of integrity and strength from which to move into the future. Faith in Jesus Christ and a spiritual centering in God offers the strongest foundation to move people fearlessly through the massive changes of the twenty-first century.

### 2. Naming Shared Vision

Ask the question, "What do you want more than anything else in the world?" and most persons will give a response that indicates that they want to live in a world filled with love, faith, security, and meaning. Because persons desire a positive future, they are willing to invest themselves in organizations that are committed to it. By its very nature, the church is devoted to the creation of a better future. When the church promises to move people personally and corporately toward their desired reality, people will invest time, energy, and resources into the church. As people see their own desires linked to the congregational vision and a deeper understanding of God's future, they deepen their commitment and involvement. Building this link is a vital role of leadership.

Naming a shared vision is accomplished by asking people about their lives and their faith, and by listening very carefully. By listening, we mean deep listening—the kind that requires setting aside our own agendas and entering into the worldviews of others, and listening for God through the conversation. It is a significant shift in our understanding of leadership in the church to move from telling people what we think they need to know to listening to people in order to find out who they are and what their desired realities are. Effective spiritual leaders listen to the hearts of people and begin to articulate a shared vision.

### 3. Developing Bridges

To span the gulf between our current reality and the hope expressed in the shared vision, leaders must build a bridge. The third critical function of leadership is to plan actions and develop systems that create the bridge across this gulf. Leaders who are elected to administrative and program committees are responsible for the ongoing work of the church and must pay attention to the present. At the same time, leaders *must* be focused on the future—keeping today and tomorrow in tension—ensuring that the church does not get stuck in the past, present, or future.

Church leaders who are attentive to God’s leading and who can hold the tension between today and tomorrow are *visionary leaders*. Visionary leaders see it all—current reality, desired reality, and the bridges to get from one to the other.

### 4. Monitoring the Journey

Perhaps the most critical task for leaders is keeping an eye on the whole of the faith journey of the congregation. When leaders are constantly caught up in “doing” the administrative and program work of the church, there is not any time left for “being” with God in prayer to discern the leading of the Spirit for the congregation. Leaders must step back from “doing” constant activities in order to pay attention to the total direction of the church’s mission and ministry. All elected and appointed leaders must spend time together listening to God in prayer, Bible study, conversation, and other means of grace in order to lead the entire community in the work of Christ. Anything less is not Christian spiritual leadership.

## Congratulations and Welcome

**W**elcome to this great fellowship of mission leaders. You are not just a name on a list of church workers; you are a vital link in the chain of God’s mission, which extends around the world from the distant past into the future. Throughout The United Methodist Church thousands of people like you have accepted the challenge to support missions enthusiastically—with their prayers, their concern, their time, their financial gifts, and their service—and to inspire an awareness of and educate their congregations about the mission outreach in their churches.

This fellowship of mission leaders includes a variety of individuals—women and men, young and old, people from different races and countries—but we are bound together by our common goal to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and to minister to others in that name. Ours is a fellowship of different kinds of congregations—rural, suburban, urban, large, medium, and small—with many perspectives on the world at large, but each

congregation is an avenue through which God enters the world with power and grace to seek and save all people.

## Your Job Title or Position

Depending on how your congregation is organized, you may be the coordinator of missions or of outreach ministries, or you may be the chairperson of global ministries. All of these come under the broader understanding of *outreach* in the Nurture, Outreach, and Witness model used for organizing the work of a congregation.

As the coordinator or chairperson of missions, your discipleship will take on new dimensions of global involvement as you respond to God's call to serve in mission through the Body of Christ—the church. You will gain great satisfaction in knowing that lives are being changed because of your efforts.

So . . . welcome to the exciting fellowship of people who are responding to God's call to be in mission as work area chairpersons of missions.

### How Do You Provide Mission Opportunities for Your Congregation?

1. Develop a continuous, year-round program of mission education so that the congregation will be better informed, more knowledgeable, and more motivated to be supportive of the mission outreach of the church.
2. Identify the needs of your community, your country, and your world and engage your congregation in mission opportunities and service projects that seek to address these needs.
3. As mission personnel be aware of the different opportunities for service through your church and enlist church members to serve as missionaries or persons in mission in our nation and around the world.
4. Seek to expand your congregation's mission and benevolence budget and ensure that your congregation is provided every opportunity to participate financially in God's mission through the church.

### How You Are Elected and Your Term of Office

The coordinator of missions or outreach ministries (as well as other coordinators and chairpersons and other program leaders in local churches) is nominated by the committee on nominations and personnel and elected by the charge or church conference each year. This body may limit the number of consecutive years a person may serve in one office if it so desires.

### Memberships and Accountability

You are a member, by virtue of this office, of the church council or the council on ministries and the charge conference. In your work you are

accountable to these bodies, and you work with the guidance of their chairperson and your pastor.

### Basic Resources

To aid you in your responsibilities, the denomination produces numerous printed resources. This booklet is one of them, and it is one unit in a larger series, *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: 2001–2004*. Other booklets in the series that you might find helpful are *Church Council* and *Leading Small Groups*. These are available from Cokesbury.

The *Interpreter* is the program journal of our church for local congregation leaders. Each issue includes feature articles on mission subjects, as well as suggestions for program planning in the “Idea Mart” section. This magazine is produced eight times each year, and seven subscriptions are available free to each church; additional copies are available at a nominal cost. See your pastor or order from United Methodist Communications, P.O. Box 320, Nashville, TN 37202-0320.

The General Board of Global Ministries has many resources you will want to obtain. Your source for these missions resources is the Service Center Catalog, which lists all mission study books, leaflets, maps, and audiovisuals. It is available free from Service Center, General Board of Global Ministries, 7820 Reading Road, Caller No. 1800, Cincinnati, OH 45222-1800.

### Connectional Personnel Resources

In addition to the printed and audio visual resources available to you, there are several persons in your area who are ready to assist you in organizing and carrying out a plan of mission education in your congregation. Your district has a district secretary of global ministries and your annual conference has a conference secretary of global ministries. These officers have been trained to help you to engage your congregation in mission in any way possible. They may also organize district and annual conference training meetings so that you might be more prepared for your responsibilities. To learn who they are and how to contact them, ask your pastor or your district superintendent and your annual conference program staff.

### Questions to Think About

1. What are your basic responsibilities as Chairperson of Missions?
2. Whom do you work with and report to in your church organization?
3. Where do you find help and resources to assist you in your position?

# Your Congregation's Journey into God's Mission

## Where Do You Begin?

Churches of every size can and should have interest, involvement, and partnership in God's mission. All it takes to begin is one enthusiastic person in the position of work area chairperson. A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step forward, and that is where you might be right now. Start with your own mission awareness and interest, then move into your congregation and out into God's world.

We hope these Guidelines help with that first step in the mission journey of a lifetime. No one need do everything suggested here, but everyone will find some practical, helpful, and useful ideas to be considered in planning a mission program for the local church. All of these ideas have been tested and used in a wide variety of churches—churches of all sizes, locations, and levels of involvement. Decide where you are and take that step.

## Partnership in God's Mission

One of your first steps is to understand why the church is involved in missions. Mission programs are not an option in the church; they are the foundation for spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. Mission is a natural aspect of any Christian lifestyle and needs to be incorporated into the ongoing life of every congregation.

