



breadfortheworld
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

A group of approximately 15 diverse people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are posing for a group photo. They are standing on a dirt path in front of a waterfall. Many of them are holding long, thin wooden sticks vertically. The group is arranged in several rows, with some people in the front row kneeling or sitting. The background shows a rocky cliff and lush green foliage.

Getting Ready to Come Back

Advocacy Guide for Mission Teams



Who is Bread for the World?

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. By changing policies, programs and conditions that allow hunger and poverty to persist, we provide help and opportunity far beyond the communities where we live.

God's grace in Jesus Christ moves us to help our neighbors, whether they live in the next house, the next state or the next continent. Food is a basic need, and it is unjust that so many people must go without enough to eat. We can end hunger in our time. Everyone, including our government, must do their part. With the stroke of a pen, policies are made that redirect millions of dollars and affect millions of lives. By making our voices heard in Congress, we make our nation's laws more fair and compassionate to people in need.

What is an Offering of Letters?

Bread for the World members write personal letters and emails to Congress. Working through our churches, campuses, and other organizations, we engage more people in advocacy. Each year, Bread for the World invites churches and groups across the country to take up a nationwide Offering of Letters to Congress on an issue that is important to hungry people. People place these letters in the offering plates during church services, prayerfully offering them to God before sending them to Congress.

The Offering of Letters enables individuals to see their concerns translated into policies that help hungry and poor people improve their lives. For many of these letter-writers, it is their first time communicating with their members of Congress. This outpouring of concern sends a powerful message to our country's political leaders and helps us as a nation move closer to our goal of ending hunger.

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Advocacy Guide for Mission Teams

www.bread.org/advocacyguide



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For Team Leaders

Getting Ready to Come Back will help short-term mission teams traveling internationally to understand how political, social, and economic systems contribute to hunger and poverty. The guide seeks to support and encourage mission teams to engage in advocacy as informed Christian citizens upon their return home.

The guide is designed to complement other training materials used to prepare short-term mission teams. It does not cover issues of cultural sensitivity, travel preparation, group dynamics, or missional theology that other manuals explore. Your denomination's mission office may have specific recommendations for such a manual. This guide has been written mainly for a U.S. audience, but Canadians may find additional information in Appendix B.

Although *Getting Ready to Come Back* is written for all members of a short-term mission team, we recommend that a single leader assume primary responsibility for encouraging participants to use the guide by (1) setting the goals and expectations for independent research, journal entries, and reflections; (2) scheduling, planning, and leading discussion times; and (3) encouraging members to get involved in advocacy. "Leader's Notes" can be found throughout the guide.

Leaders should plan at least four sessions on advocacy, the

first scheduled before departure, the second held during the mission experience, the third taking place after returning to North America, and a final meeting several months after the mission experience.

The format of *Getting Ready to Come Back* encourages mission team members to begin each step with independent study and reflection, which will serve as the basis for discussion during the group gatherings. Sample prayers are provided to conclude each gathering.

All Web site address in this Guide are available as live links on Bread for the World's Web site, www.bread.org/advocacyguide.



Introduction

Short-term mission trips can be life-changing experiences. Research shows, however, that they often are not. One reason is that groups spend many hours preparing for their trip—but little time preparing for what happens when they return.

Following a powerful mission experience, some participants may feel called to return to the field for a long-term mission commitment. With adequate preparation, however, everyone has the potential to become a lifelong advocate in partnership with hungry and poor people everywhere.



Getting Ready to Come Back introduces your mission group participants to advocacy as a way to do justice, love your neighbor, and minister with the least of these. It provides the tools you need to prepare your group to be observant, inquisitive, and thoughtful about the poverty you will observe and experience on your trip. And it suggests ways to process those experiences so that each person can take actions that lead to real change—change that helps alleviate or remove the underlying causes of human suffering.

In his book *Loaves, Fishes and Leftovers: Sharing Faith's Deep Questions*, Ted Loder discusses the importance of Christians engaging in advocacy in an effort to promote justice, peace, love, and hope. He writes, “It’s not just volunteering in soup kitchens, which is excellent, but it’s joining the struggle to eliminate poverty itself.” The same is true for our overseas mission experiences.

Getting Ready to Come Back will challenge your group to see a new dimension of mission. It introduces advocacy as an important way God calls us to respond to our mission experiences. It is our hope that the impact of your mission experience will not end as memories fade. Instead, the knowledge and experiences you gained will

Advocacy (AD-vuh-kuh-see): noun; the act of pleading for, supporting, or recommending; active espousal.

provide a springboard into a long-term commitment of speaking out with God's people in need.

While this guide focuses on advocacy for international mission teams, the same principles apply for domestic mission experiences. You may want to consider using the same model to prepare groups for short-term mission trips in your own country.

Becoming an Advocate

by Lily Cheng

During the summer of 2007, I traveled to Guatemala to teach English to kids in elementary school. However, God changed my life in unexpected ways. I went with the mentality that I was in Guatemala to serve them and to change their lives. I met different kids who lived each day in complete poverty and hunger. As I met these new friends and heard their stories, God poked my heart, prodded it, and shook it up a bit. Finally, God broke it.

God broke my heart as I finished up my lunch one day. When I got up to throw away my unused condiment packets, one of the girls asked for my mayonnaise.

She relished it. Gingerly, she squeezed out the remaining mayonnaise, making it last as long as possible. These kids have learned long ago how to deceive their empty stomachs with flavor. This is hunger. This blew my mind!

With these kids, there is no self-pity, no guilt, no wallowing. This is their life. For them, there are no alternatives. Life is hunger.

I realized that fighting hunger means more than just giving food. This is simply a temporary Band-aid to a larger problem. Without some fundamental change, this



Celia Escudero Espadas

cycle of hunger and poverty will continue. I was motivated by the conviction to help my new friends realize that there are alternatives; there can be change.

