

Called to a
global perspective

Passport to your heart

*A program to help us understand our
God-given roles as global women*

contents

1	design a t-shirt	15 minutes	3
2	forces that shape our global vision	15-20 minutes	5
3	who is a global woman?	15-30 minutes	8
4	building global bridges	15 minutes	9
	appendix: some global women leaders and their characteristics		11
	Women of the ELCA resources		12
	handouts		
	t-shirt drawing		h-1
	closing litany		h-2
	p.s. good news!		h-3

To the leader

This resource may be used as a congregational unit program, as part of a cluster or conference event, or as a synodical women's convention workshop.

The format is flexible, depending on the size of your group. For small groups, try shared leadership, giving everyone a copy of the entire resource. For larger groups, assign a facilitator for each section (1-4). Allow the facilitators to decide how to conduct each section, and have copies of the three handouts for each participant.

Consider also the suggestions in the Appendix for soliciting or preparing profiles of global women leaders in advance of the program.

Time required

1-1½ hours. The suggested times may be altered to meet the needs of your group.

Materials needed

- Sample T-shirt from a rock concert that lists cities where the group has toured (*borrow one from a teen, and invite her to participate in your program*)
- Copies of the three handouts for each participant
- Paper, pens, and markers for each participant
- A world map or globe
- Several sheets of blank newsprint
- One sheet of newsprint with the definition of *global women leaders* from p. 8
- Tape or thumbtacks for hanging the newsprint
- Bibles (for the reading of Romans 12:2 in section 2)



design a t-shirt

15 minutes

The purpose of this section is to build community. Take care that no one feels left out because she has not traveled as extensively as others.

steps for facilitator

1. *After welcoming the group, read aloud the "Introduction" below to set the stage for this program. Invite participants to stretch their thinking as they imagine themselves connected to women around the world. Challenge them to begin to see themselves as global women.*

INTRODUCTION

Believe it or not, we already *are* global women. As baptized children of God, we are members of the global family that God claims and loves. We are connected to women all over the world in ways we may not even realize.

Whether we are seasoned globe-trotters or armchair tourists, each of us has been shaped by our own ethnic heritage and family traditions. We receive world news daily. We buy produce flown in from every corner of the earth. We eat at ethnic restaurants. We wear clothes made in factories thousands of miles away. We support our congregation and possibly some international relief organizations, which in turn pass along money and aid that ultimately reaches dozens of countries. We *are* global women!

2. *If you are able to locate one, display a T-shirt from a rock group's tour. Be sure that all participants have a copy of the T-shirt drawing (handout 1) and a pen.*

3. *Read aloud "Getting Started."*

GETTING STARTED

Young people today love to wear T-shirts publicizing the latest concert tour of their favorite musical group. Often a list of the various cities where the group has performed appears on the back of the shirt.

Today we are going to design our own world-tour T-shirt. On the drawing of the T-shirt, list all the countries outside the United States you have ever visited, including places you visited as a child or young adult. If you haven't traveled much, name countries visited by people close to you.

(continued)

design a t-shirt *(continued)*

4. *Allow about 5 minutes for everyone to list the names of all the places they have visited. Then ask each person to read her list out loud so that members of the entire group may add those countries to their own T-shirt. Keep a world map or globe handy in case someone names an unfamiliar place.*
5. *Then ask the discussion questions below.*

for discussion

1. How many different countries has this group visited? Are you surprised at the number?
2. For what purpose did you go to these countries (for example, vacation, mission work, visits to friends or family, studies, a job, military service)?
3. How many places might this group have listed 50 years ago? 100 years ago?
4. Reflect on how and why the world is shrinking.
5. What does it mean to refer to the world as a global village?



forces that shape our global vision *15-20 minutes*

The purpose of this section is to open our eyes to the realities of today's world, while looking at these realities through a lens of faith. This is the heaviest section of the resource. Explore the issues without getting overwhelmed by them.

steps for facilitator

1. Ask for three volunteers to read Romans 12:2 slowly, one after the other. Invite the participants to meditate, closing their eyes if they feel comfortable and allowing the words to sink in as the verse is read repeatedly. Permit a few moments of silence after each reading.
2. Divide the group into smaller groups of three. Each person in the small groups should take responsibility for one of the three topics, reading aloud the material and then leading the discussion. The groups shouldn't spend too much time on any one section.

