



# BOARD FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSION AND OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL MISSION



June 2016

## GOSPEL-BEARING TOOLS:

People, Policies, Protocols



### “PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE DO

as a board is call our missionaries,” said LCMS Board for International Mission (BIM) Chairman Rev. Bernard Seter. “It is always a privilege to prayerfully consider these calls and remember that we also make these considerations on behalf of the church. The church decided many years ago that we send missionaries through a Synod board so we are all in this together.”

The BIM — a group of pastors, church workers and laypeople elected by the Synod in convention — joyfully shoulders the responsibility of setting the policies that guide our international witness and mercy work, as it is carried out through the LCMS Office of International Mission (OIM).

#### Guided by the Synod

Guided by the LCMS bylaws and the Synod’s six mission priorities and under the supervision of the Synod’s chief mission officer, the BIM and OIM are responsible for the work of the Synod in foreign countries, including the placement and support of foreign missionaries, the establishment and maintenance of international schools, the coordination of international relief efforts, policy recommendations to the BIM, and the support and encouragement of international partner churches in conjunction with the Office of the President.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the OIM receives its primary focus from the mission-and-ministry emphases developed by the Synod in convention and from the policies developed and determined by the BIM. Through the chief mission officer, the president of the Synod advises the OIM on all aspects of its responsibilities.

“We take all the overtures and convention resolutions seriously,” Seter continued. “For all the folks in the pew and for the missionaries themselves the message is important: The church sent you, the church will care for you, the church prays for you.”

In July 2013, the Synod convention set before the OIM a challenge to double the number of career LCMS missionaries (Resolution 1-11, “To Recruit and Place More Career Missionaries”). The OIM launched an intensive recruitment effort, bringing on former missionary Rev. Daniel McMiller as director of Recruitment. He and his staff are continually meeting with potential missionary candidates and gathering names of others to call on. Simultaneously, they are in constant contact with our regional directors to keep abreast of the type and number of missionaries each field desires and is prepared to support.

And the goal to double missionaries? The OIM recruitment team is closing in on it and will host the

second missionary orientation of 2016 this month, culminating in a missionary-sending service a few short weeks before the convention.

The LCMS also prepares and sends missionaries for various lengths of service — whether for just one or two years or even shorter stints — to help round out and support the teams on the field.

#### World-class, comprehensive care for missionaries

With nearly 400 missionaries, spouses and children deployed across the globe, a high priority for both the BIM and OIM is the support of missionaries throughout their time of service.

“We care for our missionaries at every phase of their service,” said the Rev. Dr. Edward Grimenstein, associate executive director for the OIM.

To do this well, the OIM staff has put procedures in place to ensure that body-and-soul care exists for missionaries before, during and after their deployment.

On the front end, a two-week intensive missionary orientation for new missionaries and their families includes training in building a support network and the theology of mission, as well as intentional programs for children and spouses. The orientation resumes some weeks later with a two-day retreat aimed at spiritual care and emotional well-being that is geared specifically for missionaries and their families who are preparing to move to the mission field.

On the field, the OIM is committed to and working toward placing missionaries into teams where a regular life together exists around Word and Sacrament with a missionary chaplain in each area or region.

Annual regional missionary retreats provide opportunities for study, prayer, counsel and fellowship with fellow missionaries and specially invited care providers. When missionaries return home for periods of support-raising, they are assisted and debriefed by teams in OIM, Mission Advancement and Communications.

When a missionary ends his or her service, another series of procedures is in place to ensure that the transition from the field to their new home goes well

physically, spiritually and emotionally.

Life in a new land is both exciting and full of challenges. The Missionary Services unit of the OIM exists to walk with our missionaries, caring for their needs in body and soul so that they are freed to care for those they have been sent to serve.

“Missionaries are the people Christ has called through His church to go out into all the world and speak the Gospel,” said Grimenstein. “These men, women and children have given up everything they know to do this. For us at the Office of International Mission, there is no higher priority than caring for those entrusted to us. They are the very means by which Christ spreads His salvation so people may believe and by believing have eternal life.”

“The work going on around the world is truly amazing; the global reach of the Synod and her partners is inspiring,” Seter commented. “I am thankful for the hard work and dedication of our missionaries and staff and the folks in the pews around the country [who] support them.”

The Missionary Services unit works around the clock, communicating with missionaries 24/7 to ensure the health, well-being and accountability of mission workers in a time when dangers can range from terrorist attacks to pandemic diseases.