My answer came through an ad for Bread for the World's Hunger Justice Leaders' Training Conference. Through exploring the mission of Bread for the World, I was introduced to the idea of Christians lobbying in Congress. I found this to be unbelievable and incredible. After all, Capitol Hill and lobbying is often portrayed in a negative light, synonymous with corruption. But what I realized was that this feeling of intimidation I had about the government is an indication of

its power, a power that is feared because of its misuse. This is why I shied from politics. Bread for the World helped me understand that Christians, as servants of Christ, need to be in these difficult places and need to realize the potential of our government's power for God's work.

In spite of these convictions, I was still intimidated beyond belief when I found that I would spend the last day of the conference meeting with my representatives and senators. But as I went into

meeting after meeting, the faces of my friends in Guatemala came alive as I talked about poverty. What fueled the issue of hunger for me were not posters of starving children or statistics of poverty. It was the people I met and the friends I had made in Guatemala. As I talked with my representatives and senators, hunger became more real and more relevant. More and more, it pushed away the intimidation I felt toward politics and Capitol Hill.

The sense of empowerment I felt when lobbying in D.C. inspired me to bring this conviction and need for change to my community in Berkeley, California. Poverty, hunger, and homelessness have become so commonplace here that it has become an accepted reality. But even here, change can happen; God can move. However, conviction must be partnered with action. With the support that Bread for the World has given me, I have been able to raise awareness in my community, interweaving hunger and poverty into discussions of God. Hunger and poverty are not just issues that concern the socially active. People hunger. People are in need. That's all we need to know, as followers of Christ, to step out in faith and speak up.

Lily Cheng is a student at the University of California, Berkeley. She is a Bread for the World Hunger Justice Leader and activist.



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STEP 1: Preparing to Go

In Matthew 10, Jesus prepares his disciples for mission with information and instructions before he sends them out. This Scripture passage reminds us of the value of preparation and the importance of background knowledge before we travel. This session will guide you through research questions that will serve as the basis for study and discussion during this important preparation time.

Here you will begin to learn about your host country's strengths and weaknesses, and the ways your own country is engaged with this nation—both positively and negatively. Over time, you will gain an understanding of how complex the underlying problems can be in a particular country or region.

Background work is key as you begin to develop an eye for discovery and a mind for learning more. In addition to the Web links suggested here, you might simply use your favorite search engine (i.e., Google) to learn more. Do not worry if statistics vary from source to source. Use the glossary in the Appendix to look up unfamiliar terms.

The mission experience itself will allow opportunities for additional research and learning. And after you return from the mission experience, you will set new goals and the work will continue.

Independent Research

A. Researching Your Host Country

The country we are visiting is: _____

1. Visit the U.S. State Department Web site www.state.gov and scroll down the home page to “Learn About” your host country. Then visit the World Bank’s Web site www.worldbank.org and look for a summary of information about your host country. What interests you

Leader’s Note:

Leaders can do this research themselves or divide it among team members to encourage their learning about your host country.

Since Web sites change frequently, leaders might want to check them before assigning one to a less experienced Web user.

All research should be completed before the Step 1 gathering.

Web addresses throughout this Guide are live links at www.bread.org/advocacyguide.

2. Visit Bread for the World Institute’s Hunger Report Web site, www.bread.org/hungerreport and click on “Downloads” to seek more information about hunger and poverty in your host country. What new information did you learn?

3. Visit the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Monitor Web site www.mdgmonitor.org to learn more about these international goals to be reached by the year 2015. Then click on the profile for your host country to see its progress toward each specific goal.

1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger _____
2. Achieve Universal Primary Education _____
3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women _____

Millennium Development Goals

-  Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
-  Achieve Universal Primary Education
-  Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women
-  Reduce Child Mortality
-  Improve Maternal Health
-  Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases
-  Ensure Environmental Sustainability
-  Develop a Global Partnership for Development

www.mdgmonitor.org

5. To learn if there are refugees or displaced persons in your host country, you can visit the Web site of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees at www.unhcr.org and browse by country. You can also look at “where we work” on the Web sites of organizations such as Refugees International www.refugeesinternational.org and The International Rescue Committee www.theirc.org. What did you learn?

6. Visit your denomination’s Web site (see right) and see if your denomination has a connection with your host country. What did you learn?

Denominational Mission Web sites

American Baptist International Ministries
www.internationalministries.org/volunteer_teams

Catholic Network of Volunteer Services
www.cnvs.org

Catholic Relief Services
www.crs.org

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
www.weekofcompassion.org

Christian Reformed Church
www.crcservicelink.org

Church of the Brethren
www.brethren.org/mission

Church World Service
www.churchworldservice.org/action_where_main

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
www.thefellowship.info/missions

The Episcopal Church
www.episcopalchurch.org

Evangelical Covenant Church
www.covchurch.org/cwr/opportunities-to-learn/where-we-work

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
www.elca.org/globalmission

Presbyterian Church USA
www.pcusa.org/worldwide

Reformed Church in America
www.rca.org/volunteer

United Church of Christ
www.globalministries.org

United Methodist Committee on Relief
www.umcor.org

Women’s Missionary Council of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
www.womensmissionarycouncilcme.org

B. The United States and Your Host Country

(See Appendix B for Canadian references)

1. To learn some of the ways the United States is aiding your host country, go to the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Web site, www.usaid.gov/locations/. Click on the region, then select “Country and Regional Profiles.” What are the programs that USAID supports in your host country? _____

2. Return to the U.S. Department of State Web site at www.state.gov and then describe U.S. relations with your host country. _____

3. Visit www.peacecorps.gov to learn if there are Peace Corps volunteers in your country. If so, where are they located? _____

Web addresses throughout this Guide are live links at www.bread.org/advocacyguide.