I. supermarket tabloids vs. CNN

One step toward becoming a global woman is being able to distinguish sensationalism from in-depth reporting. When you hear international news, what is usually being reported? Often it's news of natural disasters, terrorism, imprisonment, airplane crashes, protests, environmental problems, religious wars.

Whose voices aren't we hearing? Are we hearing the voices of women and children? Are you aware of 10-year-old girls working in brothels in Bangkok and Bombay? Adolescent girls in Africa being genitally mutilated to discourage sexual temptation? Women in India aborting female fetuses because girls are a financial burden?

Where can we get such information? The *Christian Science Monitor*, National Public Radio, the BBC, *New York Times*, and news releases from the ELCA and Lutheran World Relief are possible sources.

As stories are told, women begin to speak out. As documentaries expose the charred women of India who have been burned in dowry disputes, we begin to recognize similar experiences of women in Pakistan, South Africa, Ecuador, Malaysia, and other places.

These issues are being brought to our awareness by the voices of women advocates. These women are using their influence in the arenas of education, law, politics, religion, health, and environmental activism to act as global women. We can be advocates, too.

(continued)

How does our use of resources have an impact on women in other countries, especially poor women?

forces that shape our global vision *(continued)*

for discussion

1. How aware are people in the U.S. of what is happening globally, especially issues that affect women?
2. What is our responsibility as Christian consumers of news? As discerners of the will of God?
3. Does hearing about international news make you feel more connected or more disconnected? Why?
4. What issues are affecting women in the United States?
5. What are “good and acceptable and perfect” responses to current events in national and international news? What are not?

II. poverty vs. wealth

As Christians, we are challenged to consider this verse from Romans when we look at the world. With recent scientific advances and technological progress, the living conditions of many in the world have improved greatly. Yet poverty and hunger abound. According to the World Bank, one-quarter of the world’s population lives on less than \$1 a day. About two-thirds of the world’s people live in abject poverty. Another one-fourth have become middle class. Ten percent are wealthy. These 10 percent control 90 percent of the world’s resources, and U.S. citizens are among that 10 percent.

for discussion

1. Even if you don’t feel particularly wealthy, reflect on your place of privilege in relation to the rest of the world. How does that position make you feel?
2. What responsibilities does such privilege carry with it?
3. How does your use of resources have an impact on women in other countries, especially poor women?
4. What is the will of God for us? How might we discern it?

III. hopelessness vs. faithfulness

The daily newspapers tell of events that breed hopelessness—with floods in Mozambique, famine in Ethiopia, war in Uganda, anarchy in Sierra Leone, civil war in Angola, genocide in Rwanda. Every day we are bombarded with discouraging statistics.

Women and children make up 80 percent of the refugees fleeing conflict. Two-thirds of the illiterate

Jesus brings hope to people who are oppressed. Their faith gives them strength.

people in the world are women. Hunger is rampant as people experience drought, disease, poverty. Worldwide, nearly 31 million people have died of AIDS, while 34 million more are infected with HIV. Africa is the hardest hit with 25 million dead, 11 million infected. The orphans left behind are not expected to live beyond age 35. In the small country of Malawi, 29 of the sitting parliament officials have died of AIDS. This disease crosses all economic and social classes.

Yet these African countries are home to the fastest growing churches in the world, despite all the challenges they face. Jesus brings hope to people who are oppressed. Their faith gives them strength.

for discussion

1. How does hearing about these issues make you feel? How do you want to react?
2. All global issues are women's issues. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?
3. What can the people of Africa teach us about sustaining faith in the midst of hopelessness?
4. What does it mean to "not be conformed to this world" but to "be transformed"?
5. What are some ways in which your women's group or congregation can help bring hope to people in Africa and other parts of the world?

