Using the ELCA’s Social Statement

FOR PEACE IN GOD’S WORLD

in Your Congregation

Peace
I leave with you

A Leader Guide Prepared by
the Division for Congregational Ministries
and the Division for Church in Society
of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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### Handouts

- Handout #1, "Images of God"
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- Handout #6, *Legislative Backgrounder: “10 Myths & Realities of Foreign Aid”*

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What’s in this Guide?

This guide will assist those who intend to lead a study of the ELCA’s social statement, For Peace in God’s World. It includes:

- detailed directions for conducting five, one-hour sessions for adults or adults with youth.
- suggestions for supplementary activities as well as ways to adapt the model for use in other settings.
- a listing of additional resources and organizations.
- handout sheets to be photocopied for distribution to participants.

The study process is designed not only to help participants understand the statement but also to reflect on its implications for themselves and their congregation.

As leader, you will need a copy of this guide and a copy of For Peace in God’s World. Participants should have their own copies of the statement to study and mark. The ELCA grants permission to copy the social statement for congregational study, providing each copy displays the copyright found on the back page of the booklet. Or you may order copies by calling the Augsburg Fortress at 1-800-328-4648 and asking for item number 69-3920.

What is the ELCA’s Social Statement on Peace and Why is it Important to Study?

Within the past decade, the global community of nations has entered a new era in international relations. We have witnessed the end of 50 years of Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, along with their respective allies, and the resulting dramatic reduction of the threat of global war. At the same time, the 1990s has seen a surge in regional and local armed conflict and ethnic rivalry. New opportunities and challenges raise fresh questions about our nation’s role in promoting global peace and justice.

Lutherans in the United States have a long-standing interest in and concern for peace among the nations. Lutheran church bodies have spoken officially on war and peace since at least 1922. Such statements express a range of theological perspectives and ethical emphases, in part conditioned by the historical circumstances surrounding each statement. Yet, there are common themes, including the recognition that “peacemaking” is a Christian responsibility, and that peace is linked with other issues including economic development, human rights and international institutions.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America inherited the concern for peace expressed in social statements of its predecessor bodies. In 1991, the Division for Church in Society appointed a Task Force to assist staff in the preparation of a social statement on international peace. The Task Force of fifteen included pastors, theologians, a biblical scholar, specialists in international relations, a four-
star general recently retired from the U.S. Army, peace advocates and others who provided a wide range of background and perspectives. This group published a study, *Peace: God’s Gift, Our Task*, in the Fall of 1993 and a first draft of the social statement in the spring of 1994. Both documents called for and received responses from individuals, congregations and other groups of the church. In the Fall of 1994, a series of hearings were held across the country to gain additional feedback in order to help shape the final proposal to be brought to the Churchwide Assembly in 1995. *For Peace in God’s World* was presented to voting members of the Assembly, and after discussion and amendment, was adopted by a vote of 803-30.

The central message of the statement is contained in the opening paragraph: “We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America share with the Church of Jesus Christ in all times and places the calling to be peacemakers.” And then, “That calling is to proclaim the Gospel of God’s final peace and to work for earthly peace.” The statement begins theologically, with the God of peace, and continues by affirming that the church is a community for peace. It explains a Lutheran understanding of the role of citizens and governments, including questions about the legitimacy of the use of military force. The study presents a multi-dimensional array of tasks for keeping, making and building international peace today. It concludes with a series of implementing resolutions.

Leaders of the study need to be familiar with the purposes of the statement. As an ELCA social statement, *For Peace in God’s World* is intended to offer theological and ethical perspectives to equip the ELCA and its members to fulfill their calling to serve God in the world. It is intended to guide staff, pastors, teachers and other lay persons in their response to issues of war and conflict among the nations and to the challenges of peacemaking.

The concern of this statement is our calling to be peacemakers in the international arena. Although, its focus is not the equally challenging tasks of peacemaking in our families or local communities, this guide offers opportunity for participants to connect the issues of global peace to personal and community concerns. You may want to consult the ELCA Church Council’s “Message on Community Violence,” listed in the Resources section at the back of this guide.

Note also that the statement is not a comprehensive Bible study on peace. Biblical references, however, are included in the statement, and the session plans do offer some opportunity for biblical reflection. Several excellent Bible studies on peace are listed in the Resources section.

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**Steps to Planning and Leading a Discussion**

This study offers a detailed plan for five, one-hour sessions that might be done at any convenient time, including the Sunday morning “Bible class” hour.
Aims for the study

Through this study, participants will:
1. Become acquainted with the contents of the ELCA Social Statement For Peace in God’s World;
2. Deepen their awareness of the biblical and theological basis for our calling to be peacemakers;
3. Explore the implications of this calling for their lives as people of faith and as citizens and for our church;
4. Increase their understanding of the many dimensions of making, building and keeping peace in the world today.
5. Provide an opportunity for participants to support one another in their calling to be peacemakers.

The Setting for the Study

This study might also be used in:
• a one day workshop, combining the five sessions into four time blocks divided by coffee and lunch breaks;
• an overnight retreat, organized in a similar manner;
• two Saturday morning sessions for three hours each.

If one of these options is used, you will need to make the necessary adjustments so that participants may do the necessary preparatory work for each session.

The study is designed to be used in groups that include men and women of a variety of ages. If you are leading a study with a particular group, such as women or youth, you will want to tailor the study to your participants. The Resource section includes materials on peace prepared for use with the WELCA and with youth groups which may be helpful in making necessary adaptations to fit your group.

For Further Study

As you read the statement, you will discover that the “Tasks” section of the statement contains material on many different policy issues facing our government and international organizations such as the UN. The five-session study model presented here does not include time for discussion of the many policy issues raised. If your group has interest in discussing one or more specific policy issues, such as US foreign aid, we encourage you to schedule an additional session(s). This guide includes an optional handout (Handout #6), “Ten Myths and Realities of Foreign Aid,” and a plan for an additional session at the end of this study.

Laying the groundwork

1. Begin your process of personal preparation by reflecting on your own experience and concerns related to issues of war and peace.

2. Assemble or order the resource materials that you will need to lead the study, including copies of the statement for yourself and all the participants in the study.

