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## For the Nations: Casting a Global Vision for the School of Education

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# FOR THE NATIONS

**CASTING A GLOBAL VISION FOR THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

BY KEVIN JONES

Louise “LuLu” Cecilia Fleming was a teacher, physician, graduate of Shaw University, and faithful member of Bethel Baptist Church. She was also a missionary to the Republic of the Congo. The Women’s American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society sent her, and she went on to spend years teaching and shepherding there, touching lives with practical reading and writing skills. She served her local church and blessed the nation with the Gospel of Christ. When I think of our students’ futures, I hope their lives reflect LuLu’s.

Here at Cedarville, one vision for the School of Education is to have Cedarville graduates serving in all 192 countries around the globe. We see clear directives for this in Matthew 5:13–16, where in verse 14 Jesus says, “You are the light of the world.” He doesn’t say we are the light of a single city, or our hometown, or a nation. But we are the light of the entire world.

The Psalmist proclaims, “The whole earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (Ps. 24:1) and “The Lord is exalted above all the nations, his glory above the heavens” (Ps. 113:4). Therefore, we have a responsibility as God’s people to steward the gifts that the Lord has given us. Matthew 5 gives us clear imperatives, and so does Matthew 28, where the Lord says, “Go ye therefore and make disciples,” again, “of all nations.” In short, we are the salt and light of the world, and we are to go to all nations.

## WHERE AND HOW

As we pray about the areas in which we desire our students to serve globally, our prayer is threefold.

We want students to:

- Work in already established schools in open countries.
- Serve alongside missionary families and church plants.
- Establish schools in open, closed, and developing countries. Having traveled to various countries, I see the need clearly. And in each country, the need is different.

In Venezuela there is one need, in Zimbabwe a different need, and the Middle East has its own unique needs. The opportunities for service are countless. As the Lord observed, “The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few”

(Matt. 9:27). We see this call as complementary to our efforts to send teachers to every city and church in the U.S., where we are called to be light as well.

## SERVING ESTABLISHED SCHOOLS

In many countries around the world, schools are already established, and we have ongoing partnerships with many of them. We understand that some students desire to serve in pre-established schools with set curriculums and teachers who are trained in a well-established system. They desire stability,

**We want our teachers to obey God’s command to be “salt and light” and “go.”**

and we want to send those students to those places. Currently, we have graduates serving in those kinds of areas.

## SUPPORTING MISSIONARY FAMILIES

We also want our students to consider serving alongside missionary families. Mission organizations are constantly sending families to serve the Lord and establish churches in unreached places. Many families go to areas without pre-established schools. Without a doubt, parents love their children and want the best for them educationally, but some don’t have the time, bandwidth, or pedagogical capacity to teach their children. Our students are primed to serve the nations by serving these families short- and long-term. They can consider assisting with homeschooling or teaching Sunday schools for those families.

## FOUNDING NEW SCHOOLS

The third aspect of our prayer is for Cedarville graduates to establish schools in countries that lack the infrastructure for systemic learning. Lack of ability (or even desire) to read weakens the chance to cling to God’s Word. What an awesome responsibility it is to build a new school, a new system, new process, and new procedure to train up the nations. The desire here is not to take a Western way of thinking and duplicate it, but to organically shape education in a place where it is sparse.



Whether it is serving in already established schools, coming alongside missionary families, or creating new schools, we want our teachers to obey God's command to be "salt and light" and "go."

## INTERNATIONAL DISCIPLE-MAKERS

At Cedarville, our students are trained by the best theological professors the academy has to offer. We yoke that sound theological training with the best early childhood, middle, and secondary education training to produce outstanding teachers. We also offer our students biblical discipleship through our faculty and student life staff, another component of our excellent preparation process.

The vision is for students to see themselves as disciple-making teachers.

Discipleship is significant. The vision is for students to see themselves as disciple-making teachers. It is imperative that our students understand they are going to teach more than basic learning skills; they are going to serve alongside and be the church.

Pray for our students as they decide whether or not they will stay in the U.S, serve internationally, or both. Let's consider the words of Revelation 5:9-10: "And they sang a new song saying: Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals. For you were slain, and by your blood, you ransom people for God from every tribe, and language, and people, and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." My desire is that our students would delight in seeking to plant seeds among every tribe, every language, and every people. My desire is they would be modern-day LuLus.

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# BUILDING ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEGACY

Australia, Kenya, India, Honduras, Portugal, Ecuador, Nepal, Hungary, China, Malaysia, Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Czech Republic, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Paraguay, Germany, the Philippines, South Korea, Brazil, and Taiwan.

Nearly 200 students over the last 18 years have completed student teaching opportunities in the above-named countries, with many of them returning overseas after commencement.

"The sun never sets on Cedarville students because they're all over the world," noted Brenda MacKay, Associate Professor of Education. "We've had as high as 50% of our School of Education students return overseas to teach after graduation."

For a School of Education that desires to send more and more of its graduates overseas, the current international placement program offers a proven and effective launching platform.

Cedarville coordinates placements through Interaction International's STAGE (Student Teaching and Global Experience) program. According to MacKay, who has led the program since 2003, students must apply a year in advance, interview with her, and receive approval from School of Education faculty. Then they apply on the STAGE website and submit a rank-ordered list of schools where they hope to serve.

MacKay reviews their online applications and works with STAGE on final approvals.

Once placed in a school, students have a teacher-mentor on site and a supervisor during their semester overseas. MacKay also keeps in regular contact with students while they're away.

When they return, she conducts an interview with each one. "They talk about what God did for them," she said. "In a setting where they don't have family or friends, they have to depend on the Lord to help them through the issues that come up, from finding their way around in a new community and country, to eating new foods and learning how to relate to people in that culture.

"I ask them, 'If given the opportunity, would you complete this experience again?' I've never had one of them say, 'No.' They all want to go back; they talk about what a great experience it was and how much it changed them."