Drawing from the mission mandate in *The Book of Discipline*, the General Board of Global Ministries has long worked to develop a theology of mission. In general, it is a witness to the reality of God's mission in our world as the whole church has become aware of the signs of God's mission. The basis of this theology is that we are all partners in God's mission and are all called to participate.

We have heard the witness to a living God who does not stay in one place but moves in mission to redeem, restore, and reconcile the whole creation and all created beings. We have heard of men and women being loosed from the bondage of sin, turning from self to embrace the gospel of Christ, and finding new life through loving and serving others. We have heard how God has moved in mission to use the seeds planted in the past to renew and transform human life.

The voices we have heard and the signs we have seen compel us all to articulate a mission theology based upon the biblical witness and our Wesleyan heritage.

## Biblical Witness

All of the Scriptures bear witness to a mission that begins with God, belongs to God, and will be fulfilled by God at the end of time. Mission is the activity of the triune God. By the authority of the God of justice, mercy, and peace, the risen Jesus sends the church into mission partnership with God (Matthew 28:18-20). God's authority sends the church into mission (John 17:18). God's power sustains the church in mission (Luke 24:49). God's revelation in Jesus Christ defines the church in mission. Mission is God's mission and not simply our efforts to help God.

Through the Holy Spirit, the church continues to spread the revelation of God in Christ throughout the world by joining God in mission. God's mission is marked by revelation, incarnation, and redemption. The church in mission continues the model of Jesus Christ in mission.

## Wesleyan Tradition

In the Wesleyan tradition, partnership in God's mission flows from a three-fold understanding of God's *prevenient* (ever present from the beginning), *justifying* (making us right or in-line with God), and *sanctifying* (making ordinary acts holy) grace that is revealed in Jesus Christ and experienced in the hearts and lives of Christian believers. Just as God's grace is freely available to every human being, so is an invitation to join in mission partnership with God. Participation in God's mission is a function, duty, and privilege of all believers—laity and clergy, poor and rich, unlearned and educated, female and male, old and young—from every land and nation on earth.

## Joining God in Mission Today

God's light shines in every corner of the earth, and God's mission extends to all creation. There are no places in the world where God is not present, only places where God in Christ is not yet known, acknowledged, served, or heeded.

Partnership in God's mission means being in mission as God is in mission. It is global in focus and local in expression. In the United Methodist tradition, it is also connectional in representation.

## Mission for a New Age

The church is being swept by the Holy Spirit into a new mission Age. We may not yet know where or how the Spirit will lead, but we look forward, with faith and hope, to a new pentecostal moment in mission. There are many challenges and opportunities in this new mission age. These include the proclamation of the Word in various cultural and linguistic settings; new patterns of mission placement; and an overall stance of interdependence in mission relationships. Most significant, however, is that we expect engage-

ment in a new mission age to be increasingly dependent upon a life of prayer. Prayer is the bonding language of solidarity, the channel of communication with God in mission. Through unceasing prayer on behalf of one another and the whole human family, mission partners are connected to the everflowing grace of God. In a new and uncertain age, the most fervent prayer of mission partners is that we will be led by the Holy Spirit into the unfolding future of God's mission.

#### Questions to Think About

1. What is God's mission?
2. From where do we receive the call to be partners in God's mission?
3. What or who empowers us to engage in mission?

## You—The Mission Link

**T**he chairperson and the mission committee of each congregation are vital connecting links between a needy world and your local church. In that needy world there are those who do not follow Jesus and his teachings; there are those who are hungry, sick, fearful, and lonely; and there are those with many spiritual, physical, and emotional needs. The mission chairperson's task is to learn about these people and their needs and bring this information before the church council or council on ministries, where plans are made to alert the congregation to the needs of God's mission in the world and how it is possible to participate in that mission. Congregation members may then respond with prayer, concern, educational awareness, and the stewardship of their time, talents, and treasure.

An important responsibility you have in this process is to help the members of the congregation become aware of what they might learn from all nationalities of the world—through culture, history, or an understanding of the Christian faith as others see and observe it.

The chairperson of missions, along with the task force, committee, or commission on missions, has the responsibility of keeping alert to these mission needs and concerns. The program suggestions and ideas that you bring before the church council or council on ministries might come from the creative thinking of church members. Other ideas will be found in this booklet or in articles in the *Interpreter*.

There are many resources available to you that will provide additional ideas for mission programs and activities. If a local congregation is to have an exciting, meaningful mission program and truly follow God into mission, this success will be due to an alert and active chairperson and a

committee/commission who work together at the task throughout the year. Such a year-round program of mission education will keep the congregation continually aware of what God is doing in mission and how your congregation participates in these vital outreach ministries.

As you begin to strengthen yourself as a connecting link in God's mission, it may be necessary at first to inspire and inform the members of your mission committee (or commissions) about the fullness of God's mission and our opportunities to be partners in this endeavor. This may be done by sharing information at each meeting from mission articles in the *Interpreter*, *New World Outlook* (our denomination's mission magazine), mission study books, and other mission literature, which can be secured from the Service Center of the General Board of Global Ministries.

## Organizing for Mission

*The Book of Discipline* provides direction for organizing a United Methodist congregation. It suggests alternative ways in which this may be done.

Whatever organizational plan you adopt in your local church, it is important to remember that all areas of ministry are essential and must be provided for in your plan. See Guidelines on *Leader Selection and Development* for help in organizing your work.

If you are new to this position you will find the leaflet *Steps for the Leaders of Missions in the Local Church*, available from the Service Center, to be a useful tool as you begin your work. To aid you in understanding how to organize your work, here are some suggestions to help you get started:

- *If you are in a congregation with a small number of members*, your election as the chairperson of missions or outreach ministries is very important. You might not have a committee to work with. You will be the advocate for missions in the congregation. Do not be overwhelmed by the number of the suggestions and ideas presented in this booklet and other resources. Select ideas that you can use and plan programs that meet the needs of your congregation. This booklet is written with you in mind, so you will find many helpful ideas throughout. Even in a small-membership congregation you could find one or two people to work as a missions task force. Talk with the church council, or council on ministries, or other planning groups and develop the most effective and interesting program possible.

- *If you use the Nurture, Outreach, and Witness model*, you will want an outreach committee to consider ways in which your congregation can help others beyond the church walls. Each person on the committee might be responsible for a part of the work—one for missions, one for church and society,

one for higher education and campus ministries, and so forth. Each one needs to read the booklet for his or her area of work and bring any concerns to joint planning sessions. If only one person, as outreach chairperson, has all of these responsibilities, she or he may wish to read the booklets that seem appropriate for the local congregation's situation. Select those program ideas that will help your congregation become involved in reaching out to others, and invite several people to help you plan a program of outreach for the year. No congregation should feel it must do everything, but every congregation should do its best to be faithful to the callings of the gospel.

• *If you have a council on ministries or a church council and a missions committee or commission, encourage the two groups to work together to develop the church's mission program. This is highly recommended because several persons working together are more effective and supportive of one another in developing and carrying out the activities that are needed.*

The size of the congregation and the extent of the mission program should determine the number of people named to the work area. Those people who are asked to serve should have an interest in mission. They may be persons who have traveled and visited mission work at home or abroad. They may be persons who are actively engaged in local mission projects. Seek out those who have participated in annual conference and district mission education programs or schools of Christian mission. All of these church members are potential advocates and workers in the vineyard of God's mission. All members of the committee have the right to vote. All members are expected to attend every meeting. The pastor serves as an ex officio member of the group.