Most recently, the growing concern over the Zika virus and its effects on unborn children necessitated giving pregnant women the opportunity to move out of regions where the disease is widespread. The OIM has the capacity to remove missionaries from harm’s way immediately if the threat of terror, war or natural disaster becomes a reality.

#### Working together

Rapidly changing global realities — the rise and fall of foreign governments, increased terrorism, diseases, natural and man-made disasters — require us to work with the greatest levels of coordination, collaboration and communication with our field staff and the leadership of our partner churches.

Today, our LCMS missionaries walk and work alongside local Lutheran leaders, clergy and workers who lead the way for us with their indigenous knowledge of the people, language and culture.

*Continued on Page 4*



# LCMS MISSION WORK

Strategic. Sustainable. Specialized. Supported.

When the LCMS sent its first missionary overseas in 1893, it launched a rich legacy of robust mission work and experience that continues to this day. Convinced that sending and supporting missionaries required individuals and congregations working together, our founding fathers organized the LCMS, choosing the word “synod” because it means “walking together.” To this day, the desire to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth and the knowledge that we can do more together than any of us can do alone are at the heart of who we are as The Lutheran—Church Missouri Synod.



## The OIM Missionary Sending and Caring Process



### FIELD SELECTION AND APPROVAL

- Is it physically safe for a missionary/family?
- Is the partner church on board?
- Is the work sustainable?

### RECRUITMENT PHASE

- Frequent contact with OIM
- Regular prayer for recruits
- Vocational counseling

### VETTING PHASE

- Match candidate with field location
- Theological, field and staff interviews
- Continued vocational counseling
- Support in discernment process
- May produce call/solemn appointment

### NEW MISSIONARY ORIENTATION

- Training – theological/practical
- Training in building a sponsor network
- Daily worship and Bible study
- Spiritual care
- Counseling services
- Missionary sending service

### SUPPORT BUILDING

- Regular contact with OIM and other missionaries for encouragement and counsel
- DOXOLOGY focused on spiritual self-care



### BENEFITS FOR MISSIONARIES

#### Missionaries sent through the BIM can trust that:

- they come on behalf of the LCMS and will be well received;
- they will serve on a team with other LCMS missionaries;
- they will receive world-class, round-the-clock, comprehensive emotional, physical and spiritual care throughout their time of service;
- they will be funded, ensuring their service and projects are sustainable;
- their service is integral to mission efforts coordinated with and approved by the local partner church and other LCMS missionaries across the region; and
- in an emergency, their needs will be met 24/7.

