

Wanted: Volunteers in Mission
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JULY 28, 2008 -- Thick, chewy cassava pudding was one of the unexpected joys of Lorna Reevely's Volunteer in Mission (VIM) experience. The Toronto librarian and teacher spent three years in the Solomon Islands, mainly working at Bishop Patteson Theological College, but also spending time with the community—which sometimes meant outdoor pudding preparation with students and their wives.

"What really results from these pudding productions is fellowship, just like our rummage sales and parish breakfasts," she said.

Individuals like Lorna Reevely are in high demand these days—dedicated lay or clergy volunteers who will work, serve, and play for approximately two years alongside international partner churches. The program is called Volunteers in Mission (VIM), and right now more volunteers are urgently needed.

"I think there are Anglicans who are called to this challenge of cross-cultural ministry, of living and working and worshipping with people in another part of the church," said Jill Cruse, coordinator of mission education and personnel at General Synod. "Certainly we have partners who are interested in that."



Lorna Reevely and a friend
 prepare cassava pudding in the
 Solomon Islands

At the height of the program in the 1990s, 25 VIMs worked all over the world in various capacities: veterinarian VIMs have taught animal health in Uganda; deacon VIMs have provided pastoral and prayer support in Belize; and teacher VIMs have worked at agricultural colleges in Japan.

At present, there are only three VIMs in the field, and dozens of volunteer opportunities. Here are some current needs:

A bilingual clergyperson to minister to French-speaking refugees in South Africa
 A librarian at Pacific Theological College in Fiji
 Medical volunteers in Belize
 A bishop's chaplain in Sri Lanka

So you who are reading this, are you one of the Anglicans who is called? More opportunities are listed on the website, and if you don't see your skills represented, contact the VIM office to inquire further. From there it's a process of interviews, applications, and forming a support group to assist you with fundraising and other details.

Lorna Reevely would say it's worth the leap out of your comfort zone:

"I realize not everyone has the chance to go off to the South Pacific to learn and serve but for those who are fortunate enough to go, and for their supporters, much is gained in appreciating what we in the Anglican Communion have in common and what, like Solomon's pudding, you have to be there to appreciate."