## Planning Your Mission Journey

**T**hen I saw a new heaven and a new earth," reports John of Patmos in Revelation 21:1. The Lord was revealing to John a vision of a new and exciting future filled with promise and hope even in the midst of difficult times.

Surely a local congregation's mission education program is not God's total plan for salvation, but it does point toward God's kingdom as envisioned by John. Planning is just that: a process of envisioning the future directions your congregation can take in order to be more fully in mission with God. A comprehensive and ongoing mission program for your local congregation will not simply evolve from your interest and activity, no matter how hard you work. To make your congregation's mission program come alive and be most effective, you will need to plan your course, much like setting out on a trip. The road to an exciting mission program is a process of seeing where

you are and planning where you hope to go. It is catching a vision of what is possible, then charting a course that leads you from here to there.

Planning is the way you look at the horizon of your local congregation's setting and dream of the land beyond your present experience that you journey toward, led by God's Spirit. As is the case with most journeys, the most difficult step is that first one! How do you decide where to begin and where to put the next footstep after that?

## Planning for Mission

There are many ways to engage your congregation in a mission planning process. Each may be useful, if it is right for you in your situation. Here are six steps of one mission planning process that might help you in charting your course and getting under way, or moving in a new direction. Your planning process might follow these steps as you set out with your congregation on its journey with God in mission.

### 1. Create Your Mission Statement

Before you can organize your year-round program of mission education, you will need to have a fundamental conception of what mission is and what your congregation's call to be in mission is. Begin with the "marching orders" that are presented to us in Scripture. One place to start is the Acts of the Apostles. Read over the entire book and analyze what the early church fathers did as they began to be in mission. Where did they go? What guided their actions? Be sure to pay attention to Jesus' crucial words to the apostles in Acts 1:6-11.

Next you might go back to the Gospels and study how Jesus began his ministry on earth. Analyze his actions and methods of dealing with people who were hurting, physically and spiritually. What did Jesus do with and say to them? How did the disciples and the religious leaders of the day react?

A third area of inquiry might be the struggles of the Hebrew people recorded in the Old Testament. In particular, study the actions and reactions of the community before, during, and after the Exodus, including the wilderness years and the entrance into the land of Canaan. How did the leaders build a consensus about the mission of the people? What led the people to move on toward the promised land? How were God's commandments intended to guide the people?

After you have studied several of these areas, draw conclusions about what God intends for your congregation. How are you being called to go forth in mission? What is the purpose of the church universal and your congregation as one visible example of the Body of Christ? What is the source of your authority and support going to be in mission?

Now write out your biblical vision as a statement of mission for your congregation. It will not be a list of activities to accomplish; rather it will be a short statement of your intentions and motivations for being partners in God's mission. The comments from the section prior to this one on a theology of mission will be a helpful guide to you in creating your own mission statement.

## 2. Identify Mission Opportunities and Needs

Some important questions to ask are: Where are we as a congregation in mission? What are we doing or not doing? Are we involved in mission, as Jesus calls us (Acts 1:8), in Jerusalem (locally), in Judea and Samaria (nationally), and to the ends of the earth (beyond this nation)? Are there unique opportunities in our location that call us to reach out and give ourselves in love to God's people?

List on paper every mission program your congregation is now engaged in. Think in the broadest terms about missions including all the various groups in your congregation. Include in the list all financial preparation in programs of outreach beyond your congregation, all means of informing and educating the members about missions, and all the ways in which church members and groups are involved in mission activities—both close to home and far away.

This list will help you see your church's level of interest in mission work and the types of programs that interest your congregation. You will probably be surprised to see how much mission work is already going on in your church. That is cause for real celebration. You might want to inform the congregation about this—and celebrate!

Next, analyze and evaluate these mission programs. As you look over your list, do you see gaps or weak spots? Is your mission program heavily involved in mission locally but not overseas? Or is it oriented toward overseas missionaries, but not toward our missions here in the United States? Gather information about the special programs and projects of your annual conference or district and General Conference quadrennial programs. What financial requests come to your local church? Determine what the needs of your community are and the ways your congregation can help meet them. Then consider your congregation's attitudes toward mission and what areas of mission education are needed. Develop a mental picture of your church's mission awareness and involvement.

## 3. Build a Set of Mission Goals for the Future

After you have discerned your call to mission and the needs of the world around you, develop goals that will form a structure for how you move in mission. Goals are what you are working toward—a vision of what can

come about by God's grace and your faithfulness in mission. Be very specific with these goals. Make sure they contain standards that you can measure your achievements against and that they are in conformity with your mission statement. Don't attempt to have too many; select several achievable goals that will result in a quality program you can be proud of. Present these to the church council or council on ministries. Involve as many people as possible in setting the goals. Consider what you hope to accomplish with your mission programming in the current year and in the years ahead. This will help as you plan your church's year-round mission program and as you develop steps to move you closer to your goals.

#### 4. Decide on Your Mission Strategies

This is a pragmatic list of steps that will guide you where you want to go. Ask all the questions and consider all the possible alternatives and effects of your program. Be specific in identifying who will carry out which aspect of the program and when it will be done. In other words, list the names, dates, and specific resources you will need. Everything that goes into the program should be for a specific purpose. For example, why do you want a missionary to speak in your church? What is he or she supposed to accomplish? Who is your target audience? Will this program advance you toward your goals?

When your program proposals are presented to the church council or council on ministries, they will be considered with other concerns, interests, and plans in mind. Other ministry chairpersons or commissions may have similar concerns, and you will be able to work together. Even before you go to the church council or council on ministries, you will want to work with the ministry areas on education to plan programs involving mission education and consult with other program chairpersons in regard to programs they may be involved in as well.

Since many programs are related to a specific age level, the coordinator responsible for age-level ministries needs to be brought into the planning. The church council or council on ministries will determine how the program proposals should be carried out, who will be involved in doing the proposals, which dates will be saved on the congregation's calendar, the budget, and any other related matters. More details regarding the process to be followed can be found in other Guidelines booklets.

#### 5. Evaluate Your Programs

The purpose of evaluation is neither self-pity nor self-praise. Look neither for excuses nor for awards. Analyze how the strategies did or did not move toward the goals, whether the goals are in harmony with your mission statement and are addressing real needs in God's mission. Use this process as a

time for learning about every step of the planning process, always looking toward the future God is revealing to us.

## 6. Celebrate Your Mission

In all things give thanks unto the Lord—and to all who participated—in the programs. Lift before your congregation the exciting work that was accomplished and the joy of giving yourselves in service to God’s mission. Celebrate your next step on the journey, for this is the plan as we await the final consummation of John’s vision in the fullness of God’s glory.

### Questions to Think About

1. Why is your particular position important in the life of your congregation?
2. How would you suggest the mission committee be structured?
3. How would you begin to involve your committee in planning for mission involvement?

# Planning Your Year-Round Mission Program

**T**he foundation of mission involvement for a congregation is a comprehensive year-round mission education program that engages the members of your congregation in the following aspects of mission education:

- Education *about* mission
- Education *in* mission
- Education *through* mission

Taken together, these are the components of a year-round mission program for your congregation. Most United Methodists will respond actively and generously to a one-time personal appeal from a missionary or when they know of an emergency need in the world. Your goal, however, is to have an active and involved congregation every week or month of the year, not just once in a while. A year-round mission program that includes the three elements listed above will aid in making yours a true congregation-in-mission.

