Companion Synod: Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church (AELC) of India

With our companion synod, the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church in India

“It is in joining hands with our global companions and missionaries that we are all strengthened for mission.”
Rev. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, Director of ELCA Global Mission

We in the Northwestern Minnesota Synod are joining hands with our companion synod, the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church (AELC) in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh.

Our companion synod includes:

Over 800,000 baptized members
Over 5000 congregations
600 ordained pastors and a large number of lay workers

Like the folks in our Northwestern Minnesota synod, about 80% of the members are from rural backgrounds

Like our synod, the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church serves people through educational, medical, and social ministries and does evangelical outreach

Like the women’s ministry we have in our church, the AELC has a small group of women church workers, the Bible Women, who reach out to other women with the Good News

Like the institutions of our church, the AELC operates a college of education, 24 primary and secondary schools, two seminaries, vocational training schools, a Bible school, two hospitals, a nursing school, and health clinics which fight again communicable diseases

Like the members of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, residents of Andhra Pradesh regularly battle overland flooding when monsoon rains spread across the flat fields. They reached out to us with funds for flood relief in 2009.
Unlike the Northwestern Minnesota Synod—

- Andhra Pradesh has 76 million people
- It’s located in the tropics
- The predominant language is Telugu
- A little less than 90% of the residents are Hindu, a little less than 10% are Muslim, and about 3% are Christians
- It’s an agricultural area where rice, sugar cane, tobacco, and oilseeds are grown
- Coal and iron ore are mined, and electronics are manufactured

By walking hand in hand with our companion synod, we are practicing accompaniment—a way of seeing the world and engaging one another in global mission that places mutual relationship at its core.

In this relationship, we experience the persistence and resilience of our brothers and sisters in Andhra Pradesh. Gifted local leaders carry out the programs and ministries the ELCA helps support.

Together, we Lutherans in northwest Minnesota and in Andhra Pradesh are reshaping the manner in which we engage in global mission ventures. (adapted from the comments of Rev. Rafael Malpica-Padilla in the 2011 Hand in Hand Annual)

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. For we are God’s Servants, working together...” 1 Corinthians 3: 6, 9

The NW MN Synod Global Mission Table—a team of synod leaders who have a passion for the global mission of the ELCA—is in the process of planning a couple of exchange visits with our companion synod in the coming months. We hope to bring over a team of around 5 members of the AELC to visit our synod this autumn (late September/early October), and we plan to send a team of up to 15 members of our synod to the AELC early next year (late January/early February of 2012). If either of these exchange visits interest you, please send an email to either tkachuk@cord.edu or wohlrabe@cord.edu and let us know if:

* You or your congregation would like to RECEIVE a visit from the AELC team when they visit our synod this autumn;
* You or another member of your congregation might be interested in VISITING the AELC with others from our synod in late January/early February 2012;
* You would like to be placed on a mailing list to receive information about both of these pilgrimages in the months to come. THANKS!