We also recommend you obtain the following resources from Augsburg Fortress (1-800-328-4648):
• “Peace: God’s Gift, Our Task” - study document prepared by the ELCA Peace Task Force, 56 pages. $1. (69-7349).
• “The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective” - the foundational social statement of the ELCA passed by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly, 8 pages. $.10. (69-2102).
• “A Message on Community Violence”

3. Read carefully the statement For Peace in God’s World and review this guide prior to session planning, paying particular attention to the “Guideposts to Learning” section below. Change and adapt the plans suggested in this guide to your particular audience and setting.

4. Work closely with your parish education committee, director of Christian education or others responsible for education in your congregation so that this study will fit with the overall educational plan.

5. Decide on your intended audience and the time frame for the study.

6. Develop a plan for recruiting participants. You will want to include those with a diversity of backgrounds, ages, political perspectives, etc. Specifically invite the participation of people in your congregation who have been in the military, been active for peace, lived overseas, or worked in military industries. Publicize the study opportunity well ahead of time through your church newsletter and bulletin.

7. If your room and group size permit it, arrange the chairs so that participants can face one another.

8. You will need an easel with a large pad of newsprint (or a blackboard) for each session as well as wall space to post several sheets simultaneously. When the sessions call for recording ideas on newsprint, you might designate someone to assist you with this task.

9. You might also make or purchase a tri-panel cardboard display board (or poster board) to display newspaper and magazine clippings.

10. Before each session, review what you need to prepare and assemble the materials you want to bring.

Guideposts to Learning

To achieve the aims of this study listed in the previous section, it may be helpful to think of the study process as supported by three legs:
• The first leg is the statement For Peace in God’s World.
• The second is the experience and the perspectives that each participant brings to the study.
• The third leg is the present context in which the study process is taking place—what is happening in your congregation, the ELCA, the nation, and the rest of the world?

Each of these three legs is important to achieving the aims of the process. The statement is a tool to help the church and
its members reflect upon the past and present and discern opportunities for the future. You will want to take particular responsibility for keeping in touch with the three legs.

In your first session, assess your group and seek ways to build on its strengths. Recognize that your group will probably include those who have relatively little sense of personal connection to the issues of war and peace as well as those who have a much greater sense of connection—for example, those who have served in the military or in military-related industries, or those who have protested specific wars. With this variation in mind, you will want to affirm the importance of the statement and the study process for all participants, and the need for hearing the contributions of each member.

The statement carefully affirms the role of individual conscience in making particular choices related to the calling to be peacemakers. Make it a point to help participants understand that people experience that calling in different ways. Your group discussion itself can be an expression of peace as you show respect for diverse viewpoints and listen thoughtfully to increase understanding of other points of view.

This topic may elicit the expression of strong feelings. Help participants affirm that it is all right to express feelings as well as their opinions. Remind people that emotions, by themselves, are neither right nor wrong; they are simply signs of our humanity. When strong feelings are expressed by a member of the group, encourage others to listen and to avoid judgmental responses.

Consider whether or not it is an appropriate time to invite others to share feelings on the issue under discussion. As group leader, you will want to give those expressing their feelings feedback that indicates they have been heard. A study group that provides a positive, "safe" environment for its participants to express diverse feelings and points of view is a blessing to each of its members and to the church!
Aims for this Session

Through this session’s study, participants will:
1. Become aware of each participant’s personal connections to the issues of war and peace;
2. Become familiar with the ELCA’s social statement: For Peace in God’s World;
3. Explore biblical images of God related to war and peace.

Introduce the Aims

Using the newsprint lists, first introduce the aims for the entire study. You may want to share the image of the three legs undergirding the study process—see “Guideposts to Learning” above. Ask participants if they have any questions about the aims, and then briefly highlight the aims for the first study session.

Sharing

Invite each participant to take a minute or so to respond to this question: How has war touched my life? For example, have you or a loved one served in the armed forces? Have someone you know been wounded or injured in war? Have you worked in a defense industry? When have you been afraid of war or participated in a protest against a war? If the group is larger than 10-12, you may wish to break into two or more groups to do this exercise.

Introducing: For Peace in God’s World

1. Distribute copies of the statement.

2. Ask participants to read the first page of the statement, underlining what they think are key words and phrases. Ask someone to try to state in one sentence what the statement is about. Ask participants to share the key words and phrases they have underlined and put them on newsprint. Make sure the following are included: “calling to be
peacemakers”; “global perspective”; “God’s final peace”; “earthly peace.” Encourage participants to keep these words and phrases in mind as they read the statement.

3. Give participants a quick overview of the rest of the document, noting the five numbered sections and the implementing resolutions at the end. Help the participants understand the flow of the document—from God, to the church, to the calling of the individual Christian, and then to the tasks of peacemaking. Note that the study deals with the issue of war in section four.

Bible Study on Images of God

1. Distribute copies of Images of God (Handout #1) from the back of this guide and Bibles.

2. Using the handout, assign one passage for each “image” of God (all from Old Testament). Ask each person to look up the text and to read it aloud.

3. Ask someone to read aloud the portion of handout: “In view of this...through the death of his Son.” Then, have another person continue to read until the end of the handout.

4. The statement speaks about “God’s resolve for peace” and shows how we can read the biblical story to demonstrate that resolve. Invite participants to share how they experience that resolve both personally and in the world around them. When do I experience God making peace with me? When do I see God at work for peace in the world?

Preparation for next Session

- Ask participants to read sections 1-3 of the statement.
- Encourage them also to follow the major international news stories in the newspaper or on television.
- Each might bring a newspaper or magazine clipping related to the issues of the study.

Closing Prayer

Session Two: Sections 2 and 3

Aims for this Session

Through this session’s study, participants will:
1. Develop understanding of the church’s divine calling to be a community for peace and encounter the various ways that it carries out this calling;
2. Begin considering what it means for each participant in the group to be a peacemaker.

Resources and Advance Preparation
- Bibles
- Lutheran Book of Worship for each participant
- Scissors and glue stick
- Extra newsprint and markers (or a blackboard)
- List the aims for Session 2 on newsprint
• Make a newsprint chart (or you may use a blackboard) with two vertical columns labeled “Ways the Church is Divided” and “Ways the Church lives the Oneness.” Make three horizontal columns labeled “in our congregation,” “in the ELCA,” in the church “universal.”

• Put up a tri-fold cardboard display (or use a bulletin board or piece of posterboard) where participants may mount their clippings. As participants gather, they can put their clipping on the display board.

Opening Devotion

Read Ephesians 2:13-22. Invite the group to pray together the prayer for “Peace” on page 42 of the LBW.

Introduce the Aims

Call the group’s attention to the goals for Session 2 that you have listed on the newsprint. Discuss and clarify as needed.