3

Global women leaders are women who support and speak out on behalf of women everywhere.

who is a global woman? *15-30 minutes*

The purpose of this section is to help women see themselves as global leaders.

steps for facilitator

1. *Display the prepared newsprint sheet with the definition of “global women leaders.” Begin with large-group brainstorming about women who are considered to be global leaders. Read aloud the instructions for the exercise below. Invite the group to call out names that come to mind, and write the names on newsprint. If you get stuck, glance at the list in the Appendix (page 11). Take no more than 5 minutes. Hang the newsprint pages up in your meeting space, where they will make a wonderful visual statement.*

(Note: If you opted to prepare in advance some profiles of women leaders or to invite several participants to bring profiles of women leaders whom they admire [see Appendix], you will want to spend more time on this exercise.)

Not only are we all global women, but we have the potential to be global leaders as well—women who support and speak out on behalf of women everywhere. Let’s make a list of global women leaders. Think of women you admire because they are good leaders. They may be famous or not so famous. They may be living or dead. They may be people you have personally encountered or those you have read about. They may be from the United States or from elsewhere in the world.

2. *Next ask participants to name characteristics of these global women. Write these on a new set of newsprint pages. Keep in mind that later you’ll want to help participants see that many of these same qualities reside in them.*

One definition of leadership is “the capacity of persons to move, inspire, and mobilize others so that they act together to see that things happen.” What is it about the women you just named that makes them leaders? Generate a list of characteristics or qualities that you value in these women.

3. *Encourage participants to do the work of identifying their own leadership qualities. Follow with discussion questions.*

Which of these qualities do you see in yourself? Are there qualities that others see in you?

for discussion

1. Did you find making a list of global women challenging? Which was more difficult: naming the qualities associated with their leadership or identifying yours?
2. Most global women leaders began their efforts right in their own backyards. Where might you begin?

building global bridges *15 minutes*

The purpose of this section is to explore how to begin to build bridges—to think globally and reach out to help other women improve their lives. The steps are (1) listen, (2) learn, and (3) lead.

steps for facilitator

1. *This time ask the questions first. Then read the summary after the group has had a chance to discuss. Reassure participants that it's OK to have more questions than answers at this point.*
2. *Move the group from thinking conceptually to concretely by the end of this section. There's no need for grandiose action plans; you're just trying to bring out ideas about possible next steps.*
3. *Close this session with the litany (handout 2). Send each participant home with a copy of "P.S. Good News!" (handout 3).*

listen

1. Where might your global listening happen?
2. How has the media influenced your listening habits? Is that influence positive or negative?
3. Do you listen to multiple sources? Why is it important to listen to multiple sources?
4. What kinds of stories are you hearing about women around the world?
5. Do you listen to people in your community or region who are from other countries or who have had international experience?

To listen with your heart is to be open to hearing the voices of women telling their stories, raising awareness, confronting the issues. Watch for stories about injustices to women in the news. Listen for the voices of others who are helping women in the United States catch a broader vision.

Human-rights violations occur when no one is looking. So stop, look, and listen to the world. It's easy to get overwhelmed, but don't hide yourself in a veil of ignorance. Listen and let the stories take root in your heart.

(continued)

As a global woman, be an activist, boldly speaking out for those with no voice.

building global bridges *(continued)*

learn

1. How open are you to learning something new?
2. How do you open yourself up to other points of view?
3. How do you react when your assumptions are challenged?
4. How do you discern the truth?

Learn from the stories of other women. Examine the issues that confront women and children around the world. What is your new awareness calling you to do?

Educate yourself and your children. Mentor the next generation of women, reminding them of the past, helping them to look clearly at the present, and working with them to make the future a better place for all women.

lead

1. After listening and learning, what do you need to do to respond?
2. Are you comfortable being a global leader or advocate? What would it take to raise your comfort level? Who or what do you need to help you?
3. Have you been involved in building any bridges between yourself or your community and people of other countries and cultures?
4. Why do we even bother to build global bridges?
5. What will you personally do as a global leader? What are some steps you can take?