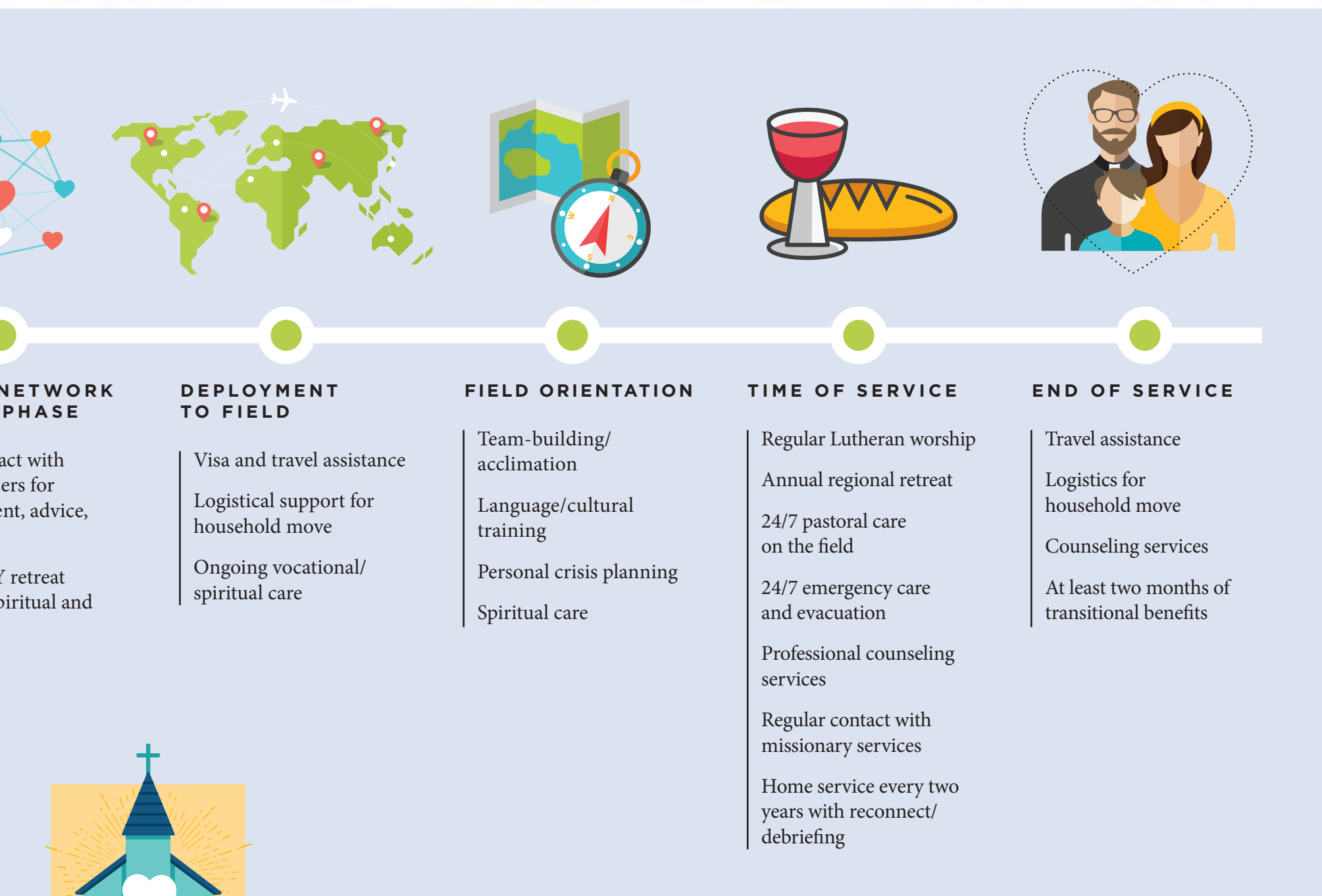


### BENEFITS FOR PARTNER CHURCHES

#### Our partners on the field can trust that missionaries sent by the LCMS coming to their region are:

- fully vetted, approved and possess the skills to do the work;
- fully funded to carry out their projects and sustain their service;
- part of a regional plan and team that they have helped determine and approve;
- fully cared for by the LCMS;
- ready and willing to work alongside them for the sake of the Gospel; and
- respectful of local leadership, customs and church relations.





**BENEFITS FOR THE CHURCH BACK HOME**

*Individuals and congregations of the LCMS who desire to share the Gospel can be certain that:*

- our missionaries and their work are approved, supported and sustainable;
- our missionaries are properly approved and sent;
- the work is guided by the mission priorities of the Synod\*;
- the missionaries are well prepared and cared for throughout their service;
- the field knows they are coming and welcomes their arrival;
- financial gifts for mission work are carefully accounted for and wisely used to proclaim Christ in word and deed; and
- over 120 years of world-class mission work across the globe undergirds and informs today's mission efforts.

**THE SIX MISSION PRIORITIES of the Synod**

- 1 Plant, sustain and revitalize distinctly Lutheran churches.
- 2 Support and expand theological education.
- 3 Perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministry.
- 4 Collaborate with the Synod's members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness.
- 5 Nurture pastors, missionaries and professional church workers to promote spiritual, emotional and physical well-being.
- 6 Enhance early childhood, elementary and secondary education and youth ministry.



# SERVING YOU

## The Board for International Mission

### The BIM as sole sending agency for LCMS international missionaries

LCMS missionaries sent through the Board for International Mission go with the full support and backing of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod — internationally trusted and respected as a leading church body across the confessional Lutheran world. Our missionaries are well received and welcomed when they arrive on the field.

Policies and bylaws might appear bureaucratic and heavy-handed, with their many details and procedures. In reality, such documents and protocols ensure that our missionaries are properly cared for, partner churches are treated with respect and cooperation, and those who support our mission efforts are confident their financial gifts will be used wisely and accounted for properly to sustain and increase mission work around the world.

### LCMS Bylaws

#### 3.8.3.3

The Office of International Mission implements the policies of the Board for International Mission under the supervision of the Chief Mission Officer and shall be responsible for the work of the Synod in foreign countries. Such responsibilities may include but not be limited to:

- placement and support of foreign missionaries
- establishment and maintenance of international schools
- coordination of international relief efforts
- policy recommendations to the Board for International Mission
- support and encouragement of international partner churches in conjunction with the office of the President

#### 3.8.3.4

In carrying out its mission responsibilities, the Office of International Mission shall receive its primary focus from the mission and ministry emphases developed triennially by the national Synod in convention and from the policies developed and determined by the Board for International Mission. Through the Chief Mission Officer, it shall also receive direction from the President of the Synod on all aspects of its responsibilities.