Margaret W. Nea

Going Deeper

What is the history of U.S. involvement in your host country?

What is the impact—positive and negative—of U.S. involvement in the region and surrounding areas?

Are U.S. corporations present?

How has U.S. pop culture influenced the country?

**Leader's
Note:**

Consider asking foreign nationals living in North America what they thought about the country prior to their arrival. What was their hardest adjustment? How has their view of North America changed? What do they want to tell North Americans about their home country? About their new country? Be prepared to share information during the Step 1 gathering.

4. Go to www.state.gov/f/releases/iab/fy2009cbj/ and scroll down to “Request by Region” to note U.S. funding allocated to regions/countries. For which program areas in your host country is the United States spending the most money? _____

5. If you are interested, find out about some projects other U.S. groups are carrying out in the country. For examples, see www.care.com, www.crs.org, www.churchworldservice.org, www.savethechildren.org, www.wr.org, www.worldvision.org _____



Group Session 1

You will complete this section with your group. Come to the session prepared to share and discuss your research.

Scripture

Isaiah 58 and Matthew 25:31-46

Discussion

As North American Christians traveling to another country on mission, it's important to keep your heart and eyes open:

- for evidence of God's presence and for the impact of the church as an agent of God's love.
- for evidence of your country's presence, including the impact of foreign assistance, trade policies, debt, corporations, and the military.

The purpose of this study is to help you gain a broader context for the experiences you will have during the trip. This includes learning about the history, geography, and culture of your host country. It also includes considering the ways your country's policies and programs affect—for better or worse—the lives of the people you are about to meet.

Suggested Discussion Topics

What follows may be more questions than your group can answer. Take a moment before your group session to determine which questions will be most beneficial for your group.

1. What information did you find most surprising or valuable as you researched your host country?
2. What are the biggest challenges the people in your host country face? What are some of the country's strengths?

3. What progress has occurred during the past 10 years that meets some of those challenges?
4. How would you summarize your country's involvement in your host country?
5. What questions will you ask yourself and others during the trip?
 - Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? See sample questions in the box on page 25.
 - Be sensitive to cultural norms. In some cases, questions should be directed only to mission personnel. Check with your host to determine what is appropriate.
7. What does it mean to be a North American traveling internationally? Consider stereotypes: Which do you fit? Which don't you fit?
8. If you have spoken with someone who came to North America from another country, what were their views? How have their views changed?
9. How do you believe that your country's policies and programs affect your host country? What are the benefits? What are the disadvantages? What do you think the local perspective on your country might be?
10. Read the suggested texts from Isaiah and Matthew. What are your responsibilities as a North American citizen and Christian? Might there be tension between your responsibilities as a Christian and as a citizen?
11. What does it mean to be an advocate for hungry and poor people? In what ways can someone advocate for those living in poverty? See the example of Lily Cheng in her story "Becoming an Advocate," page 7.
12. How do you imagine or hope that you might be affected by the trip you are about to take?



Celia Escudero Espadas

For More Information

**U.N. Development Programme
Country Offices:**

www.undp.org/countries

Google News:

Search by country

**Library of Congress country
profiles:**

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles.html>

**Jubilee USA Beginner's Guide
to Debt:**

www.jubileeusa.org/?id=109

Leader's Note:

Your group might consider emailing your hosts to prepare for future dialogue. See sample messages in Appendix C.

The Burning Questions

Individually, think about the one question you would most like to have answered about your host country. Write your question in the space below. You will revisit these questions in Group Session 3.

Concluding Thoughts

As you approach your departure, consider your short- and long-term goals. What do you hope to accomplish during the trip? Some members may feel that the point is to achieve or fulfill a mission, but the primary goal is to accompany your hosts in their journey—to experience, listen, learn from, and engage with them. Be appropriately inquisitive, so that you will continue gaining knowledge about your host country and about the ways your country's policies and programs have affected it. Be curious and humble as you respectfully engage in dialogue.

What are your long-term goals? What do you hope to accomplish after your return to North America? Consider ways to continue ministering to these new friends after you return home.

Prayer

Open our eyes to see you in the people we will meet.

Open our ears to hear what you would have us learn.

Open our lips to offer words of encouragement, hope, and love.

Open our hands to commit acts of service.

Open our hearts to a passion for justice.

Open our minds to discern how your will might be done.

Amen.



STEP 2: In Your Host Country

You have a unique opportunity to continue learning about your host country—now your research takes place on the ground, through observation and dialogue. Some suggestions for interactions in your host country:

- You will be seeing evidence of God’s presence and the impact of the church as an agent of God’s love. Also keep your eyes open for the ways your own country has influenced and affected this nation.
- What North American products—companies, goods, restaurants—do you see?
- Tell your hosts about your desire to learn more about their country, as well as how your country’s policies and programs have affected them. These questions may be uncomfortable for the people you meet, and—depending on the country’s political situation—they may not have the freedom to express themselves. Don’t push policy discussions if you sense a reluctance to talk.
- Be a good listener. Seek to understand, not to be understood. As you talk with people, repeat their answers back to them to make sure you have heard them correctly.
- Don’t jump to conclusions; discuss your questions or confusion with someone who is more familiar with the situation.
- Invite people to tell you what they know of your country. Ask them if they know of ways that their country and your country work together.
- If people are critical of your country, welcome their honest opinions and try to understand their perspectives. Listen and always be respectful, even if you disagree. Remember that you are a guest in their country.
- Be personal and share information about yourself. Remember that we all wonder and worry about the same things—our jobs, our families, our futures. Reflect on how your hosts are “neighbors” as Jesus defines them.



Questions You Might Ask

Questions you might ask if you were to visit a health program. Consider similar questions that would be appropriate in your mission context.