**Education *about* mission** is the way we learn about what God’s mission is and the realities of working in mission in this new age. This involves studying the biblical mandates for mission, as well as learning about the history and current activities of missionaries and mission projects in this country and around the world.

**Education *in* mission** is the process through which we become open to new understandings about God’s mission by participating directly in mission

projects. This includes a variety of local, regional, and international volunteer mission programs, as well as full-time mission service.

**Education *through* mission** is the way we expand our commitment to and involvement in God's mission through the prayerful and financial support of our church's mission programs. We offer ourselves and the financial resources God has made available to us to support local, national, and worldwide endeavors to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in as many places and in as many ways as possible.

This may seem like a lot to do, but remember that your congregation is already involved in each of these in some way. Your task is to build on what is already happening and to move your congregation further along on that journey with God in mission. Let us look at these responsibilities in greater detail to find ways to help you down that road.

## Education *About* Mission

In planning to educate your congregation about mission, you should consider the attitudes of your congregation toward missions. This will help determine the nature of the education program you develop. Some people favor mission outreach and support it wholeheartedly. Some are lukewarm. Some give grudgingly and do not encourage such work. Some do not understand what is meant by missions today. Others are uninformed or misinformed.

The attitudes of a congregation vary greatly. Therefore, you have a continuous job educating people, keeping them informed, and gaining greater support for the outreach of your church. This is a task that involves changing attitudes, not just putting on programs. The effectiveness of mission education program is proven by a new and greater concern for God's mission in the world.

Educating and informing church members about mission is not achieved in any one way, nor is it ever completely accomplished. It is a continuous process. Many different methods may be used, depending upon the goal or objective. Listed in this section are several activities and methods of education. Select those that will best help you reach your goals.

### Five Activities for Every Church

We begin with five program suggestions for every church. Your size or financial strength will not prevent you from doing the following:

#### 1. Mission Minutes or "Moments for Missions"

A member of the congregation gives a short (four- to five-minute) presentation about some aspect of God's mission. "Moments for Missions" could be

used during the Sunday worship time, during church school sessions, at council or board meetings, or at any gathering of the congregation. The talk could be read or spoken from notes. It might be a dialogue or question-and-answer presentation with two or more people participating.

The content may address where money has been sent, what missionaries are doing, current issues and concerns, mission events, or pressing financial needs. Information may be found in mission leaflets or magazines, missionary letters, the *Prayer Calendar*, or other resources prepared by the General Board of Global Ministries. Look in the Service Center Catalog for ideas. A presentation to the full congregation, even once a month, will do much to educate your congregation about missions and might be the most important activity you carry out in your position.

## 2. Literature Distribution

One person on your committee could be responsible for obtaining and distributing mission literature. By ordering from the Service Center Catalog a sample of the leaflets you may want to use this year, you can preview them and order a sufficient quantity of the ones you want for your congregation. Be as creative as possible when distributing literature so that it will be read and not wasted. Perhaps you could have the youth group hand out leaflets as people leave the service on Sunday, using a leaflet which describes a program talked about in the “Moments for Mission” on that day. Have someone give a short report on a brochure as the opening for a meeting. Make displays with them. In general, find ways to create interest in the content so people will know why they should read the material. Remember, however, that leaflets simply placed in a literature rack will probably be left untouched and unused.

## 3. Mission Displays and Bulletin Boards

Maps, posters, pictures, and leaflets may be used to make attractive, eye-catching mission displays. These are visual reminders that the congregation reaches out and is in mission throughout the world. Even if some members do not stop to read the bulletin board thoroughly, they know, at a glance, that your congregation is a mission church. Plan to change the display periodically, perhaps once every month or two.

## 4. Missionary of the Month

Select a missionary to highlight each month in your church. Contact your annual conference secretary of global ministries or conference program staff for the missionaries related to your conference or look in the *Prayer Calendar*, where all United Methodist missionaries are listed. Throughout the month, your congregation can learn about the missionary through pictures of

the missionary and his or her work, in displays or congregation publications, in articles in the newsletter and Sunday bulletin, and in Mission Minutes. Ask the congregation to pray for the missionary, send cards and letters, and learn as much as possible about the person's work and area of service.

Through your World Service Apportionment, you already support all persons in mission through the General Board of Global Ministries. However, special offerings for the missionary's support might be received, and you might consider a special covenant relationship with one or more missionaries. Get information on this program from your conference secretary of global ministries, or write to Missionary Support Office, Room 320, General Board of Global Ministries, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115.

#### 5. Church-Family Night Program

Many churches have all-church potluck or covered-dish dinners, either on a regular basis or once in a while. Such events provide an opportunity to present a mission program. Plan the evening around a mission area or one of the annual mission study themes (see the Service Center Catalog). Sing songs from other parts of the world, play games from other cultures, and use recipes from other places. Show a mission audiovisual or invite a mission speaker. You might present a mission play or have a panel discussion. Distribute some appropriate literature, and decorate tables with other information. Involve as many people as possible in planning the event.

### Other Mission Education Events

Keeping your congregation informed, updating their thinking about missions, making them aware of the world, raising their consciousness, and confronting them with the people hurting around us and how the good news of Jesus Christ is being brought to them—this is your major function. In order to do more in the way of providing mission education for your congregation, you will want to consider some of the following methods. These will take extra planning and effort, but the results will be an even more mission-minded, turned-on, enthusiastic, and highly motivated congregation. Most people enjoy being part of an active congregation, so the reward of good mission education is a Spirit-filled and involved church.

#### 1. Hold a School of Missions

Each year three mission themes are recommended for study by the whole church. These include a study of a geographic area, a general mission theme, and a spiritual growth study. The studies are widely used by United Methodist Women, so you might want to consider cooperative planning with your local unit of the UMW to determine how and when the studies will be used. Your "school" could be five or six weekly sessions held in the evening, a

weekend convocation held in a retreat setting, or a day long study. Order the study books prepared on the theme you have chosen and secure qualified leaders. Plan for an adequate amount of time to cover the material thoroughly and enable real learning. The *Interpreter*, *New World Outlook*, and *Response* have articles on the themes and study materials available each year.

## 2. Hold a Mission Fair

There is usually good attendance at such events because every group in the congregation participates and is involved in preparing for them. A Sunday afternoon or evening is a good time to have one. The congregation visits booths and rooms which have been prepared by all of the classes and groups. Each may be decorated to represent a different country or national mission area. Displays on national and world mission projects and missionaries, films, literature, pictures, and maps are in the room. Those attending visit the rooms at their leisure, and the festive activity is brought to a close with an assembly where there is worship, music, and a mission speaker.

## 3. Invite Mission Speakers and Interpreters

Invite a missionary or mission interpreter to your church to speak to classes, groups, the church council, or council on ministries, or to speak at family night events, morning or evening worship, or an informal gathering of interested people at the church or someone's home. There are many people in the church with current information or experience in missions who could come and relate to your mission program. Many times small, intimate sessions are more effective for this method than large rallies or worship settings. Your conference or district secretary of global ministries has the names and availability of possible speakers.