Take the resources you have (including your own gifts), and use them to improve the lives of others. Use your voice to lift up the needs of others. Make those around you aware of women and children's issues. Lobby policy makers. Keep the pressure on for action. Fight for change wherever you find injustice.

As a global woman, be an activist, boldly speaking out for those with no voice, exposing harmful practices, calling governments to account for human-rights violations, supporting actions that improve the conditions of women and children all over the world, transforming oppressive institutions, and building communities of peace.

Encourage other women to speak out and become global women activists. Out of conflict and struggle come global women like you who use their faith, courage, and hope to keep others moving forward. United with others in listening, learning, and leading, you can use your presence, power, and position to make a difference.

Accept the call to become one of those global women who will shine with God's light into a darkened world. Pray for all women everywhere who are making a difference.

appendix

some global women leaders and their characteristics

to the facilitator

You may wish to prepare profiles of some women leaders ahead of time and distribute these to a few participants in advance, to be shared with the larger group. Below are some suggestions. (In addition, or as an alternative, you could mount the profiles on construction paper and display them in your meeting space, creating a gallery of "Inspiring Global Women Leaders.") Another possibility: ask several participants to come to the program prepared to share a profile of a woman leader whom they admire.

well-known global women leaders

Mother Teresa, Roman Catholic missionary and helper of the poor in India

Diana, Princess of Wales, advocate for banning land mines

Golda Meir, former prime minister of Israel

Indira Gandhi, former prime minister of India

Margaret Thatcher, former prime minister of Great Britain

Madeleine Albright, U.S. Secretary of State in the Clinton Administration

Corazon Aquino, a leader of the "People's Revolution" in the Philippines
and president of the country from 1986 to 1992

some lesser-known global women leaders

Bertha Holt, founder of Holt International Children's Services, which has placed over 60,000 orphans from around the world in U.S. homes since 1956

Aung San Suu Kyi (pronounced Soo Chee), winner of the 1991 Nobel Prize for Peace for leading Myanmar (formerly Burma) in a nonviolent struggle for democracy

Graca Simbine Machel, Mozambiquan children's rights activist and special advisor on children and warfare for the United Nations

Jozka Jaburkova, Czechoslovakian children's writer who wished to help women better their conditions

Elly Jansen, Dutch social worker who set up the Richmond Fellowship houses for the mentally ill all over the world

Medha Patkar, Indian environmentalist who successfully persuaded her government not to build a huge dam that would have resulted in the loss of many homes

Shirley Smith, Australian aborigine from New South Wales who was active in prison ministry and established a home for single mothers

characteristics of global women

fairness

honesty

integrity

sense of humor

indomitability

wisdom

energy

focus

groundedness in faith

ability to be a peacemaker

courage

strength

passion

humility

devotion

humanitarian spirit

generosity

intelligence

ability to be a bridge builder

compassion

hopefulness

Women of the ELCA resources

Available from Augsburg Fortress, Publishers
P.O. Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209
Phone: 800-328-4648
Fax: 800-772-7766
Web site: www.augsburgfortress.org

Called to be Global Sisters: Seeing Each Other with New Eyes prepares you to meet women from other cultures through two clever role plays. By looking at your similarities and differences, you increase your understanding of each other. Code 6-0001-6484-X

Called to Be Political: But I Don't Want to Be Political! is a two-hour program that offers a fascinating glimpse into the teachings of Martin Luther on the role of Christians in politics and explores how those teachings still speak to us today. Code 6-0001-6485-8

Called to Ethical Decision Making: No Easy Answers is a two-hour workshop exploring the Lutheran ethical approach and the complexities involved in ethical decision making. Workshop participants will gain practical experience in ethical deliberation. Code 6-0001-6486-6