Sharing

Ask participants to share briefly the topic of any clipping they have brought.

The Church: a Community for Peace

1. Distribute Bibles and ask all to look up 2 Corinthians 5: 17-19. Invite someone to read the text aloud. What do the verses reveal about the church’s calling? Highlight the words “ Entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.”

2. The statement identifies three aspects of the church’s calling to be peacemakers in the bold face type in Section 2A. Ask the group to identify these 3. Consider each in turn:

a. In publicly gathering to proclaim and celebrate God’s Gospel of peace, the Church uniquely contributes to earthly peace.

• Distribute LBWs, and ask participants to discover how many times the word “peace” appears in the liturgy. Then go through the liturgy together to identify each reference noting whether it speaks of “earthly peace,” “God’s final peace,” or perhaps both.

b. The Church, with a diversity of gifts, contributes to earthly peace in living the oneness we have received.

• Ask participants to read paragraph 1 on page 4. Using the chart you prepared ahead of time, ask participants for examples of ways that the church is divided and other examples of the way that it “lives the oneness,” on the level of the congregation, the ELCA and the church universal.

• Read paragraph 2 on page 4. Ask participants to reflect on the chart and to share their opinions about how faithful the church is to its calling to proclaim the message of reconciliation.

c. By equipping the faithful to act for peace in their communities, the church contributes to earthly peace.

• Ask the group to read paragraph 3 on page 4. Direct participants to underline the sentence: “The church is the school of the Holy Spirit that molds us an equips us to be peacemakers.” Then note the following sentence in Section 3A, paragraph 3:
"Our everyday communities form the arena where faith acts in love for peace. God calls us to be peacemakers in and through the many overlapping circles of communities through which God gives us life. . . ."

3. Draw a large circle on a piece of newsprint or the blackboard. Then add three progressively smaller circles within the larger circle--each circle containing the smaller circles. Starting with the innermost circle, ask participants to identify communities that they are a part of. The smallest circle is the family. The next, their own community. Then the nation and the global family. Ask the participants to name some ways they can be peacemakers at each level. Indicate that you will return to this topic in session 5.

Preparation for next Session

Encourage participants to read Section 4 of the statement. They might also continue to read the international news in the newspaper and bring in another news clipping.

Closing Prayer

Session Three: Section 4

Aims for this Session

Through this session’s study, participants will:
1. Consider the Christian’s responsibility for their neighbor;
2. Deepen awareness of a Lutheran understanding of good citizenship;
3. Look at the role of governments in restraining conflict and promoting peace;
4. Consider some of the individual choices that confront us in war and peace.

Resources and Advance Preparation
- Bibles
- Newsprint and markers (or blackboard)
- Post sheet with concentric circles (from previous session) representing various levels of community
- Set up clipping display
- List aims for Session 3 on newsprint
- Make copies of Handout #2 -- “Case Study of a Conflict” and Handout #3--“Christian Approaches to War”

NOTE: You might choose between two options for considering the pros and cons of using military force in a particular situation.

Option 1 is to use the “Case Study of a Conflict” presented in Handout #2. Option 2 is to pick a current conflict from among the clippings that have been brought in, and apply the “Questions for Consideration” on Handout #2 to that conflict.

Make a decision about which option you plan to use.
Opening Devotion

Read Romans 12: 9-21. Invite the group to pray together the prayer for the “Human Family” on page 44 of LBW.

Introducing the Aims of the Session

Call participants’ attention to the goals for Session 3 that you have listed on the newsprint.

Sharing

Invite people to share the content of any new clipping they have brought.

Acting as a Neighbor

1. Read Matthew 10: 25-37. Ask participants to share what the story tells them about being a neighbor.

2. Refer back to the concentric circles chart from the previous session. Discuss: How are people at each level our neighbor? Ask the participants to share their opinions and feelings.

- Share Martin Luther’s explanation of the Fifth Commandment. In the Large Catechism he states that the commandment is violated, “not only when a person actually does evil, but also when he fails to do good to his neighbor, or though he has the opportunity, fails to prevent, protect, and save him from bodily harm and injury.” (Book of Concord, Fortress Press, 1959, p. 390)

3. To help the participants think about HOW we serve our neighbor, ask them to consider how they would respond if they had seen a neighbor physically abusing his wife on several occasions. Assume this is a neighbor they do not know personally. Break into groups of 3-4 to discuss possible responses, and the pros and cons of each kind of response.

4. Regather the larger group and get some quick feedback from each group. You may wish to record the responses on newsprint. Note how some responses involve only oneself; others the neighborhood; others the local government (law enforcement).

- Ask participants to think through any possible parallels to the dilemmas that nations face. What might be comparable types of responses by our government when there are massive violations of human rights within another country or between two countries?

The Role of Government

1. Read Section 4A paragraph 3--6.

2. Look at the collection of news clippings and identify one or two that are conflict situations that already involve or could potentially involve the U.S. government in some way. In relationship to each, discuss what the U.S. is doing and/or could be doing to promote peace and the common good. Do you agree/disagree with the current course of action (or inaction) and why?
3. Explain that in the next session, you will consider the U.S. response to one particular conflict in more depth, and go over the option that you have chosen, asking for volunteers as described below in “Preparation for Next Session.”

- Distribute Handout #2, “Case Study of a Conflict” and Handout #3, “Christian Approaches to War.” (If you have chosen option 1, you will use all of Handout #2. If you use option 2 and pick another conflict to consider, you will just use “Questions for Consideration.”).

Preparation for Next Session

Encourage participants to do the following:

- Reread 4B and read Handout #3, “Christian Approaches to War”.

- Using a conflict situation from the clippings where there is actual involvement of U.S. armed forces or potential for such involvement (Option 1) OR, using the case study included with the handout sheets (Option 2), ask for two volunteers to return to the next session prepared to make a two to three minutes case each for a particular course of action for the U.S. government and its citizens using the principles in the ELCA peace statement and the “just war criteria” in Handout #3, “Christian Approaches to War.” Ask other volunteers to come prepared to present what they think would be a pacifist course of action. Each of the volunteers should address the following “Questions for Consideration” related to the conflict:
  (These are included on Handout #2)
  a. In a sentence or two, what is the conflict? (or use case study)
  b. Who is the neighbor that we may be called to help?
  c. What does it mean for us to “serve the neighbor” in this circumstance?
  d. If peace cannot be achieved through nonviolent channels, do you advocate military intervention, either unilaterally or multilaterally?
  e. How are the just war criteria in Handout #3 helpful or not helpful?