Who is receiving help from this health unit? Who is staffing it? Who is providing supplies and funding?

What illnesses and medical problems are treated? What are the medications available? What is working? What needs to improve?

Where is the unit? Why is it here? Where are the people coming from?

When will additional medications and services be available? When will the funding end?

Why are people suffering from these diseases? Why are some medications unavailable? Why are there not more health units?

How is this working? How is your country helping here? How could this program work better?

3. Some of the major challenges here are... _____

4. I see God working here through... _____

Going Deeper

As you consider the ways your country is involved in this country, ask yourself:

Who? Who began the relationship? Who is it affecting?

What? What are the basic facts of this involvement?

Where? Where is the impact of this involvement?

When? When did it begin? Is it short-term or long-term?

Why? Why does this involvement exist?

How? How is this affecting people? How is this involvement successful? How could it be better?

5. I see my country's involvement here in... _____

6. People here think that my country... _____

10. I feel God might be calling me to respond to this experience by... _____

Group Session 2

You will complete this section with your group. Come to the session prepared to share and discuss some of your journal entries.

Scripture

Philippians 2:1-7 and 1 Corinthians 12

Suggested Discussion Topics

Your group has been sharing powerful experiences, and it's important to take time together to process what you are seeing, hearing, and learning. You will probably do this frequently during the trip, but this session provides an



Leader's Note:

Let group members know that their next advocacy discussion will take place after returning home. This meeting will allow members to discuss the final two journal entries in more detail.

opportunity to discuss your journal entries, focusing on your perspective as a Christian from North America.

1. Share responses to the journal entries. Highlight entries 5-10.
2. Read and discuss the following words from Mother Teresa:

“When a poor person dies of hunger, it has not happened because God did not take care of him or her. It has happened because neither you nor I wanted to give that person what he or she needed. We have refused to be instruments of love in the hands of God to give the poor a piece of bread, to offer them a dress with which to ward off the cold.”

—*Mother Teresa: In My Own Words*,
compiled by Jose Luis Gonzales-Balado (Random House, 1996)

- How does it feel if you read the “you” and “I” as personal?
 - How does it feel if you read the “you” and “I” as universal?
 - How does it feel if you read the “you” and “I” as your country?
3. Read the verses from Philippians and Corinthians, and apply the words to the global church.
 - Review personal reflections from journal entry 4.
 - Consider a vision for partnerships that are interdependent.

Consider your newly acquired gifts of knowledge and experience. How will you use these gifts? As you prepare to return to North America, begin thinking about your next steps. The next session will introduce you to a variety of ways you can use your knowledge, experience, and voice to help those in need—to advocate for those whose voices are not always heard.

Prayer

For Those Who Are Hungry

In the name of him
who gave bread to the hungry,
we remember all
who through our human ignorance,
folly, and sin
are condemned to live in want.
Show us, who have so much,
what we can do
to help those who have so little;
and bless the efforts of those
who work to overcome poverty and hunger,
that sufficient food may be found for all;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—from *The Book of Common Order
of the Church of Scotland*
(St. Andrew Press)



STEP 3: Taking Action

What an amazing opportunity you have had! It is indeed a privilege to participate in a mission experience. You have gained firsthand knowledge of another country by working with partners there. With this privilege comes responsibility as you return home.

The people you met are your neighbors (see Luke 10). You have seen their strengths and gifts, their challenges and needs. What might God's will be for these friends, and how might you be a part of it?

It is time to use your experiences and knowledge to take action. As North American citizens, you have power by virtue of your citizenship. You have the ability to speak on behalf of your friends as they work to meet their needs and improve their living conditions. What you now do through advocacy will supplement what they are doing for themselves. Your voices can complement their voices.

Spend some time considering the questions below as you prepare to participate in the group gathering. Then review the information on advocacy as you begin to make decisions about the best ways for you to become an advocate.

A. Reflections

Review your thoughts about your host country that you wrote in Step 1. How have your views changed now that you have seen the country firsthand?

Leader's Note:

Remind participants to complete their reflections before the gathering.



Robin Stephenson

Reflecting on your experiences and observations, when did you experience:

Feelings of hope? _____

Feelings of hopelessness? _____

Feelings of empowerment? _____

Feelings of guilt? _____



Margaret W. Nea



Hope in God and in the fulfillment of God's reign on earth:

How did you see God at work? _____

How can you help continue that work? _____

Satisfaction at your own country's assistance efforts:

What were you proud of? _____

What were you not proud of? _____



Richard Leonardi

Consider setting up MDG prayer stations developed by Micah Challenge USA and available at www.breadstore.org.

The prayer stations invite participants to reflect and engage with the issues of global poverty, bringing them to God in prayer.

“When we offer ourselves to God through prayers of intercession, whether for strangers we have never met in a distant country, for acquaintances, or for those we know more intimately, we do so realizing that God works through the world for the world. Through prayer, we open ourselves to conformity with God’s great will We risk being used by God as answers to our own prayers.”

—Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki,
In God’s Presence: Theological Reflections on Prayer

B. Different Forms of Advocacy

Your voice is powerful, and there are many ways you can speak up for people living in your host country. You can be an advocate with God, with your community, with the public, in the marketplace, and with your nation’s decision-makers. See which of the ideas below sound like exciting ways to use your voice.

1. Advocacy with God

“God’s touch upon our lives often takes the form of a call to pray so that we ourselves become a new opening for God’s power in the world...even though we are at a distance, our prayers change what is possible. For God is never at a distance.”¹ As you pray for your host country and the new friends you met there, you might invite family, friends, and people in your church to pray with you. You could organize a public prayer vigil, where people can learn about your host country, pray for the people, and make a public statement. You can even invite religious leaders and local media for a bigger splash.