## 4. Show Mission Audiovisuals

There are a wide variety of videotapes that vividly portray the conditions of people around the world and the work being done among them by persons in mission. This is an excellent way to touch and inform people who cannot travel and visit mission projects firsthand. Develop a plan to use audiovisuals regularly in church school classes and fellowship gatherings.

Check your annual conference resource or film library for available audiovisual resources. The Service Center Catalog also lists mission audiovisuals that are available by mail through EcuFilm.

## 5. Telephone a Missionary

With electronic communications, we really do live in a small world these days. Work with your telephone company to arrange for a call that can be amplified over the church public address system. It may be during morning

worship, at a church family night, or during a mission study. Write or call the missionary in ample time to make the necessary arrangements, and prepare questions in advance by studying about the country or mission setting, type of mission service, and current events there. Call mission workers in the United States as well as overseas. Promote and publicize the event in the church and the community.

If the public call seems too much to organize, why not make a personal call to a missionary and interview him or her over the phone, and then use it as a Mission Minute or in a newsletter article.

6. Hold a Missionary Conference or Missions Emphasis Week  
For this event, several mission interpreters are invited to a church or cluster of churches. They meet with all of the groups in the congregation on the opening Sunday. During the week they have early breakfast meetings with men, women, or youth; they go to study groups, prayer groups, luncheons, after school sessions with children, dinner meetings for the whole congregation, and an evening worship/preaching service every night. At the close of the week a special Faith-Promise offering is taken for mission projects.

7. Schedule an International Weekend  
This event involves bringing a number of international students from nearby colleges, universities, and high schools to the church community for a weekend. Begin on Friday or Saturday with a banquet for the students and the congregation. The program following may consist of informal discussions with the students, short presentations, or other activities to get the students and church members acquainted. The students stay in the homes of church members overnight.

On Sunday the students visit church school classes and participate in the morning worship, with the entire service centered on missions. Afternoon or evening programs, particularly with the youth, could be also planned.

8. Organize Neighborhood Mission Groups  
Select a group of five to twenty members who are scattered geographically throughout the area served by your local church. Ask them to meet together for a briefing session on one of the current mission study themes. After this they invite three to six families from their neighborhoods, either church members or interested neighbors, to their homes for an evening. During the evening they discuss the mission theme and perhaps have refreshments, which may be related to the theme area being studied.

## 9. Plan Mission Tours

Seeing mission projects firsthand sparks more interest and lifelong concern for God's mission than almost any other learning experience. When a tour is sponsored by your annual conference or district, you will want to take advantage of this great opportunity.

In addition, your own local congregation may wish to arrange a tour of mission projects in your community, your state, nearby states, or even overseas. Depending on where you choose to go, the tour may be for a day, a weekend, a week, or longer. A caravan of cars or a busload of church members will ensure a group of people sympathetic to the mission cause. Be sure to get in touch with those in charge of the various projects ahead of time so they can be prepared to greet you and make your visit worthwhile.

Also, encourage church members to visit United Methodist mission projects when they travel on vacation. Look in the *Prayer Calendar* or the *Partnership in Missions* catalog for suggestions, and remember to contact the projects before you go.

## Mission Literature

People become informed and educated by reading as well as by "going and doing." Here are five educational resources to help with this approach:

### 1. *New World Outlook Magazine*

This is the mission magazine for our church. Those who read it regularly will not only know what The United Methodist Church is doing in missions, but will also be kept up to date on current trends in missions throughout the world. All the members of your work area commission, committee, or task force need to subscribe to this important resource. You might also want to have an annual subscription drive for all church members. Give a free one-year subscription to new church members, have copies in the church library, and use quotes from the magazine for your congregation's bulletin or newsletter.

### 2. Mission Study Themes and Church School Curriculum

The annual mission study themes have materials produced for children and youth, as well as adults. Check the Service Center Catalog for the current resources. Plan to make use of these in ongoing classes, special sessions, vacation church school, and youth fellowship meetings. United Methodist church school materials also offer units on missions for all ages.

### 3. Mission Books in the Church Library

The missions committee should recommend books on missions for your church library and feature these in Mission Minutes and newsletter articles.

The Service Center Catalog lists books for purchase, and the United Methodist Women's reading list is another source for good ideas. Remember that children and youth read also, so select mission books for them.

#### 4. Missionary Letters

Letters written by missionaries are an exciting and informative way to learn about missions. You will want to receive letters from several missionaries in different geographic areas and various types of mission service. Use the letters in Mission Minute talks, sermons, bulletins, bulletin boards, and newsletters. You can obtain letters from a short list of missionaries by contacting the Missionary Letters Office, General Board of Global Ministries, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115.

#### 5. Congregation Newsletter and Bulletin

Mission articles, quotes from mission publications or missionary letters, and interesting mission facts should be printed in your local church publications regularly. They will keep the congregation aware of mission events and concerns. One member of the work area commission or committee might organize this function.

#### And More

As you see, there are many means to reach and educate people about God's mission. No one method will work in every situation, nor will it be the only method to use. You will want to try several types of mission education programs, and you will even begin to develop some ideas of your own. There are many variations on the suggestions given here—and this is only a partial list.

Some additional ideas that have been used in local churches are:

- Mission sermons
- Pastoral and offertory prayers that include mission concerns
- Mission banquets and breakfasts
- Announcements and articles in newspapers and interviews with missionaries and mission interpreters on radio and television.

The General Board of Global Ministries has many resources for you to use in planning your mission education program. No congregation is expected to do everything, but from the resources available to your congregation, you will be able to plan a creative, meaningful, year-round mission program. Obtain a copy of the Service Center Catalog from your pastor, or order one directly from the Service Center (contact information is listed at the end of this booklet). This catalog contains many ways for you to obtain more program suggestions that have worked for local churches just like yours.

## Questions to Think About

1. What is education about mission?
2. Which one activity listed here would be most effective for your congregation?
3. Which printed resources do you need to build your year-round program of mission education?

## Education *in* Mission

**T**he second task of the work area of missions is to keep the congregation informed about the qualifications of and current needs for personnel to serve in the mission field at home and overseas. You, as mission leader in your local church, will want to consult with the work area on higher education and campus ministry or the secretary of career planning and counseling in your congregation to discuss ways to approach this concern together. Others who might work with you are the age-level coordinators of children, youth, and adults, and the coordinators of family ministries.

Whom do you try to reach? Not only youth, but adults who are already equipped with skills and information should also be made aware of service opportunities. There is often a need for house parents in home mission projects. There are frequently short-term situations for people who can go at once and fill a specific need. College graduates can serve as US-2's for two years in some area of the United States. Individuals who have completed professional training and have some experience are often in demand. Those persons may be found somewhere in a United Methodist congregation as members of an adult church school class, worshipers at a Sunday morning service, or members of another group to whom you can relate. When they become aware of the church's need for their talents and energies, they may willingly respond to the call of God's mission. Your task as mission leader is to find and contact them, bringing information and allowing the Spirit to speak to them through you.

The second reason for informing adults about personnel needs is that they have an influence on youth. Young people need and want to be challenged with the variety of vocational opportunities offered by our church in all parts of God's world. They can then begin their preparations and be trained and ready when requests come for their services in future years.

As the chairperson of missions, you will want to become informed about all phases of missionary enlistment and personnel needs. If there is a commission on missions, one meeting each year can be devoted to looking at this area of responsibility. However, a person must have more than just concern.