- Read Section 5 of the statement.

Closing Prayer

Session 4: Section 5

Aims for this Session

Through this session’s study, participants will:
1. Consider differing views about when it is (or is not) appropriate to use military force in conflict situations;
2. Get an overview of the tasks involved in building, making and keeping peace.

Resources and Advanced Preparation
- Reread “Guideposts to Learning” at the beginning of this guide
- Newsprint (or blackboard)
- Post “Questions for Consideration” from last session
• Set up clippings display
• List and post aims for Session 4 on newsprint
• Make copies of Handout #4—the Web Chart: “Tasks For Making, Building, and Keeping International Peace.”

NOTE: Session 4 is structured with a major transition from considering the possible use of military intervention in a conflict situation to considering the myriad tasks of building peace. It is essential that participants are aware of this transition at the beginning of the session so that the first half of the session can be drawn to a close. In the event that the group decides it is more important to continue the discussion concerning military conflicts into the second half of the session, you would have several options for completing the study process. You might add a sixth session or you might have the group look over Handout #4 at the beginning of Session 5, shortening the process presented in this guide.

Opening Devotion

Invite participants to offer intercessory prayers for one of the conflict situations reflected in the clippings that they have brought in. Prayers may be a short as a simple sentence (“We pray for the people of Bosnia.”) or they may be several sentences. Take a few moments for people to look at the clippings display and collect their thoughts before you begin the prayer.

You might begin the prayer in this way: God of all peoples and nations of this earth, we come before you with frustration and sorrow about the many conflicts that plague our human family and pray for guidance for ourselves and for our political leaders on the pathways to peace.

Conclude: We offer these petitions for peace in the name of Jesus Christ through whom we have been reconciled to you, and who has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation. Amen.

Introducing the Aims of the Session

Call the participants’ attention to the goals for Session 4 that you have listed on the newsprint.

Deciding about Wars

1. Using the “Guideposts to Learning,” remind people it is okay to disagree and that we can learn from other’s points of view.

2. Remind all of the conflict situation that you will be considering in this session and point out the “Questions for Consideration” in Handout #2 that each presenter will be addressing.

• Ask each volunteer prepared something to make a case for what the U.S. should do. Ask someone to make notes on newsprint in a way that the group can compare responses. (You may want to use a half sheet of newsprint for each of the “Questions for Consideration.”)

3. Invite the group to compare and contrast the responses. What questions do you have? What is similar and what is different? Do the responses reflect the principles in the social statement? What do you find challenging?
Tasks: What Do We Do to Keep, Make and Build International Peace Today?

1. Distribute Handout # 4-- "Tasks for Making, Building and Keeping International Peace" and explain that it is a way of presenting the main point of Section 5 of the statement.

2. Highlight the three main building blocks and ask participants what they think each of the three phrases means: Politics of Cooperation; Culture of Peace; and Economy with Justice.

   * For each of the three, ask a volunteer to read the components of that task, using the chart. Explain that most of these tasks can be worked on at different levels and by different actors: international organizations like the UN; private international or national organizations like Lutheran World Relief; national governments such as our own U.S. government; a church body such as the ELCA; a congregation, a family; or an individual. These are noted on the chart as "Actors."

3. Ask participants to match one or more tasks with each of the specific actors listed at the bottom of the web chart.

   Some examples:
   * The UN can promote respect for human rights.
   * A private international organization, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services can care for the uprooted.
   * The U.S. government can promote the control and reduction of armaments.
   * The ELCA, through its office in Washington, can lobby to revitalize aid.
   * The congregation can develop appreciation of the differences in the human family.

   * The family can work with their children to counter and transform attitudes that encourage violence.
   * The individual can encourage and support nonviolent action.

4. Conclude by asking each person to reflect briefly and share the one task on the chart that is most interesting or compelling to her/him. Have someone record these on newsprint.

Preparation for next Session

Ask participants to do the following:

* Volunteers might find out what your congregation has done or is doing related to peacebuilding, through its youth program, its women’s group, its social concerns committee, its Christian education program, and other groups. Activities may include a variety of educational programs, service projects, or advocacy on particular issues. Also make sure someone speaks with the pastor(s).

* Reread Section 5 and read the "Implementing Resolutions" Section. Think of ways that the congregation might relate to some of the tasks presented.

* Watch the media for examples of ways that people, groups or governments have been peacemakers. Bring in one example to share with the group.

Closing Prayer
Session 5: Section 5 and Implementing Resolutions

Aims for this Session

Through this session’s study, participants will:
1. Look more closely at their own congregation’s role as peacemaker, by reviewing past and current activities;
2. Generate ideas for strengthening the congregation’s peace witness.

Resources and Advanced Preparation

- Newsprint (or blackboard)
- Post Matthew 5:9 on newsprint
- List and post the aims for Session 5 on newsprint
- Make copies of Handout #5-- Evaluation

Opening Devotions

Ask one of the participants to read Ephesians 6:10-17. Pray together the “Prayer of St. Francis” on page 48 of LBW.

Introducing the Aims for this Session

Call the group’s attention to the goals for Session 5 that you have listed on the newsprint.

Sharing

Invite someone to read aloud Matthew 5:9 that you have put on newsprint. Ask participants to group themselves into threes and to share the example of peacemaking that they brought OR a time in their life when they were a peacemaker. If your group is small, you may want to do this in the whole group or in pairs.

Peace and Our Congregation

1. Ask participants to share their vision of what a “peacemaking congregation” might look like. How would it function? What would its worship look like? What kinds of activities would it have? How would it relate to the community and the world? Record people’s ideas on newsprint or the blackboard.

2. Ask participants to share what they learned about what groups in the congregation have done or are doing related to building peace. Record on newsprint or a blackboard. It is possible in some congregations that people will come back with “nothing.” Their assessment may be true or may result from lack of awareness about what has happened. If a list is very short, do not focus so much on blame as on the opportunity to do more. If the list is long, take the opportunity to rejoice.

3. Ask participants to turn to the Implementing Resolutions at the end of the statement. Invite all to read aloud resolutions that have particular relevance to congregations (1-4 and 6-8).