#### 3.8.3.5

The President's supervisory responsibilities under Constitution Art. XI B and Bylaws 3.3.1.1–3.3.1.3 will assure that the Office of International Mission incorporates the doctrine, mission, and vision of the Synod in its service to the Synod. All staff shall be responsible and accountable for their activities to the President of the Synod (Constitution Art. XI B 1-4) between conventions of the Synod and ultimately to the Synod in convention (Constitution Art. XI A 1-2).

#### 3.8.3.6

The Office of International Mission shall be responsible for granting recognized service organization status to organizations that provide services primarily outside of the United States, are independent of the Synod, engage in program activity that is in harmony with the programs of the Synod, and warrant recognition by the Synod according to section 6.2 of these Bylaws.

### BOARD MEMBERS AND THE LCMS REGIONS THEY REPRESENT



**REV. BERNIE SETER**  
*Ordained • Great Plains*  
CHAIRMAN



**ALLAN VOSS**  
*Lay • Great Lakes*



**ROBERT VAN GUNDY**  
*Lay • Great Plains*



**BUTCH ALMSTEDT**  
*Lay • East-Southeast*



**REV. DR. JEFF SHEARIER**  
*Ordained • West-Southwest*



**JOHN EDSON**  
*Lay • President's Representative*



**REV. JOHN TEMPLE**  
*Ordained • Central*



**REV. JUAN GONZALEZ**  
*Ordained • East-Southeast*



**LOIS PEACOCK**  
*Lay • West-Southwest*



**JERRY FRESE**  
*Lay • Central*



**DEACONESS ROSE ADLE**  
*Commissioned • Central*

*Continued from front*

In Ethiopia, there are nearly 8 million baptized Lutherans, four times as many members as in the LCMS. Yet the leaders of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) have invited the LCMS to assist in training pastors for their rapidly growing church body. Similar work is taking place across the globe and is intentionally coordinated with local church leaders to ensure that the people and resources we bring to the field are beneficial and do not hinder the proclamation of the Gospel.

As the LCMS seeks to better coordinate missionary work with partner church bodies and their national governments toward safer and more efficient unified efforts, it's helpful to note Bylaw 3.8.3 of the Synod's 2013 *Handbook*: "Upon the recommendation of the Office of International Mission, the [Board for International Mission] shall serve as the only sending agency through which workers and funds are sent to the foreign mission areas of the Synod, including the calling, appointing, assigning, withdrawing, and releasing of missionaries (ministers of religion—ordained and ministers of religion—commissioned) and other workers for the ministries in foreign areas."

Partner-church leaders frequently express concerns about unofficial LCMS mission workers arriving in their country without proper coordination with host-nation and church authorities. This can and has led to significant problems on the field: work is carried out with locals who are not affiliated with the partner church, projects are commenced but not completed, an influx of dollars creates divisions in the local church, efforts are duplicated and the safety of workers is sometimes compromised. There is a better way forward.

The OIM and BIM seek deeper ties with mission societies and other organizations that desire to work internationally. A number of LCMS congregations and districts, working through the OIM, are adopting mission fields or partner church bodies. They bring welcome capacity, resources and support. When these efforts are coordinated with the OIM field staff and partner-church leadership, much good is accomplished for the sake of the Gospel. The OIM welcomes such walking and working together.

### Are you or your parish ready for a more hands-on mission experience?

Perhaps you or your congregation is looking for greater involvement in mission work. Would you like to support an LCMS missionary or mission project? Do you have a team ready to go on a mission trip? The Office of International Mission stands ready to assist you! They can tell you where work is taking place, who the missionary and partner-church leaders are, and provide information that will increase your capacity to become a part of how God is carrying out His mission. Learn more at [lcms.org/missionaries](http://lcms.org/missionaries).

The mission field is large and varied — keeping the lines of communication open ensures safe, effective, collaborative mission efforts to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

For more information and clarifications about the Commission on Constitutional Matters opinion on Bylaw 3.8.3 and the BIM as the only sending agency, visit [lcms.org/faqs/ccm-opinion-14-2724](http://lcms.org/faqs/ccm-opinion-14-2724).



LEARN MORE AND GET INVOLVED:

[lcms.org/mission-and-outreach](http://lcms.org/mission-and-outreach)

To contact the BIM please email [bim@lcms.org](mailto:bim@lcms.org).