It is helpful to know about the types of missionary service. It also helps to gain acquaintance with the qualifications for missionary service. This means knowing more than the age, training, and language requirements; it includes knowing the requirements concerning attitudes, character, personality, and adaptability. It is also good to be acquainted with the variety of vocations needed in missionary service.

## Publicizing Personnel Needs

If there is a commission on missions in your church, one person might be assigned the responsibility of staying alert to enlistment needs. His or her task would be to keep the personnel needs before the congregation according to the plans developed by the mission leaders and agreed upon by the church council or council on ministries. Publicizing the needs might include such activities as the following:

1. Order the free leaflets from the Service Center of the General Board of Global Ministries that describe the church's mission personnel programs. Distribute them to the congregation with an explanation.
2. Secure a listing of the current mission personnel needs by writing to Mission Personnel, Room 320, General Board of Global Ministries, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115. Share it with your congregation—particularly the youth—and with local high school guidance counselors.
3. Plan posters and bulletin board displays highlighting a different missionary occupation each month.
4. Plan a panel discussion on the church's needs for mission personnel with the family, adult, and youth coordinators.
5. Obtain missionary speakers or mission interpreters and films on vocational needs for family nights, meetings of United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women, young adult classes, and other occasions.
6. Seek out individuals in the congregation who should be approached personally to consider mission service and give them information on programs and opportunities.

## Volunteers in Mission and Work Camps

Another aspect of enlisting personnel is the recruitment of volunteers for mission projects and programs. Youth and adults can go near and far to work in building programs, clinics, and other types of service. This is one of the fastest growing mission activities in the church and is known as the Volunteers in Mission program (VIM). It provides opportunities for mutual work, sharing, and understanding. Church members who are young or old, men or women, and from all segments of the church form teams that construct, remodel, or build churches, schools, homes, playgrounds, and clinics at the invitation of churches and mission projects in the United States and

around the world. Some volunteers are teachers, doctors, dentists, nurses, engineers, or other skilled people who work for a limited time in mission.

Contact your annual conference VIM coordinator or your conference secretary of global ministries. For a national or international listing of current opportunities write to the VIM Office, Room 320, General Board of Global Ministries, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115.

### Mission in Your Community

Not all the work of Christian mission is done by sending money or personnel elsewhere. All Christians are called to be in mission by virtue of their baptism. Your local congregation is located in a mission field—your community! Part of the task of the work area of missions is to encourage your congregation to be in mission right where you are and to seek to influence the institutions of our society—government, industry, schools, and the church—to create a lifestyle and environment in which every person can enjoy God’s creation and be invited to share the abundant life Jesus offers to us all.

To engage your congregation in local mission, you will need to study your community first in order to recommend service projects. This should be done in cooperation with other commissions and committees of your church, such as church and society and Christian unity and interreligious concerns. Plans can then be developed through the church council or council on ministries.

Often, it only takes one person or group in the congregation to get the idea started in order for the whole body to become excited about a project. Your committee on missions may need to be the initiator in your church. You can help locate mission needs in the community and suggest goals and programs related to them that will open doors for members of the congregation to become actively involved in helping people nearby.

### What You Can Do

Members of your congregation can take an active part in social agencies and community service projects that are set up to meet people’s basic needs. They can join action organizations that are seeking to improve your community, such as fair housing associations, urban renewal groups, and rural life coalitions. Concerned church members can also have an influence on the social structures that seek to deal with civic problems by writing letters to newspapers or visiting town and city council meetings, school boards, and the like. In this way they may bring a Christian viewpoint that would not be considered otherwise.

You might work with the finance committee to make sure that investments of the local church, and those of your annual conference and the general church, are in corporations that reflect the values of the Christian faith. Individual members can be sensitized to the need to review their own investments in the light of the gospel. This aspect of Christian stewardship is an important way to participate in God's mission through the wider world.

Your congregation can become a communications center for promoting information about community agencies and the needs of people in your community. As a result of this kind of concern, many other types of ministries might develop. A teenage drop-in center could be started, or a community halfway house for drug addicts or parolees. Perhaps there is need for a safe house for abused women and children, or an outreach to an apartment complex. There is virtually no limit to the ways your congregation can be in mission locally, once you become acquainted with the needs of your community.

### Planning Reminders

As you consider organizing a local mission project, several points are important to remember:

1. Follow the planning process outlined earlier. Know your community and your congregation; analyze your resources and potential; build on your strengths and the interests of your church members.
2. Work together with other commissions and committees to build a significant team approach to mission. Invite other churches to participate in the planning and activities. Much more can be accomplished by working ecumenically with other denominations that have similar concerns.
3. Dare to dream. Do not reject an idea just because you have never done it before or because it seems too big a job. God's mission covers all of human life, and we must allow the Spirit to move among us as we plan and participate in this mission.

No local congregation will be involved in every community issue, but every congregation should search for specific ways it can be in mission and ministry to that community and be an effective witness to God's mission. Our risen Christ put it plainly to the apostles: "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Your local congregation is called to be in mission both near and far away.

### Questions to Think About

1. Where can interested persons serve God in mission?
2. From whom can you receive information on mission service?
3. What opportunities exist for voluntary service?

# Education *Through* Mission

**E**ncouraging personal commitment to and support of God's mission is the third task of the work area chairperson of missions and your committee on missions. Your work in this area is to seek to expand the mission giving of your congregation and prayerful support for all who are working in God's mission, at home and around the world.

Every congregation is financially involved in mission through the variety of giving channels available to United Methodists. Since the chairperson or commission helps develop a benevolence program for the church, it is important for you to be well acquainted with the giving by all groups in the church. You can encourage planned, systematic financial participation by the congregation in the various mission programs and thereby expand the support for God's mission. Learn what your church's members are doing already and help them celebrate that involvement in God's mission. Then move forward on your mission journey to even greater financial support.

Many items in the benevolence budget, such as conference apportionments, are distinctly missional in nature, and the missions work area has the responsibility of suggesting the amounts to be given for these. Other items in the benevolence budget are to be suggested by work areas related to them. When the entire benevolence budget has been determined, it is submitted by the work area on missions to the committee on finance, which presents it to the church council for approval. The work area of missions must study and plan with care to make the recommended budget a challenge to the giving potential of the congregation and to ensure that it includes opportunities for giving to all mission areas available in our church.

## Steps in Budget Development

When the work area on missions begins to make its plans for the benevolence budget, it must take into account the need of the world to receive and the need of the congregation to be involved in giving. It is good to ask: What does God expect of us, of our people? What is our opportunity as a community of Christians to further God's mission through our participation? When questions like these have been discussed, the matter of objectives can then be considered.

The church's potential is the next matter for the work area to consider. Questions such as these can be asked: In terms of financial ability, what could our congregation do in benevolence sharing if it really got serious about this matter? What could our people do if they would? How much has our congregation participated in each cause this year? What is our total par-

ticipation now? What is our per capita giving? What has been the trend in benevolence participation in our congregation during the past ten years? Has it kept pace with the growth of the congregation and with inflationary trends?

It is wise to have not only immediate goals but also long-range objectives. Some further questions may be: Where do we want our congregation to be in its benevolence participation four years from now? What could we be giving and receiving eight and ten years from now?