4 Brainstorm: Ask participants to take a few moments to reflect on the Implementing Resolutions and then to share ideas about what the congregation might do to respond more effectively to God’s calling to be peacemakers. Encourage people to think in terms of
different age groups and different kinds of activities—from youth to seniors; from worship to advocacy. Include in your consideration what the congregation and its members can do to support what the ELCA is doing to build peace through LOGA, the Lutheran Office of World Community, LIRS, the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, and other groups. (See the section on Resources and Organizations.) Record ideas on newsprint.

5. Ask for volunteers to bring these ideas to the appropriate groups and committees in the congregation for consideration. You may wish to schedule a follow-up meeting in several months.

Evaluation

Ask participants to reflect a few moments and share one sentence about what they valued about the study process. Distribute the Evaluation (Handout #5) and encourage people to complete them and return them to you.

Closing Prayer

Invite participants to offer their own petitions.

Suggestions for Additional Activities and Projects

• Focusing on a Particular Policy Issue

Participants may wish to focus on one particular policy issue in Section 5 ("Tasks") for study and discussion. Possibilities could include the role of the United Nations, control of the conventional arms trade, nuclear non-proliferation or foreign aid. The choice you make should be shaped by the group’s interest as well as by current events at the time you are doing the study. The Lutheran Office of Governmental Affairs in Washington D.C. and the Lutheran Office for World Community at the United Nations (see Resources and Organizations section) can help with suggestions and resource materials.

• An Additional Session

The process which follows is an outline for an additional one-hour session focused on U.S. foreign aid, using Handout #6—"Ten Myths and Realities of Foreign Aid," reprinted from the Legislative Backgrounder of the Lutheran Office of Governmental Affairs.

1. Begin by asking the participants to share their impressions and concerns about U.S. foreign aid. Note these on newsprint.

2. Distribute Handout #6—"Ten Myths and Realities of Foreign Aid.” Look at the ten myths and see which, if any of them, correspond to concerns or impression in the initial sharing. For
each myth, look at the “reality” presented in the handout.

• Give the group an opportunity to ask questions as you go along. When you are finished, ask participants which realities most surprised them. Return to the initial list of concerns and impressions and see if participants wish to delete any that they previously raised or add any concerns.

3. Turn to Section 5, B. page 16 of the statement and the section, “Revitalize Aid.” Ask participants to spend a few moments reading it. What kinds of aid does the U.S. provide to other countries? (humanitarian, development assistance, military) What are the avenues for this aid? (bilateral, government-to-government; multi-lateral through organizations such as the UN) What adjustments or revisions in aid policy does the statement advocate?

4. Invite the participants to share their views on what kind of U.S. aid is most important and why it is important.

Listening to People’s Stories

Identify people in your study group, congregation or another congregation whose present (or past) work or volunteer commitments relate to the issues of war and/or peace. If possible, include a person for the following categories:
• served in the armed forces, particularly during an armed conflict;
• worked in a military industry;
• protested a specific war or wars;
• been involved in conflict resolution at a local, national or international level.

Select three or four of the people identified to invite to your study session to share their reflections on the questions which follow. If they are not part of the study group, share with them the statement, For Peace in God’s World, and the purposes of the study process. If they are unable to share in person, ask them if they would be willing to be interviewed on tape.

You may structure the session either as a panel discussion with an interviewer asking the questions of the group as a whole, giving each person an opportunity to respond to each question or as a series of presentations, giving each person 5 to 10 minutes to address all the questions.

General Questions for Discussion or Presentation: (You may want to refine these for each presenter.)
• What is your work or your volunteer commitment related to war/peace?
• What contributed to your decision to undertake that work or commitment?
• How did your religious and/or ethical values affect your choice?
• Do you feel that you make a contribution to peace through this work or activity? If yes, in what ways? If no, why not?
• How has your work/activity presented you with moral dilemmas? Can you explain?
• Have you felt the support of your church in the choices you have made? If yes, how? If no, what might be the reasons why?
• In what ways do you think the church could be more supportive to its members who are making choices similar to yours?

When the presenters have concluded, invite
the participants to ask further questions and to offer their own reflections on what they learned from the presentations. Remind the group that the ELCA statement affirms a variety of different personal approaches to our vocation of peacemaking.

- Organizing a Peace Sunday

Consider organizing a Peace Sunday in your congregation involving your pastor, Sunday school, Worship and Music Committee, WELCA, Social Ministry Committee and other groups.

Plan an intergenerational Sunday school hour focused on peace. (A variety of ideas are available in the Mission 90 Resource—Our Children at Risk: Hope for Our Future Together. The resource is out of print, but may be available from resource centers.) Pick a Sunday when one or more of the lectionary texts relate to peace. Ask the pastor and Worship Committee to emphasize peace in the prayers, hymns and the sermon. (You will find helps in the Peace Worship Resources Packet—see Resources section.)

Organize a Coffee Hour and Peace Fair after worship, inviting the WELCA, the Youth, the Sunday school, the Social Ministry Committee, and other groups to set up a display about peace. Highlight specific opportunities for peacemaking activities. You may wish to also invite community groups working for peace. Show the video, Green Shoots of Peace—(See the Resources section).

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Resources

Statements and Messages of the ELCA

Unless otherwise indicated, call 800-328-4648 to order these item or for price information. Note: A shipping and handling charge is added to each order.

- “The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective”—the foundational social statement of the ELCA passed by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly, 8 pages. $10 (69-2102)


- “A Message on Community Violence” adopted by the ELCA church Council on April 18, 1994. 10/$.50 (69-6598)

Note: Single copies of all 3 statements available from the Division for Church in Society. (800-638-3522 ext. 2715)

- Peace: God’s Gift, Our Task, study document prepared by the ELCA Peace Task Force in 1993 to solicit feedback for the proposed social statement, 56 pages. $1 (69-7349)

• **Green Shoots of Peace.** A 27-minute video highlighting five dimensions of peacemaking. Available for free loan through the Division for Church in Society.

**Bible Studies**

• **For the Peace of the Whole World: Five Bible Studies for Just Peacemaking** produced by the ELCA Commission for Women, the Division for Congregational Ministries (Youth Division), Division for Church in Society, and the Women of the ELCA. $4 (69-3924)

• **Peacemaking.** An eight session small group Bible study on peacemaking. Augsburg Fortress. $1.50 (15-9031).

• **Women of the ELCA 1996 Triennial Bible Studies.** Three complete bible studies of four-sessions each developed to support the W/ELCA’s 1996 Triennial theme, “Proclaim God’s Peace” (available in July): *Peace* (2-9695); *God’s Peace* (2-9698); and *Proclaim God’s Peace* (2-9699) $2.50 each.