2. Advocacy with Your Community

You have a story to tell, and your community is the place to start telling it. Your family and friends will want to hear about your trip and what you learned from it. Emails, blogs, and online social networks are great ways to share.

Your congregation is full of people who want to hear what you have to say. As you share, you can give them opportunities to join you in working with and speaking up for the people you met. You could offer to speak to Sunday school classes and small groups and in worship services, and write an article for your church newsletter.

Local schools and universities may also be interested in your experiences. There may be existing student groups that will want to become involved, or you might work with students to build one. Advocacy with the community will require some preparation (and, especially for shy

Sample Letter to the Editor

Senators urged to back the Global Poverty Act

Durham Herald

August 27, 2008

“Rising food prices are a concern to many people in Durham. For the world’s poorest people in developing countries—who spend up to 80 percent of their income to buy food—the situation is devastating.

This is why we ask you and your readers to join us in urging Sen. Elizabeth Dole and Sen. Richard Burr to become co-sponsors of the Global Poverty Act, SB 2433.

The Global Poverty Act would require the president to develop and implement a coordinated strategy of U.S. aid, debt relief and trade policies to meet the goal of cutting by half the number of people around the world who live on less than \$1 a day by 2015. For more information about the act, you may visit www.bread.org.

Poor and hungry people should not be allowed to suffer due to partisan politics during this election season. Please urge Sens. Dole and Burr to co-sponsor SB 2433 by calling the Capitol switchboard, (202) 224-3121, and asking for the senators’ offices.”

LLOYD SCHMEIDLER, JOHN ROREM,
NORMA TAYLOR MITCHELL and ADELIN PLUMER
Durham, NC

Note: This letter requests action on a specific bill that was before Congress at the time it was written. For information on current legislation affecting those who are hungry or poor, visit www.bread.org.



Brian Duss



people, some courage!) but your enthusiasm can encourage others to get involved. When they do, your voice will be even stronger.

Keep in mind Jesus' parable of the sower (Mark 4). Just as not all of the seeds fell on fertile ground and took root, not everyone will be ready to receive your message. Don't be discouraged if only a few seem to share your passion and commitment. Start with them and allow the Holy Spirit to use this small group to make a big difference.

3. Advocacy with the Public

A great way to advocate with the public is to write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, which will reach readers throughout your area. Your local paper will have limits on the length of the letter—usually between 100 and 200 words. An original letter that expresses your opinion with conviction may lead to new connections and opportunities for action. You may be surprised at who sees your name in print! For more information on writing letters to the editor, go to www.bread.org/local-media.

4. Advocacy in the Marketplace

Money talks! We can be advocates through the products we buy—or don't buy. We can choose not to support companies that exploit their workers and/or the environment. Boycotting is pressure that can lead to change—consider, for example, how many coffee shops now sell fair trade coffee and chocolate.

We can also influence the market by choosing to buy products from businesses that support fair pricing, employee rights, and environmental sustainability. To find companies and products that meet fair trade standards, you can contact the Fair Trade Federation (www.fairtradefederation.org).

Even writing letters to corporations can bring about results. For example, if the community you visited in your host country is battling HIV/AIDS, you could work together to encourage a

pharmaceutical company to make and distribute inexpensive medicines. Your host country partners may be able to provide information and pictures about those living with the disease, while your church could commit to sending 200 letters to the company to encourage action. A visit to your denomination's Web site can tell you how they may already be engaged with co-ops, fair trade groups, boycotts, and letter-writing campaigns.

5. Advocacy with Decision-Makers

Elected officials make decisions that affect millions of people. Speaking with them can result in big changes, both in this country and around the world. Your voice is especially powerful with them because representing you is their job.

Your experience of visiting your host country makes you a valuable ally and advocate for the people who live there. When you tell your story to your senators and representatives, you use your voice to bring the people of that country to the attention of some of the most powerful leaders in the world.

Calling, writing, and visiting members of Congress are all effective ways to get their attention. To find out who represents you in the U.S. Congress, go to www.house.gov or www.senate.gov. To find your Canadian Parliament member, see Appendix B on page 56. You can go to the Web sites of your senators and representative to find their contact information and learn what issues are important to them.

To call Congress, you can use (202) 224-3121 to reach the Capitol switchboard. Ask for your member's office. Once you are connected, give your name and where you live. Then ask for a specific action. If you choose

Major Fair Trade Organizations

Equal Exchange

www.equalexchange.coop

Equal Exchange's mission is to build long-term trade partnerships that are economically just and environmentally sound, to foster mutually beneficial relationships between farmers and consumers, and to demonstrate the contribution of worker co-operatives and Fair Trade to a more equitable, democratic and sustainable world.

SERRV

www.serrv.org

SERRV International is a nonprofit alternative trade and development organization. Their mission is to promote the social and economic progress of people in developing regions of the world by marketing their products in a just and direct manner.

Ten Thousand Villages

www.tenthousandvillages.com

Ten Thousand Villages is comprised of a global network of social entrepreneurs who try to improve the livelihood of disadvantaged artisans by building a market for handmade products in North America.

to write a personal letter, ask for a specific action and state the reasons why you support the action. For more information on writing a letter to Congress, and to read a sample letter, go to www.bread.org/OL. Visiting your members of Congress (either in Washington, D.C., or in their district offices) can send the most powerful message because of the time and commitment involved. You can schedule a meeting yourself, or join a group as part of a lobby day on a particular issue. If your denomination has a Washington office, it's a good idea to contact them before the meeting. They can give you background information and help with your message and the logistics of your visit.

When you meet with your member of Congress, be ready to tell your story concisely and confidently, and don't be afraid to ask for a concrete commitment. If the person will not commit, ask why. What is needed to change his or her mind? As you consider ways to take action, remember that you are not alone. Your prayers ascend with the prayers of faithful people everywhere. Your voice joins with the voices of advocates around the world, working for an end to hunger and poverty. Your phone calls, letters and visits to Congress can make a difference for people in your host country and around the world.