#### How Much for Missions?

These questions lead to another matter. The church council or council on ministries should discuss the question of what percentage of the total budget should go for benevolences. The common range is twenty to twenty-five percent. However, many churches are working on the principle of “as much for others as for ourselves,” or a fifty-fifty division. If the church council or council on ministries accepts this as a goal, benevolences would include World Service and conference benevolences; Advance Specials, One Great Hour of Sharing, Human Relations Day, World Communion Sunday, and other special offerings; Youth Service Fund, United Methodist Children’s Fund for Christian Mission, World Service Special Gifts, funds contributed through United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men that go for work outside the local church, and all other benevolence causes.

It is important, therefore, to know the amounts given each year by adult church school classes, United Methodist Men, United Methodist Youth Fellowship, and United Methodist Women for benevolence causes. Benevolences would not include annual conference apportionments for conference claimants, episcopal funds, or the general administration fund. Where a congregation is involved in a large building program, the benevolences would be equated not with large capital expenditures, but only with the operating budget of the church.

When the work area of missions has proposed a long-range objective for the church’s benevolence program, the next step is to decide how far the congregation can go in that direction this year. By gradually increasing the amount and proportion of the benevolence budget year by year, the goal can be reached eventually. This is the advantage of setting a long-range objective, rather than just accepting the amount that seems convenient each year or the amount that was given in the current year. The work area with a long view, a definite goal, and a plan for leading the congregation into the attainment of that goal year-by-year has a good chance to achieve success and enjoy the satisfaction of growing spiritually as participation in God’s mission grows in your congregation.

## Total Mission Support

All the levels of our church have an interest in seeing that World Service and conference benevolence funds are paid in full. The work area chairperson of missions will also encourage this interest. Likewise your concern is to see that the One Great Hour of Sharing, World Communion Sunday, and Human Relations Day offerings, along with other special offerings that go through the channels of the General Board of Global Ministries, are received in your church. In addition, the work area of missions has a particular interest in Advance Specials and will work hard to promote them.

## Advance Specials

The Advance for Christ and His Church is a mission program begun by our church in 1948. Since that time, more than \$600 million has been given by United Methodists to support God's mission in the United States and around the world. These dollars enable us to "advance" the cause of Christ through new church buildings and new pastors, support of missionaries at home and abroad, scholarships for students of every age, medical assistance to women and children across the globe, and literally hundreds of other programs like these. Advance Special projects are supported with voluntary and designated gifts of individuals, families, groups, or entire congregations. They vary in size from a few dollars to several thousand dollars.

The purposes these gifts are given for include: missionary support; program funds for evangelism and education; buildings and equipment for hospitals and schools; scholarships; specialized ministries, such as literature and literacy; medical and agricultural work; and leadership training for pastors and laity.

Approved projects may be found within one's own annual conference, in other parts of the United States, and in nearly one hundred countries around the world where The United Methodist Church is at work.

General Advance Special projects originate when priorities are set by those most directly affected. Field committees, planning groups, and boards of global ministries/missions, in countries overseas or in your own annual conferences, determine the priority of projects and request approval. This local goal setting is the key in the approval process. The General Board of Global Ministries and the Advance Committee of the General Council on Ministries then review and give final approval. When these approved projects are made known, individuals or local churches have the privilege of deciding which approved project they will participate in.

A very appealing feature of the Advance is the fact that the total amount

given goes to the cause designated. Nothing is taken out for administration. One hundred percent is available for use by the chosen project because of your support of the World Service Fund.

Conference Advance Specials are projects approved by the conference board of global ministries/missions, the conference council on ministries, and the annual conference, and they are administered by them.

### Planning Your Advance Program

1. First, be sure the congregation will be able to pay its World Service and conference benevolences in full before considering the Advance as a means of giving to missions. World Service is “first mile” giving. The Advance program is “second mile” giving. It is not necessary for all World Service money to be paid before planning for Advance Specials, but the congregation leaders should be confident the funds will be forthcoming. Involvement in the Advance program by local churches encourages support of World Service.
2. Become familiar with many different Advance Special projects. Read the *Interpreter* magazine, the catalog of projects called *Partnership in Missions*, and Advance leaflets available from the Service Center of the General Board of Global Ministries in Cincinnati.
3. Contact your district or conference secretary of global ministries for suggestions about projects your conference or district has a commitment to or a special interest in. There also might be places of particular need that are related to and promoted by your district and annual conference.
4. If you have questions on specific projects or programs, write to the Advance Office, Room 1400, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115.
5. Select some Advance Specials to recommend to the church council or the council on ministries, keeping in mind the following questions:
  - What kind of Advance Special will have the greatest appeal to our people? Will they respond most generously to the idea of supporting a missionary, feeding the hungry, giving a scholarship, building a new church, or contributing to some phase of a literacy program?
  - What interests are already present in the congregation because of ex-service personnel or other members who have visited mission projects? Have any mission personnel visited the church, thus creating interest in a particular approved project or program?
  - Is there a current situation in the world that might provide a special need for the congregation to respond to?

6. Recommend ways to obtain support for the Advance Specials that are selected. Here are some methods that have worked in other churches:
- Advance Specials may be placed in the congregation budget so that everyone contributing to the congregation shares in the Advance.
  - The work area of missions with authorization from the church council or council on ministries may present the challenge of Advance Special giving to individuals, families, and groups within the church. A variation would be for several people, families, or groups to join in a project.
  - An offering may be taken at the School of Missions for an Advance Special in the area being studied.
  - The church council or council on ministries, upon recommendation of the work area of missions, may select an Advance Special and set aside one Sunday each year to highlight, promote, and dramatize it.
  - Thanksgiving, Easter, or Christmas offerings may be given for Advance Special projects.

These are the steps you, as the chairperson of missions, may follow in developing a program to promote Advance Specials. It is important to work closely with the pastor and the church council or council on ministries. It also helps to recommend a method of raising funds. When these gifts have been gathered, they should be sent by the church treasurer to the annual conference treasurer, with a clear designation of their intended use, using the project number and title found in the Advance catalog, *Partnership in Missions*.

## Small-Membership Churches

Churches with fewer members should not bypass the chance to participate in the Advance. One of the advantages of participating in missions in this fashion is that the size of the gift can be determined by those involved in selecting an Advance Special. The chairperson of missions in a congregation with fewer members can follow the same procedures given above and thus provide people with the same opportunity to become informed of needs and to contribute to those needs.

If your congregation is in a small rural community, you may want to select an Advance Special in a similar type of location. If your congregation is struggling in an inner-city situation with few members, the congregation may feel a real kinship with people in a similar position in a great city somewhere else in the world and will want to help them. Concern and compassion, not the size of the church, determine Advance Special giving.

## Other Thoughts

There are many independent groups and nondenominational faiths, sects, and others, both effective and ineffective, that appeal for funds from United

Methodist congregations and individuals. Our members need to understand that we have many relationships and commitments as a congregation in partnership with the whole church throughout the world. Funding comes only from our church members, so churches in many parts of the world are depending upon us.

The committee on missions can help our members be aware of all we are doing financially and can explain that the best way to help others is through our own connection. The United Methodist administrative cost is lower than that of any other group (usually less than 10 percent), and remember that 100 percent of every gift from the Advance for Christ and His Church goes directly to the project selected by the donor. We have a dependable system for assuring the safe delivery and distribution of goods and money because of our worldwide network of churches. Contributions do not go through outside agencies but through Christian congregations and church organizations. This is a story that needs to be shared with your congregation.