• **Peace: Christian Living in a Violent World.** Intersections Small Group Series. Augsburg Fortress. $5.25 (15-170)

**Children and Youth**

• **Youth in Peacemaking** produced by the ELCA Division for Church in Society and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program. A handbook of studies and activities for teens on the multiple dimensions of peace - from the personal to the global. $3.75 (69-9946)

• **Starting Out Right: Peace in the Preschools.** 27-minute video introducing the ministry of peacemaking to preschool children. Available for free loan from DCS.

• **Our Children at Risk: Hope for Our Future Together.** A multi-generational resource developed for the “serve” element of Mission90. Now out of print. Check resource centers for availability.

• **Conscription and Conscience: Ethical Dilemmas for Lutherans.** $1 (69-2338)

• **A Resource on the Middle East** for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America produced by the ELCA Division for Church in Society. (67-1233)
ELCA Offices and Other Organizations

At the churchwide offices of the ELCA, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631 (800) 638-3522.

Division for Church in Society
Education and Program Resources--ext 2687
Studies-- ext 2704.

ELCA World Hunger Program--ext 2709.

Women of the ELCA, Peace with Justice Program--ext 2735.

Other ELCA-related offices

Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs (LOGA), 122 C Street, Suite 125, Washington DC 20001-2172. Telephone: (202)783-7507. LOGA is the national public policy office of the ELCA. Publishes Legislative Update and timely Action Alerts.

Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC), 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017. Telephone: (212) 808-5360. LOWC provides advocacy for the ELCA and the LWF on issues discussed in the United Nations and the international community.

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS), 390 Park Avenue South, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10016-8803. Telephone: (212) 532-6350. LIRS provides service, education and advocacy on issues related to refugees and immigration.

Lutheran World Federation (LWF), 150 Route de Ferney, PO Box 2100, CH 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland. LWF works on behalf of its 120 member churches in the areas of ecumenical relations, theology, humanitarian assistance, human rights, and mission and development work.

Other organizations

Lutheran Peace Fellowship, 1710 S. 11th Ave., Seattle, WA 98122-2420. Telephone: (206)720-0313. An independent group working to nurture a community of Christians who renounce participation in war and who espouse nonviolence as the means of justice and reconciliation in the world. Publishes PeaceNotes and offers an extensive selection of resources on war and peace issues.

We believe Scripture to be both the revelation of God to us, and the interpretation of this revelation by people of faith who were, like us, shaped by their world. For this reason, it is not surprising that in the biblical narrative, God is shown through numerous images. Some are closer to the heart of our faith than others, but all contribute to a fuller understanding of God and God’s ways with the world.

Biblical images of God in relation to peace and war are many and include:

- God is the deliverer, who frees Israel from oppression in Egypt (Ex 3:7-10);
- God is the law-giver, who provides for a just and peaceful order by establishing a covenant with the people of Israel (Ex 20);
- God is the orderer of the world in the face of chaos, who creates and acts against the threatening backdrop of water and sea (Gen 1:2, 6-8; Ps 89:9);
- God is the warrior, who commands the destruction of Israel’s enemies, including men, women, children and animals (Josh 6:21; 1 Sam 15:2-3; Ex 15);
- God is the hidden one, whose ways are not those of humans (Isa 55:8-10, 45:15; Job);
- God is the compassionate one, whose concern reaches out to all peoples without distinction (Jonah);
- God is the final judge, who determines the destines of all nations (Ps 2);
- God is the faithful one, who brings reconciliation and hope through suffering (Isa 53).

These images expressed ways in which Israel knew God in specific circumstances, and they provided patterns for living as faithful people. Of first importance for all these images is that God takes the initiative. At the heart of that initiative is God’s compassion and righteousness. For the most part these images complement one another. But can a fierce warrior God who causes violence and destruction be the same God whose heart churns with compassion?

Some images are more central than others. There are historical reasons for the use of this or that image. They often convey only a partial, but to that degree valid, picture of the ways of God with the world. Accordingly, the biblical image of God as warrior can at times depict a frightening and cruel deity; at the same time, the warrior God is also both protector and liberator, whose justice defends the weak and oppressed and contends with the forces of evil. Actually, the image of the warrior God gave rise to almost all the biblical language about freedom from oppression as God’s gift, about chaos transformed into order by God’s creative act, and about final judgment and final hope that God alone guarantees.

In view of this, who after all is this God who whom such rich and diverse, even shocking, witness is borne? In response, the biblical narrative directs us anew to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- Not only did Jesus teach love to one’s enemies;
- Not only did he reach out to the oppressed, down-trodden, and rejected of the earth;
- Not only did he pray for his enemies while himself being rejected on the cross;
- But also by the unpeaceful reality of his death Jesus confirmed God’s identity as the ultimate peacemaker, “for . . . while we were enemies, we were reconciled through the death of his Son” (Rom 5:10).

The reconciling love of enemies discloses who God is. God suffers with and for a suffering world. Christ crucified reveals most fully the triune God, making the message about the cross the “saving power of God” (1 Cor 1:18ff). Other images of God including the image of the warrior God need to be seen in the light of the cross. God’s self-giving love on the cross shows how deeply peace is rooted in who God is. The suffering and death of God’s Messiah are not passivity and defeat in the face of evil, but promise and hope: “The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet.”

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A Case Study in Conflict

SITUATION: It is Labor Day weekend 1994. The President of the United States has gone off to Camp David and when he returns, he wants your recommendation on the following question: Should the U.S. organize and lead a multinational military operation, in keeping with a July 1994 UN Resolution, to intervene in Haiti and restore the democratically-elected government of President Aristide?

Base your recommendation on the following BACKGROUND and the principles in the ELCA social statement, For Peace in God’s World, and the "Just War Criteria" in Handout #2.

BACKGROUND: Haitians have lived in desperate poverty for many years. Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. A line of dictators have subjected the people to repression, officially-sanctioned terrorism and other systematic violations of their human rights, except for the brief period in which President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was in office between February and September 1991.

In December 1990, Aristide had won 67% of the vote in the first democratic election in Haiti, an election which was certified as generally free and fair by the United Nations (UN), Organization of American States (OAS) and the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM). The Haitian military staged a successful coup d'état against Aristide in September 1991 and forced him to flee, first to Venezuela and then the United States. The military then returned to the repressive tactics of the previous dictatorship. Under the military regime nearly 4,000 Haitians have been killed and up to 300,000 people are said to be in hiding. Children suffer starvation and boat people have fled to the United States (21,000 during a recent two month period alone). The military has rejected three years of appeals by the UN, the OAS and CARICOM that the democratically-elected government be reinstated. These included the Governors’ Island Agreement of July 1993 which called for the transfer of power to President Aristide within four months.

