

**AUSTRALIAN LUTHERAN WORLD SERVICE,
THE DEVELOPMENT AND RESETTLEMENT
AGENCY OF THE LCA.**

**ACLE PRESENTATIO
BY NARELLE BOWDEN-FORD, ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR/PROGRAM MANAGER.**

TITLE: Teaching 'Service' in an egocentric world.

Introduction:

- Our students today live in an unstable and a very uneven global situation. What a responsibility we have! As teachers in Lutheran schools, we need to contribute to their ability to understand some of the real issues behind this situation, to introduce them to the instructions that Christ (and Luther) gave about the response that the "rich" should make to the "poor and needy" and to help them understand some of the finer points that contribute to the terrorism that impacts on their world. That aspect of our teaching is vital if our students are to help make a difference in our unjust world.

View Power PointImages of our World from the other side of our fence! (*This power point presentation is available on request from ALWS.*)

- So why teach "service" or "Christian responsibility" in our Lutheran Schools?

As schools affiliated with the LCA, you, its teachers, have the right to be aware of and then share Luther's teaching about our Christian responsibility to the poor in our world..... even if the majority of your students may not be Lutherans.

Let me share with you the thoughts of Rev. Dr. Dean Zweck from his paper on Luther's attitude to the poor and needy. "*Serving after the Service: Towards a Lutheran Understanding of Christian Social Service*". Lutheran

Theological Journal, Vol. 37, No 2, August 2003. Rev. Dr Zweck is a lecturer at the Australian Lutheran College, Adelaide.

He writes, “What are Lutheran congregations of the LCA doing on a regular basis for the needy in their midst and for the vast multitudes of poor in the world? We can reflect on that question by going back to our Lutheran roots and seeing how Luther and early Lutheran communities dealt with the social responsibility of caring for the poor.”

[We could here ask “What are Lutheran schools of the LCA doing on a regular basis for the needy of the worldlocal and worldwide?”]

Rev. Dr. Dean suggests that early Lutheran reformers, far from ignoring pervasive poverty and need, faced the problem squarely and dealt with it both theologically and practically. They did not shirk this serious responsibility but upheld the words of Galatians 5:6 which suggest that whilst we are saved only through faith, this faith is always ‘faith active in love.’

He continues, “When early Lutheran communities abolished begging, they knew they were not abolishing poverty and so this awareness caused them to acknowledge that the problem of social welfare was even more critical. In doing so, they therefore responded to Luther’s often quoted words ‘[Faith] does not ask if good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has already done them.’ [Are we encouraging our students to be alert to the needs of others so that responding becomes an immediate action?]

Dr Zweck concludes this section of his paper suggesting that if you, as teachers in Lutheran schools, encourage an understanding of Luther’s attitude towards a response to our needy neighbours, then our students will not ask, ‘Who is my neighbour? but, To whom can I be a neighbour’ He emphasizes that (in this case) as teachers in Lutheran schools, we need to be able to share the Lutheran theology about poverty and we need to encourage our students to put it into practice.”

The poor will always be with us and in our very uneven world today, the rich are growing richer and the poor, poorer. The results of this are impacting on the whole world. We have to teach our children why they need to act against it.

I would also like to share with you a favourite passage of mine taken from the forward of a book “Witt on the World” by Bishop Howell Witt who spent many years ministering as a servant of God amongst aborigines and other poor communities in the north and north-west of Australia.

“Let me say, right from the start, that this world for me is God’s world. Not a mad, mad world; not a dog eat dog world; not a rat race. For me it is God’s world.

So this means at times I am the complete pacifist.....knowing that there is little I can do but leave things to God. Realizing that there are many decisions that I cannot influence, I pray “O God this is your world you do something about it.”

But at other times, I must be the complete activist. Because it is God’s world, if there are things that are contrary to His will, things that I can do something about, then I must do them. Because it is His world.”

For me, this is every reason why we must teach service/ Christian social responsibility in our schools. Our students live in a world where so much is happening that is contrary to God’s will both in the national context and international arena. Today what does happen or is experienced in one country does impact on life in another country. The deprivation of basic rights for too many of the world’s population (a situation that is contrary to God’s will) has contributed to the terrorism and its associated paralytic fear gripping the world. By encouraging our students to respond in order to begin to alter this grim situation by raising much-needed funds or by advocating to governments and multi-national companies against the injustice that permeates world trade etc., we are helping them to uphold the world as God wants it. They are becoming activists as He wants them to be. They are putting into practice Luther’s theology on poverty

Body:

- How do we teach service? Whilst this elective uses the word “egocentric” to describe the world today, I believe that the students in our schools are quite happy to support a “good cause” as long as it is presented to them enthusiastically and with details that illustrate the transparency and accountability of the processes it involves. They are discerning! And they are also generous and do have more money at their disposal than many of the past generations of school students. But they need to know how to serve and who they should serve.(if we can prioritise need!)