### Your Operating Budget

The work area chairperson will also need to present to the church council or council on ministries budget recommendations for carrying on the program of mission education in the local church. This will include items such as costs for mission interpreters and national visitors, film rentals, School of Missions promotion, leadership training, literature and supplies, postage, and other miscellaneous expenses. The size of the congregation and the extent of the missions program will determine the amount to be budgeted for mission education. These funds are an integral part of our mission work since they allow you to share the good news of God's mission in your congregation.

### Prayer Support for God's Mission

As important as financial support is to the continuation and expansion of God's mission, dollars alone are not enough. Prayer support is absolutely essential for every congregation's mission program. Without the ongoing and fervent prayers of our faithful church members, the mission program will simply be another charity to which they contribute. Your mission program must be understood as the vital link between your congregation and God's coming kingdom. As your congregation becomes spiritually involved in mission, miracles of mission education and support will occur.

The best way to promote the prayer support from your congregation is to encourage church members to obtain a copy of the annual *Prayer Calendar* from the General Board of Global Ministries. This comprehensive book lists each of our missionaries on his or her birthday, in addi-

tion to mission projects in the United States and around the world. There are statements of witness from our missionaries that will enhance your prayer life, and there is more information to assist church members in being involved in God's mission.

Lift up our mission projects during Sunday morning prayer times, as well as on a mission bulletin board and in the church newsletter. You might consider organizing a special "Mission Prayer Fellowship" of people committed to daily prayer for God's mission. The group could meet biweekly or monthly to share in prayer together for special mission concerns.

Know that our prayers for missionaries and colleague mission workers around the globe will advance the cause of Christ and bring many benefits to your congregation as you move forward in your mission journey, step by step and day by day.

#### Questions to Think About

1. What are the channels through which United Methodists financially support God's mission?
2. What is the Advance program?
3. Why is prayer a form of mission support?

### Conclusion

These, then, are your tasks and responsibilities as a work area chairperson of missions and committee on missions in your local church. It is hoped that these Guidelines will help you know where to begin and how to go about your important functions in the life of your congregation. Take that first step on your mission journey of a lifetime, and be a partner in God's mission with the thousands of coworkers throughout the church.

Make Your Plans Carefully  
Carry Them Out Prayerfully

# How to Plan a Local Church Mission Program

1. List everything that your congregation is doing in mission.  
Think broadly about programs you financially support and activities in your area and elsewhere.
2. What are your needs in mission?  
Do you see gaps in the list from number 1? What are the weak spots in your mission program? What areas of mission programming would be most helpful and interesting to your congregation?
3. Select one or two projects or ideas to work on.  
Do not use the “shotgun” approach to missions. Don’t try to do everything, rather take a focused, specific approach. Think of what you hope to accomplish with specific programs.
4. Develop a year-round mission program.  
Plan a set of activities and program ideas that liven up mission throughout the year, each week, and not merely on one occasion, such as the following.

## Five Mission Education Programs Any Church Can Do (And every church should do)

1. Mission Minute, once a month during Sunday worship.  
For content use Global Ministries brochures, *New World Outlook* and *Interpreter* articles, Mission Means ideas, and the *Prayer Calendar*.
2. Literature Distribution.  
Have youth or others pass out a leaflet following worship after a short introduction during announcements; obtain these free leaflets using the Service Center Catalog.
3. Mission Bulletin Board.  
Use maps or pictures from magazines and leaflets, obtained through the Service Center Catalog; and be sure to change it periodically, either monthly or quarterly.
4. Missionary-of-the-Month Program.  
Use a picture/bio/letter for a missionary each month in several settings, such as a bulletin board, newsletter, or worship bulletin; and lift in prayer and/or as an offertory sentence during worship (remember, all missionaries receive support from World Service). Obtain this information through Mission Means.
5. Church Family Night Program.  
At least once a year hold a covered-dish supper or an evening program with refreshments; plan a program of audiovisuals or a speaker, with some intergenerational activities, or use a mission video from your annual conference resource library.

# Resources

There are many resources to assist you in planning your church's mission program. A Service Center Catalog listing these and other resources is available from the following address, and it is also sent to your pastor each year.

Service Center  
General Board of Global Ministries  
7820 Reading Road, Caller No. 1800  
Cincinnati, OH 45222-1800

Toll-free number: 800-305-9857 (Monday through Friday, 9 A.M. to 4:45 P.M., eastern standard time). Fax: 513-761-3722 (24 hours a day).

Your questions regarding the work area of missions in the local church can be directed to this toll-free number: 800-UMC-GBGM (Monday through Friday, 9 A.M. to 4 P.M., eastern standard time).

Listen to UMCOR's recorded message on current emergency needs: 800-841-1235.

Visit the General Board of Global Ministries Web page on the Internet at: <http://gbgm-umc.org>

Visit the Cokesbury youth Web page at [www.leadyyouth.com](http://www.leadyyouth.com) for resources for youth in missions.

If you want to find resources not listed here or information on current programs and projects of The United Methodist Church, or if you have other questions and do not know whom to contact, call InfoServ. Toll-free number: 800-251-8140 (8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., central daylight time).

## Quick Reference Information in Your Area for Advice and Assistance

Write in the following names, addresses, and telephone numbers and keep them for future reference:

District Secretary of Global Ministries

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Conference Secretary of Global Ministries

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# Your Communications Menu

## General Board of Global Ministries

475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115

### **World Wide Web**

Information on GBGM activities and resources, accessible through the Internet. Site of several thousand local church and annual conference home pages. Access through Web at <http://gbgm-umc.org> or call 1-800-UMC-GBGM and ask for information.

### ***New World Outlook***

The award-winning mission magazine of The United Methodist Church brings you—in words and pictures—the Christian story other news magazines don't tell. \$15 for 6 issues. Order from Service Center.\*

Call 1-800-305-9857.

### ***Response***

Bible Studies, mission stories, financial interpretation, and a wealth of great ideas for being in mission—get all that and more in ***Response***. For \$12, get 11 full-color issues a year. Order from Service Center.\*

Call 1-800-305-9857.

### **Mission Means**

Packet is prepared for conference and district mission leaders and contains Mission Minute talks, human interest stories, free leaflets, and creative ideas for local churches. Useful for anyone involved in mission activities. Nine issues, \$11. Order from Service Center.\* Call 1-800-305-9857.

**Videos** featuring stories of Christian witness from around the world, 30 minutes each. One-year subscription (4 videos) \$39; \$19.95 each, plus \$3 postage/handling. Order from the Office of Electronic Media, Room 1331, GBGM, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115. Call (212)870-3781.

### **MISSIONFAX**

Timely mission information is available through fax-back service. Callers may receive short updates on particular countries where the UMC is in mission; information on recent resources; and services for conferences, districts, and local churches. Call 1-800-793-5415.

### **Phone Numbers to Remember**

General Mission Information

**1-800-UMC-GBGM**

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UMCOR Hotline (Recorded Message)

**1-800-841-1235**

United Methodist Development Fund  
and National Division Loan Administration

**1-800-862-8633**

**\*Service Center**

General Board of Global Ministries

7820 Reading Road

Caller 1800

Cincinnati, OH 45222-1800

**1-800-305-9857 (for orders only)**

**or 1-513-761-2100 (inquiries) FAX 1-513-761-3722**

## Notes