Because the military and para-military forces were engaged in arbitrary detention, the use of torture and rape, especially of family members of those sympathetic to democratic forces, among other violent acts, the UN Security Council imposed an oil and arms embargo against Haiti in June 1993. They suspended it in July 1993 with the signing of the Governors’ Island Agreement but reinstated it with strengthened provisions in October 1993 when the military demonstrated that it did not intend to live up to the Agreement. The embargo has proven to have large "holes." Contraband moves easily across the border with the Dominican Republic.

In the face of these failures, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution in July 1994 authorizing, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, a multinational force to use all necessary means to facilitate the departure of the military regime, the return of the legally-elected President and the restoration of the legitimate government authorities in Haiti. UN diplomatic efforts continued in August 1994 but yielded no positive results.

The Haitian military consists of about 7,500 poorly-equipped regular troops but also effectively controls 4-5,000 additional police, paramilitary forces and so-called section chiefs who carry out its wishes in outlying regions and towns. The United States would have available 20,000 troops, with the provisional agreement of more than 20 other countries to provide a total of 1,500 additional personnel. One potential danger is that when an international force is deployed the Haitian military may try to seek reprisals against supporters of President Aristide during the initial phase of the operation. There are also concerns about the capacity of a restored Aristide government to maintain order once foreign troops have been withdrawn.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION (to use in preparing a two to three minute case for or against intervention)

1. In a sentence or two, what is the conflict?
2. Who is the neighbor that we may be called to help?
3. What does it mean for us to "serve our neighbor" in this circumstance?
4. If peace has not been achieved through nonviolent channels, do you advocate military intervention, either unilaterally or multilaterally?
5. Are the just war criteria in the handout helpful or not helpful?

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Historically, Christian approaches to the issue of war have fallen into three categories: holy war or crusade, pacifism and just war. The crusade approach is based on the conviction that God sanctions war when the enemy represents great evil. A crusade war is therefore viewed as a struggle between good and evil, and in the pursuit of total conquest, any means may be justifiable. This approach to war is viewed by the ELCA and most Christian churches as incompatible with Christian teaching.

For Peace in God’s World continues the historic Lutheran perspective on justifiable war though it acknowledges the concerns about its viability in the modern age. The statement raises up the important witness of pacifists in the church today. Just war doctrine and pacifism are complex but the following chart seeks to make some rudimentary comparisons between the two approaches.

**Just War and Pacifism: Contrasting Approaches to War**

(Source: *War: A Primer for Christians* by Joseph L. Allen, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991. Allen offers a concise description of the just war teaching as well as other options Christians have followed.)

**Theological/Biblical Basis**

**Just War:** God’s creation is beset by persisting and often destructive conflicts in human life. It is wrong to kill to save one’s own life; it is our duty to act to help other people.

**Pacifism:** Jesus teaching, life and death show us the way of Christian love. In particular, Jesus instructed his followers not to resist an evildoer (Mt. 5:39) and to love their enemies (Mt. 5:44).

**Historical Notes**

**Just War:** A doctrine developed by Ambrose and Augustine in the late fourth and early fifth century after the Roman Empire had become officially Christian and faced external threats. The criteria for justifiable war were further developed by Thomas Aquinas and others in the late Middle Ages.

**Pacifism:** Pacifism was the predominant position of the Christian church until 312 CE and the end of Roman persecution of Christians. Since then, pacifism has persisted as a distinctive strand in Christian ethics, within Roman Catholicism and within the Protestant tradition in the historic peace churches (e.g., Quakers, Mennonites) as well as in other denominations.

**Core Convictions Held in Common**

All people are of worth in God’s sight, including our enemies. A Christian approach to the issue of war must be guided by our understanding of Christian love and the duty placed upon us by such love. The presumption in a conflict situation is always that disputes should be settled peaceably.

**Core Convictions That Are Different**

**Just War:** Wars may be justifiable if they are fought by a rightly constituted authority for the purpose of protecting people and restoring a just and peaceful order in society. Such wars must meet certain criteria (see below), precluding revenge and requiring mercy to the defeated.

**Pacifism:** War cannot be an expression of Christian love and is incompatible with being a follower of Jesus. “Pragmatic” pacifists emphasize that nonviolence achieves better results than violence in conflict situations. “Witness” pacifists insist that Christian refusal to use power violently is a required witness to the love of Jesus Christ.

**Critique**

**Just War:** The just war criteria are applied infrequently prior to war and are used as a rationalization for government action. The just war criteria can no longer be met because of the destructiveness of modern weaponry.

**Pacifism:** “Pragmatic” pacifists do not recognize the depth of human sin. “Witness” pacifists have defined what constitutes Christian love too narrowly; they do not engage in the give and take of politics concerning war and peace.

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Just War Criteria

Criteria for resorting to warfare are:

1. Justifiable Cause
   Justifiable causes are to protect people from unjust attack, to restore rights that have been wrongly taken away, and to defend or reestablish a just political order.

2. Legitimate Authority
   Decisions to employ military measures must be made by those who have legitimate authority in a nation or the international community.

3. Last Resort
   Before resorting to war, all peaceful alternatives must first be exhausted.

4. Declaration of War Aims
   Those who decide to use military force must make known what their proposed action is meant to accomplish.

5. Proportionality
   Is the probable good to be attained and evil avoided greater than the anticipated evil effects of military action or inaction? A reasonable calculation of probably consequences must be made.

6. Reasonable Chance of Success
   A case must be made that the military means chosen will likely accomplish the stated aims. The use of military force should never be a futile act.

7. Right Intention
   War must not be waged for reasons of hate or revenge. War should never be an end in itself, but a means to bring a just peace.

Just war criteria for conducting war are:

1. The Principle of Discrimination
   This principle prohibits direct and intentional attacks on noncombatants.

2. Proportionality
   Within the limits set by the principle of discrimination, military action must be conducted so that objectives are achieved by the least destructive means possible.

