

Jesus said, "Let the little children come unto me"

There are 22 lively children, ages 8 to 14, on my class roster at Majesty Gardens Sunday school in inner-city Kingston, Jamaica. Only about seven (and rarely the same seven) attend faithfully.

Once during class I sent a misbehaving boy back into church to his mother. Afterward, his mother asked, "Did you know that three of the children in your class, including my son, have seen their fathers murdered? That may be affecting their behavior." Indeed.

At the mother's request, our mission congregation began counseling these three children and three others from the community whose fathers have been killed. The results are remarkable: the children are more focused in Sunday school and public school; the mother gained self-confidence after successfully organizing the women who attend along with their children.



ELCA associate missionary Mary Hills Kuck serves with her husband, the Rev. David Kuck, at the United Theological College of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica.

And Jesus took the children up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them

(from Mark 10:16).



Twila Schock

Mary Kuck, pictured with choir members of the United Theological College of the West Indies, is a communication-skills tutor at the college.

Richard Young: ELCA Missionary, Pastor, Physician

Some pastors wear a cross. But the Rev. Richard Young wears a stethoscope. Serving as missionary pastor of six Lutheran congregations in Guyana, Young is also a physician.

"My call with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana is 50 percent medical and 50 percent pastoral work," said Young. Although the need for medical care can be great, the Guyanese have focused more on Young's call as pastor.

"I was struck that the spiritual needs of Guyanese were often placed above their physical ones. Prayer will often be asked first and medicine comes second," he said.

Work as a parish pastor in Guyana is similar to the work of an "American pastor, with some exceptions," according to



Twila Schock

ELCA missionary Richard Young serves in Guyana

Young. One difference is that Guyanese pastors are "given more responsibility for decision-making in the congregation. They are considered to know the right way and expected simply to give directions," said Young.

Young said his favorite thing is witnessing "Aha!" moments "when someone comprehends for the first time that the gospel is really for them."

Young's medical work is practiced at various places of need that he has identified over the years. "When I travel out to give medical care, I carry my little black bag," he said. In it, there is "a little black Bible and a supply of medications which are dispensed free of charge," said Young. Young regularly treats members of his congregations and holds a monthly clinic. He also serves at various community clinics, shelters and homes "for the aged and poor."

"Teaching is also an important part of my medical work," said Young. "People leave hospital clinics with a prescription and a pat on the head but often do not know their diagnosis, what the prognosis is, what medicine they have been given, or what they can do to prevent the problem."

Young said that he was taught "in medical school that the word 'doctor' means 'teacher' not 'healer.' Since my patients all know that I am a pastor, they often request prayer as part of the encounter. I hope they leave the visit feeling validated as a valued child of God."

This article is an edited version of an April 29, 2010, ELCA News Service feature written by Melissa Ramirez Cooper (www.elca.org/news).

"I need to polish the swan!" exclaims Helloues Aveloo, as I show her my photo of the swan on the Paulus church gate in Lelydorp, Suriname. Baptized 85 years ago as a Lutheran, Helloues is part of the revitalization the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname (ELKS).

ELCA missionary in Suriname, the Rev. Kevin Jacobson, speaks about church renewal in the ELKS. Upon his arrival, church members were overwhelmed with the job of strengthening this small Caribbean church. He saw that "the potential was all here."

"I reminded them that when the big things are collapsing, it's in the little things that you find life. So, do one thing! Paint the wall. Plant a hibiscus bush. Fix the sink. Polish a cross." Helloues Aveloo decided to polish the swan.

Much can be learned about the "do one thing" approach to revitalizing parish life from Pastor Jacobson and the ELKS.

Sponsors often report that the personal and global focus of ELCA missionary sponsorship renews the local congregation. Through daily prayer, frequent communication and the occasional "missionary visit," we share one another's joys, burdens, gifts and stories. Missionaries are our "hand in hand" link with both ELCA and global church companions. The result is strengthened ministry around the corner and around the world.

I invite you to "do one thing" that will make a world of difference: become an ELCA missionary covenant sponsor. Visit www.elca.org/missionarysponsorship to learn more.

In 2010, the Rev. Twila Schock, director ELCA Global Mission Support, visited ELCA missionaries serving in Suriname, Guyana and Jamaica.



Twila Schock

Paulus church gate, Lelydorp, Suriname

Operation Thanks-Giving (OT-G2)

1. Make "thankful for you" greeting cards for ELCA (International) Missionaries. They can be simple or elaborate, sentimental or silly. Send as many as you like. Sending 180 greetings would mean that every missionary household will receive one of your cards. Feel free to include an e-mail address; you may receive a "thanks for the thanks" note.
2. Mail these "random acts of appreciation" cards to **ELCA Missionary Sponsorship (OT-G2), 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631**. Cards will be mailed on November 10 and December 10, 2010.
3. Mail cards directly to specific missionaries (i.e., those you sponsor) and other service international personnel connected to you (e.g., members of your congregation serving in the military).
4. Your encouraging support is greatly appreciated! Your sustaining support is also needed. Consider sending a gift for "ELCA Missionary Sponsorship" along with your cards.
5. Learn more at www.elca.org/operationthanksgiving.

"it was a wonderful surprise to open the operation thanksgiving cards. i felt loved and i felt like maybe this whole big lutheran church really is smaller and more connected than i think. thank you more than you can imagine for the cards!" —emily ewing (slovakia)



OT-G card from Bethany Lutheran, Star Prairie, Wis.

HOW TO GIVE

1. To give through your congregation, write "ELCA Missionary Sponsorship" on the check's memo line.
2. To give online, visit www.elca.org/4missionaries.
3. To donate directly, make your check out to "ELCA Missionary Sponsorship" and mail to: **ELCA Global Mission Support, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631-4101**.
4. Give a gift that says "you mean the world to me." Call 800-638-3522 to donate and to request a Global Mission Support gift card ("Thanking," "Celebrating," "Honoring," or "Remembering").
5. Visit www.elca.org/handyresources to discover Global Mission Support offering envelopes and gift cards.