For more tools to engage decision-makers, check out Bread for the World's annual Offering of Letters campaign at www.bread.org/OL

Remember, members of Congress are not the only decision-makers. You may find as you explore the following list of advocacy partners that you can also petition U.S. administration officials, United Nations leaders, international financial institutions, and heads of multinational corporations.



C. Partners in Advocacy

Advocacy organizations enable you to join a community that is working together on common goals. They will keep you informed on the issues, and they will guide your actions and involvement effectively, targeting actions when and where they are specifically needed. As you participate with a coalition, you will increase the impact of your actions.

Bread for the World www.bread.org

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision-makers to end hunger at home and abroad. Find out about actions you can take and join Christians around the country in an Offering of Letters to Congress.

Denominational and Agency Advocacy Offices

Sponsoring churches and agencies engage in advocacy on many global issues and can link you to their partners addressing specific issues:

- **American Baptist Churches USA**
www.internationalministries.org
- **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**
<http://globalministries.org/get-involved/justice-and-advocacy>
- **Christian Reformed Churches in North America Office of Social Justice**
www.crcjustice.org
- **Church of the Brethren**
www.brethren.org/witness_welcome
- **Church World Service**
www.churchworldservice.org/how_adv_main

Web addresses throughout this Guide are live links at www.bread.org/advocacyguide.



Margaret W. Nea



Margaret W. Nea

- **Cooperative Baptist Fellowship**
www.thefellowship.info/missions
- **Evangelical Covenant Church**
www.covchurch.org/cmj
- **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**
www.elca.org/advocacy
- **The Episcopal Church**
www.episcopalchurch.org/eppn.htm
- **Franciscan Action Network**
www.franciscanaction.org
- **Presbyterian Church USA**
www.pcusa.org/washington
- **Reformed Church in America**
www.rca.org/socialjustice
- **United Church of Christ**
www.ucc.org/justice
- **United Methodist Committee on Relief**
www.umcor.org

Web addresses throughout
this Guide are live links at
www.bread.org/advocacyguide.

D. How Will You Advocate:

1. How will I advocate? Check which of the following you will commit to do:

- I will pray individually
 - I will pray as part of a group
 - I will help organize a prayer vigil
 - I will write a letter to the editor
 - I will submit an article to a religious publication
 - I will educate and involve my congregation
 - I will speak with school or community groups
 - I will stop purchasing a particular product
 - I will encourage letter-writing to decision-makers of a corporation
 - I will write my decision-makers in Congress
 - I will call my decision-makers in Congress
 - I will visit my decision-makers in Congress
 - Other ideas _____
-

2. With whom will I advocate? Check the organizations with which you might partner:

- My denomination
- Bread for the World
- Other organizations (see next page)





Advocacy Organizations

Find links to these and other organizations at www.bread.org/advocacyguide

Hunger and Poverty

- Bread for the World
- Catholic Relief Services
- Micah Challenge
- ONE Campaign
- Oxfam
- Sojourners
- World Vision International

Debt

- Jubilee USA

HIV/AIDS

- Acting on AIDS
- Global AIDS Alliance

Conflict and Genocide

- ENOUGH
- Genocide Intervention Network
- International Crisis Group
- The Save Darfur Coalition
- Witness for Peace

Trade

- Equal Exchange
- Fair Trade Federation
- Global Exchange
- Interfaith Working Group on Trade

- Presbyterian Church, USA
- SERRV
- Ten Thousand Villages

Human Rights

- Amnesty International
- Human Rights Watch
- International Justice Mission
- Not For Sale
- Stop the Traffik

Refugees

- International Rescue Committee
- Refugees International

Water

- Church World Service

Not all Christian groups will agree on particular advocacy issues. Listing on this page does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of the group's policy agenda by Bread for the World or its partner denominations and agencies.

Group Session 3

You will complete this section with your group. Come to the session prepared to share and discuss your reflections and thoughts on advocacy.

Scripture

Micah 6:8 and James 2:14-17

Suggested Discussion Topics

1. Share your thoughts and reflections on the mission experience.
2. Share the questions that you wrote at the end of Group Session 1 (page 22) and what answers you have learned.
3. Read the verses from Micah and James and discuss advocacy as a way to continue partnering with friends from your host country who are living in poverty.
4. How will you respond to questions such as “What was it like?” Practice a one-minute response in small groups. Discuss the importance of using this opportunity to talk about what was meaningful and begin advocating for the people you met.
5. Discuss the importance of connecting with advocacy partners.
 - Partners will keep individuals informed on the issue.
 - Experts will effectively guide your actions and involvement.
 - Organizations are able to increase the impact of your actions by studying the issues and targeting actions when they are needed.
 - Partners will enable you to join a community working on common goals.

Leader’s Note:

For a meaningful closing activity, consider using the “Stone by Stone” activity before closing with prayer.

Instructions are in Appendix D.

6. Review ways to take action. Devise a group plan (see example), and allow at least 10 minutes for people to complete their individual plans by filling out the Advocacy Commitment Sheet.
7. Conclude with the Litany at right.



Jennifer Wilmore

Millennium Campaign/Sermon on the Mount Litany

We are the first generation that can eradicate poverty.
We are those who are called and equipped to make a difference.

We are called to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

We are called to achieve universal primary education.
Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.

We are called to promote gender equality and empower women.
Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

We are called to reduce child mortality.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

We are called to improve maternal health.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

We are called to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

We are called to ensure environmental sustainability.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

We are called to develop a global partnership for development.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

We are called...
And yes, we hear.