In considering the possibility of revolution in situations of structured injustice, some Christians use a version of the just war criteria. The criterion of "legitimate authority" is interpreted to refer to an organization that convincingly represents the people.
Please help us to evaluate this course by completing this form. Draw a circle around the number that most closely describes your assessment of each:

5 = strongly agree  4 = agree  3 = neutral  2 = disagree  1 = strongly disagree

The study of *For Peace in God’s World*:

1. Helped me become acquainted with the contents of the ELCA social statement *For Peace in God’s World*.  
   5 4 3 2 1

2. Presented the material in the statement in a manner that made it clear and accessible to me.  
   5 4 3 2 1

3. Deepened my awareness of the biblical and theological basis for our calling to be peacemakers.  
   5 4 3 2 1

4. Helped me to better understand the relationship between God’s gift of peace through Jesus Christ and our work for earthly peace.  
   5 4 3 2 1

5. Helped me think about this calling to be a peacemaker as a person of faith, as citizen, and as a member of my congregation and the ELCA.  
   5 4 3 2 1

6. Increased my understanding of the many dimensions of making, building and keeping peace in the world today.  
   5 4 3 2 1

7. Provided an atmosphere of mutual listening and respect For diverse points of view.  
   5 4 3 2 1

8. Gave me and others in the group an opportunity to think for ourselves and form our own conclusions.  
   5 4 3 2 1

9. Gave me ideas for specific ways I can work for international peace through my congregation or as a citizen.  
   5 4 3 2 1

10. Provided an opportunity for members of the group to express support for one another in our various choices related to peacemaking.  
    5 4 3 2 1

11. Stimulated members of our group to further learning and action.  
    5 4 3 2 1
10 MYTHS & REALITIES OF FOREIGN AID

How much do American taxpayers spend on foreign aid each year?
Where is the money going and what does it do?

Here are ten myths about foreign aid - and the realities - that every American should know.

**MYTH 1** The United States spends a huge part of its budget - at least 20 percent - on foreign aid.
**REALITY** Less than 1 percent of the federal budget is spent on foreign aid. Over the past decade, according to the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), foreign assistance has been cut by a third - from more than $19 billion in the mid-1980s to less than $13 billion in fiscal Year 1994. The current AID budget for humanitarian and development programs is $6.5 billion - or one half of one percent of the federal budget. (See chart 1.)

![Chart 1](image)

**MYTH 2** Even with recent reductions, the United States remains the most generous nation in the world when it comes to foreign aid.
**REALITY** In total dollars, the U.S. ranks second to Japan in foreign economic and development assistance. But in terms of its gross national product (GNP) allocated for foreign aid, the U.S. ranks last among 21 industrialized nations. (See chart 2.) The average American taxpayer spends less than 16 cents a day in federal taxes on AID’s humanitarian and development programs.

**MYTH 3** Foreign aid provides no economic benefits to the United States.
**REALITY** By promoting the economic growth of developing countries, foreign aid is one of the most effective tools we have to increase U.S. exports and create jobs at home. During the past decade U.S. exports to developing countries have more than doubled - from $71 billion in 1986 to $180 billion in 1993 - and now represent nearly 40 percent of total U.S. exports. Every additional $1 billion in exported goods results in 20,000 new U.S. jobs.

**MYTH 4** Foreign aid is a welfare give-away program. Once on the dole, developing nations remain on it forever.
**REALITY** Since 1962, more than two dozen countries - from Botswana to Uruguay - have graduated from foreign aid assistance programs and become U.S. trading partners. One prominent example is South Korea, which currently imports three times as much in U.S. goods each year as it received in U.S. aid during the entire decade of the 1960s.

**MYTH 5** Most foreign aid is spent in foreign countries.
**REALITY** Much of the foreign aid budget is spent in the Untied States. For example, roughly 90 percent of food aid is spent on U.S. goods and services. In addition, millions of foreign aid dollars to programs that specifically promote investment and export opportunities for U.S. businesses.
**MYTH 6** Foreign aid doesn't work. Conditions in the developing world are as bad as they ever have been.

**REALITY** Actually development assistance has produced enormous, tangible results over the past three decades. Since 1960, in developing countries, infant mortality rates have fallen by half, life expectancy has increased from 46 years to 73 years and primary school enrollment has increased from 48 percent to 78 percent. Foreign aid programs also play a critical role in helping to increase agricultural production and to expand the availability of safe drinking water.

**MYTH 7** Foreign aid only enables corrupt dictators to stay in power.

**REALITY** The United States is no longer using foreign aid to prop up dictators in hopes of countering Soviet influence in the developing world. In fact, AID is in the midst of a major overhaul. AID is closing 23 missions overseas to streamline its operations. In addition, AID is relying increasingly on private voluntary organizations to deliver services directly to communities at the grassroots level. An estimated $1.5 billion in foreign aid now goes to these private non-profit agencies to address basic human needs such as literacy, health care, family planning and jobs.

**MYTH 8** The poor are bad credit risks. You can't loan them money. They wouldn't be able to pay it back.

**REALITY** Small loans to the poorest of the poor constitute one of the great success stories of the developing world. In Bangladesh alone, the Grameen Bank has loaned over $1 billion in small loans to over 2 million people, mostly women in small villages. The payback rate is over 95 percent. Nearly half of the Bank's long-term borrowers - 46 percent - are no longer living in poverty. Versions of the Bangladesh experiment have succeeded in scores of nations around the world including the United States. Today there are over 200 microenterprise programs throughout the United States.

**MYTH 9** The developing world's problems are not our problems.

**REALITY** Increasingly, the major problems we face at home - job security, random violence, AIDS, drug abuse, infant mortality - are global problems affecting everyone. Take pollution, for example. Americans now spend nearly $100 billion a year to curb toxic emissions in the United States, but within the next 15 years, America's air will be polluted mostly by emissions from other nations. That's why combating pollution abroad is becoming increasingly important here at home.

**MYTH 10** Americans don't care about the developing world. There is no constituency to support foreign assistance to these countries.

**REALITY** Each year millions of Americans demonstrate their support for the developing world through their contributions and voluntary efforts to help several hundred private U.S.-based relief and development organizations like the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army. In 1993, 390 of these agencies raised over $4 billion in private funds and received an additional $1.5 billion from the federal government. This level of support reflects the traditional hallmark of the American people and its elected government to be generous to those who are in need, not only at home, but throughout the world.

"Myths and Realities" was produced by InterAction and adapted from earlier versions by Bread for the World and World Vision. InterAction is the nation's largest coalition of US-based development, relief and refugee-assistance agencies.

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