"For the Healing of the World: Speak Out for Women" addresses barriers that stand in the way of justice and healing for women, children, and families and illustrates how you can be involved in breaking down those barriers. Code 6-0001-6491-2

For Your Liberation and Mine: Women of the World Working Together for Justice contains several resources, including a Bible study, information on the Lutheran World Relief Coffee Project, and practical suggestions for how women can be involved in supporting women around the world. Code 6-0001-0656-4

Called to Deal with Difficult Issues by Norma Cook Everist will give members of your community tools for discussing and dialoguing with one another. Code 6-0001-6488-2

Stand Up for Justice! provides practical ideas for becoming an advocate for women in the United States and around the world. Code 6-0001-6495-5

Welcoming the Stranger: A Hospitality Workshop is designed to help the church family open its heart to others, especially those marginalized by society. The resource includes biblical reflections on hospitality, experiential role plays, and possibilities for action. Code 6-0001-6365-7

Who? Me? Women of Faith Making a Difference offers a step-by-step process to address justice issues—such as violence, abuse, poverty, education, and housing—that directly affect women, children, and families. Code 6-0001-6479-3

closing litany

All: The Lord calls us to be global women. Let us rejoice!

Leader: Be generous and share with the poor. You will be blessed for it. (Proverbs 22:9)

If you oppress others, you insult the God who made them; but kindness shown to others is an act of worship. (Proverbs 14:31)

Defend the rights of the poor and the orphans; be fair to the needy and the helpless.
(Psalm 82:3)

A good person knows the rights of the poor, but wicked people cannot understand such things. (Proverbs 29:7)

Treat foreigners as you would your own, and love them as you love yourselves.
(Leviticus 19:34a)

Do not follow the majority when they do wrong, or when they give testimony that perverts justice. (Exodus 23:2)

Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of people who are helpless. (Proverbs 31:8)

Speak for them and be a righteous judge. Protect the rights of the poor and needy.
(Proverbs 31:9)

All: Lord, open our hearts to sisters all over the world. Allow us to recognize and receive the gifts they offer us. Help us to see ourselves as global leaders. Guide us as we try to listen, learn, and lead; through Christ our Lord. Amen

Note: This litany is adapted from Litany 64 in the "Renewals of Commitment" section of the hymnal *Banquet of Praise*, copyright © 1990 by Bread for the World, 50 F Street NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001. Used by permission.

P.S. good news!

There is good news! Through the ELCA companion-synod programs and global advocacy and study seminars, many people are serving as Christ's witnesses to the world. Church groups are traveling to build libraries in Tanzania, to build houses in Bolivia, to repair orphanages in Slovakia. We can make a difference.

Women of the ELCA is sensitizing women through the "Women Building Global Community" program, in which groups of women travel to other countries, see the local conditions, hear people's stories, and observe the contrasts. As they do so, they take another step toward becoming global women. These global women leaders are sharing the stories about women's issues that they have heard. They are available to speak with your group and will challenge you to be part of a global network that can spread the stories and advocate for women everywhere.

For more information about the "Women Building Global Community" program, call Women of the ELCA at 800-638-3522, ext. 2747.

Tell the story

Deb Pangerl of the St. Paul Area Synod is one of these global women. She traveled with Women of the ELCA to Tanzania, where she met women of the Maasai (pronounced "ma-sigh") tribe. "The Maasai women, young and old, are the foundations of their congregations," Deb said. "They are the bridges that allow the gospel to reach their homesteads." Yet life is difficult for these women.

"We saw young Maasai girls who wanted more than the sixth-grade education that the government provides," Deb went on. "It lit a spark in me to find out more about them."

That spark prompted Deb to tell heartbreaking stories of these young girls in *Lutheran Woman Today* (March 2002). This article resulted in an outpouring of concern from compassionate readers. In a short time, readers had responded with gifts of more than \$20,000, used for scholarships to allow these Tanzanian girls to attend school and improve their futures.

Called to a Global Perspective is one program in the Listen, God Is Calling series produced by the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to help women's groups explore together what God is calling them to be and do.

credits

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