– Written for Bread for the World, Gathering 2007,
by Jeffrey W. Carter, Pastor, Manassas (VA) Church of the Brethren

Group Advocacy Plan example

Meet with church ministers to plan the best place and time to share, educate, and engage the congregation.

Persons responsible _____

Completion date _____

Submit a newsletter article about the missions experience that will introduce the idea of advocacy.

Persons responsible _____

Completion date _____

Plan a group visit to your member(s) of Congress to discuss a particular policy issue. This could be to his or her office in your home district or state, or in Washington, D.C.

Persons responsible _____

Completion date _____

Research potential advocacy partners. Choose one or more to introduce to the congregation.

Persons responsible _____

Completion date _____

Plan the worship experience. Consider speakers, photos, prayers, Scripture, offerings, and letter-writing opportunities.

Persons responsible _____

Completion date _____

Write a letter to the editor about a particular issue your group may be focusing on following the trip.

Persons responsible _____

Completion date _____

Group Advocacy Plan Commitment Sheet

Individual Advocacy Plan Commitment Sheet

STEP 4: Sharing Your Advocacy Experiences

Advocacy can be lonely work if you try to do it all by yourself. Individual advocacy also can be less effective than partnering with others.

Finding support in your advocacy work can be crucial for your motivation, long-term commitment, and success. Friends who shared your mission experience can understand where you are in processing the trip. Meeting with them in this last session can be a great encouragement to reach the advocacy goals set in Step 3. This session should also serve as motivation for setting new goals. Consider additional meetings—perhaps annual get-togethers—if the group would find that helpful.

Reflections

As you prepare to share your advocacy experiences with your mission team, consider the highlights and the challenges you've encountered so far.

Summarize your advocacy experiences to date. _____

Going Deeper

Want to go deeper into the biblical and faith grounding of advocacy?

Your group might think about doing an in-depth study from JustFaith Ministries.

For more information, see www.justfaith.org.

Consider Lobby Days

If lobbying a member of Congress seems daunting, consider participating in a Lobby Day and gain experience with others. Group lobbying experiences include:

Bread for the World's Lobby Day, held each June. See www.bread.org for details.

Ecumenical Advocacy Days, held each March. See www.advocacydays.org for details.

What have been the highlights? _____

What have been the challenges? _____

What have you learned from your experiences? _____



Leader's Note:

If this is the final gathering, the goals of this meeting should be support, encouragement, motivation, and challenge.

“Those who struggle for justice for one day are good; those that struggle for many days are very good. Those that struggle for many years are very, very good. But those that struggle for justice their entire lifetime, these are the essential, indispensable ones. This is what the world needs.”

—Julia Lupian, paraphrasing a Latin American saying in *What About Short-Term Mission? From Mission to Mission*, 2006

Group Session 4

You will complete this section with your group. Come to the session prepared to discuss your experiences in advocacy.

Scriptures

Matthew 6:7-15, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, 1 Corinthians 12:12-14

Discussion

1. Allow time to share advocacy experiences.
2. Discuss ways some challenges might be overcome.
3. Who is working with advocacy organizations? Describe the partnership. What are the benefits? What are the challenges?
4. Consider the five types of advocacy (with God, your community, the public, in the marketplace, and with decision-makers). Which types have mission participants not experienced? Why not?
5. How might your advocacy experiences be strengthened?
6. Review the Scripture reading and discuss the meaning of the words, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” What comes to mind as you consider everything you’ve learned and experienced on the trip? What is God’s will for your friends in your host country? What is God’s will for you in North America?

7. An African proverb says, “When you pray, move your feet.” When you pray the Lord’s Prayer, how will you “move your feet?” What are your future goals as a group? As an individual?
8. In their book *Grace at the Table*, David Beckmann and Arthur Simon write, “People of faith must act. Hundreds of millions are still excluded from the earth’s banquet, but God wants to bring them to the table! And God has given us the awesome privilege of enabling more of them to come.” As we seek to do God’s will and work toward bringing more people to the table, what will your commitment be?

Prayer

Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.

—Matthew 6:10-11

Sponsoring Bread for the World’s Offering of Letters in your congregation is an excellent way to continue your advocacy on behalf of hungry and poor people.

Visit www.bread.org



Appendix A • Glossary of Terms

Advocacy: the act of pleading for, supporting, or recommending; active espousal; a deliberate process of speaking out on issues of concern in order to exert some influence on behalf of ideas or persons.

Boycott: a concerted refusal of consumers to purchase the products or services of a business to indicate displeasure with the manufacturer, seller, or provider of the product or to force acceptance of certain conditions.

Co-Op (Cooperative): a jointly owned commercial enterprise (usually organized by farmers or consumers) that produces and distributes goods and services and is run for the benefit of its owners.

Demographic: characteristics and statistics of human populations.

Economic Aid: funds that may be provided to communities or countries in the

event of a humanitarian crisis or to create long-term sustainable economic growth.

Economic Sanctions: punitive measures to pressure a country.

Environmental Sustainability: interacting with the environment in a way that preserves it so that needs can be met not only in the present, but in the indefinite future.

Export: any good or commodity transported from one country to another in a legitimate fashion, typically for use in trade.

External Debt (or foreign debt): the part of a country's total debt that is owed to creditors outside the country. The debt includes money owed to private commercial banks, other governments, or international financial institutions such as the

International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

Extreme Poverty: living on less than \$1.25 per day.

Fair Trade: an organized social movement and market-based approach to empowering developing country producers and promoting sustainability by advocating the payment of a fair price as well as social and environmental standards in areas related to the production of a wide variety of goods.

GDP (Gross Domestic Product): the total market value of all final goods and services produced in a country in a given year. GDP equals a country's total consumer, investment, and government spending, plus the value of exports, minus the value of imports.

GDP per capita: an approximation of the value of goods produced per person in the country; equals the country's GDP divided by the total number of people in the country.

IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons): people forced to flee their homes but who, unlike refugees, remain within their country's borders.

Import: any good or service brought into one country from another country in a legitimate fashion, typically for use in trade.

Lobby: to try to influence the thinking of legislators or other public officials for or against a specific cause.

Millennium Development Goals: eight international development goals that 189 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015.

NGO (Non-Governmental Organization): a legally constituted organization created by private organizations or people with no participation in or representation of any government.

Poverty-focused Development Assistance: a catch-all phrase to describe those accounts within the U.S. foreign aid budget that most effectively provide assistance to poor countries to meet the challenges of reducing poverty and investing in broad-based economic development.

Refugee: a person who flees to a foreign country or power to escape danger or persecution.

Systemic: of or pertaining to a system; in this case, the word is used to describe problems related to systems, policies, and procedures that affect multiple people; most notably used when referring to government systems.

Undernourished: lacking the food needed for health and growth.

Unemployment Rate: the percentage of people in the labor force—available to work and currently seeking work—who are unemployed.



Martin Lueders

Appendix B • For Canadian Citizens

A. Canadian Involvement in the Host Country

Canadian International Development Agency

www.acdi-cida.gc.ca

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is Canada's lead agency for development assistance. It has a mandate to support sustainable development in developing countries in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable, and prosperous world.

B. Canadian Advocacy Organizations

Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives

www.Kairoscanada.com

KAIROS unites churches and religious organizations in a faithful ecumenical response to the call to “do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). We deliberate on issues of common concern, advocate for social change and join with people of faith and goodwill in action for social transformation.

Web addresses throughout this Guide are live links at www.bread.org/advocacyguide.

Make Poverty History Canada

www.makepovertyhistory.ca

Make Poverty History has mobilized Canadians on issues related to poverty at home and abroad. From hundreds of events to hundreds of thousands of email messages to politicians, from getting organized in communities to meeting with decision-makers, Canadian Make Poverty History campaigners are standing up and making a difference.

Micah Challenge Canada

www.micahchallenge.ca

The Micah Challenge has been developed by the Micah Network and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) in response to a groundswell among evangelical Christian churches wanting to contribute at all levels to the alleviation of poverty and to greater justice for poor communities.

C. Advocacy with Canadian Decision-Makers

To find your member of Parliament, go to www.parl.gc.ca.

Appendix C • Sample Message to Country Host

Dear _____,

Thank you for the opportunity to visit you and your colleagues in _____. We appreciate your hospitality, and we look forward to meeting you.

We have many questions! We want to learn as much as we can about your country, your church, and how you see God working in your midst. One issue we're specifically interested in is how our country is involved with _____. What impact do some of our country's programs and policies have there—whether positive or negative? We've attached a list of some specific questions, and we hope to have time to discuss them with you once we arrive. We would also appreciate any advice on appropriate times and ways to dialogue with others in your country.

Are there any questions or issues you would like us to think about as we prepare for our trip?

Thank you again for hosting our group. We look forward to visiting your country and learning from you.

Sincerely,

Your name

Sample Follow-up Message to Country Host

Dear _____,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to meet and work with you in _____.
We truly enjoyed our visit with you. Thank you so much for taking the time to answer all of our questions.
We learned a great deal about your country, your church, and what God is doing in your midst.

Now that we have returned home, we'd like to join our voice with yours. Our group has discussed several ways we can share your stories with our friends, families, communities, and our nation's decision-makers. One example is _____.

Thank you again for hosting our group. We look forward to continuing our relationship with you.

Sincerely,

Your name

Appendix D • Stone by Stone Activity

This activity flows from Alice Walker’s idea in the following quotation that each of us needs to “bring our own small stone of activism” to help build an “edifice of hope”:

“It has become a common feeling, I believe, as we have watched our heroes falling over the years, that our own small stone of activism, which might not seem to measure up to the rugged boulders of heroism we have so admired, is a paltry offering toward the building of an edifice of hope. Many who believe this choose to withhold their offerings out of shame. This is the tragedy of our world. For we can do nothing substantial toward changing our course on the planet, a destructive one, without rousing ourselves, individual by individual, and bringing our small, imperfect stones to the pile.”

—Alice Walker, *Everything We Love Can Be Saved*

What you need:

A bag of stones (can be glass, decorative, natural or rocks from your gravel driveway!)

What you do:

1. Simply show the bag of stones to the group and reflect on the body of Christ and how each member has a unique calling from God to serve a function in the body.
2. Pass the bag around. Each person with the bag may share an advocacy commitment he or she is making and a story he or she will share with others.
3. Encourage folks to take a stone after sharing and keep it on their desk or other visible place to serve as a reminder of the commitments they have made and the people they have encountered.



Advocacy Guide Sponsoring Partners



**American Baptist Churches USA
International Ministries**
www.internationalministries.org



**The Women's Missionary Council Of The
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church**
www.womensmissionarycouncilcme.org



Bread for the World
www.bread.org



Church World Service
www.churchworldservice.org



**Christian Reformed Church
of North America
ice of Social Justice**
www.crcjustice.org



Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
www.thefellowship.info

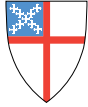


**Church of the Brethren,
Global Mission Partnerships**
www.brethren.org



Week of Compassion (Disciples of Christ)
www.weekofcompassion.org

Advocacy Guide Sponsoring Partners



The Episcopal Church
www.episcopalchurch.org



Reformed Church in America
www.rca.org



Evangelical Covenant Church
www.covchurch.org



United Church of Christ
www.ucc.org



ELCA World Hunger
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.
www.elca.org



United Methodist Committee on Relief
www.umcor.org



Franciscan Action Network
www.franciscanaction.org



Presbyterian Hunger Program
www.pcusa.org/hunger





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