I would like to share some different models of teaching/encouraging service with you. (Any discussion on these is welcome as we look at each one.)

- Model 1: The “compulsory service” model from different American/Canadian Christian schools.

(A) At Saint Francis High School, “the Christian Service Program is a graduation requirement based on the philosophy of the School which states ‘The school is committed to building a just society within the world community in which service to others is practiced by all.’ Service is not an option; it is an obligation we have as Christians and as members of the human family. The Christian Service program is designed to place each student in direct contact with varied populations of people in need. By the end of four years, each student will have worked with people who are developmentally disabled, small children, elderly or economically poor. The Christian Service Project is organized by the Office of Campus Ministry/Religious Studies Department and involves

- 1) the listing of agencies on line to help students find those who need help.
- 2) The publishing of the goals of the Christian Service Program.
- 3) The due dates for Christian Service Projects.
- 4) Student Requirements
- 5) Agency/Organisation Verification Forms”

It is a mandatory program run on similar lines to our Work Experience Programs and verification forms require reporting on the hours of service completed by the student along with the nature of the student’s approach to the work. Students are not “credited” with a service input if they have not performed satisfactory work as deemed by his/her supervisor. The program carries both a compulsory and a “pass or fail” approach.

(B) The Christian Service Program at the Junipero Serra High School, Mateo, is even more prescriptive. The following are its criteria:

- All students must complete 80 hours of Christian Service prior to the end of the first semester of Senior Year.

- 160 hours of Christian Service earns the student a Block and Service Patch.
- Service hours completed at Junipero Serra High or related activities account for no more than 40 of the 80 hours.
- Christian Service must be done for an agency approved by the Christian Service Coordinator.
- All agencies must be non-profit and any agency not on the Campus Ministry approved list must be approved by the Service Coordinator.
- Students may receive no remuneration for any work completed as part of the program requirement.
- Completed, signed time sheets with evaluation must be returned to the Christian Service Coordinator before the requirement is considered complete.

There are even monetary awards as a component of the program.

The **Oswald Award** is given to four incoming seniors, who have demonstrated outstanding Christian Service. This \$500 scholarship is applied to senior-year tuition.

The **Cashin Award** is a US\$1000 scholarship awarded to an outstanding senior who has gone over and above the 80-hour requirement.

On reading of the above awards, I wondered what Christ would have thought about financial reward and scholarships for His twelve disciples???

QUESTION: Are these two examples within Model 1, appropriate examples of how to teach and inculcate service in our Lutheran schools?

.* Model 2: Redeemer Lutheran College, Rochedale, Brisbane. A long history of an Awareness Week + a student service visit to an ALWS supported project in Cambodia.

In the early 1980's, the "beginning" years at Redeemer, the tradition of holding a school-wide Awareness Week was begun.

WHAT WAS and still IS THE RATIONALE BEHIND SUCH A WEEK?:

* We have a Christian responsibility to awaken students to the plight of the poor and needy and to encourage them to become actively involved in regular giving to those in need. See 1 John 3:17,18. Isaiah 58: 6,7. Proverbs 22:9.

- Encourages students to focus on other people who are infinitely less fortunate than they are.
- Awakens students to facts and statistics about communities of people in other countries. They are global citizens.
- Increases knowledge of other countries e.g. global location, geographic build, climate. All of these, coupled with historical experiences, have been instrumental in contributing to the situation in that country today.
- Increases appreciation of the customs in other cultures and hopefully an understanding of how these impact on the people in terms of religious beliefs and practices, gender differences, community expectations and behaviour etc.
- With the decline in the number of students choosing to study Geography and the replacement of it by SOSE, students have a very limited knowledge of countries of the world other than what is presented through the media when global issues arise. This does not always give the accurate situation within that country.
- Globalisation is the buzz word and if we accept that we are members of a global society it is essential that we have knowledge, an appreciation of and an intelligent, accurate awareness of other cultures and living conditions.

HOW DID REDEEMER CHOOSE THE FOCUS OF AWARENESS WEEK.

- COUNTRY FOCUS: Any country where ALWS provided financial support to the development project being guided by LWS was eligible for focus.
- THEME/ISSUE FOCUS: Issues that were making world headlines and were impacting on the people within a country where LWS is operational were chosen. e.g. Land Mines, Environmental Degradation, Impact of Multi-National Corporations, Reconciliation, Refugees. Topics that were featuring prominently in national and international political relationships and hence, the media, were chosen at the appropriate time.

PLANNING AN AWARENESS WEEK.

- The school calendar was consulted closely so that both staff and students were able to be actively involved in the activities of the Week. As this was/is a fund raising week, the strategic placing of it on the school calendar was very important. e.g. not chosen as the week before or after a school fete/art show etc.
- Staff and students knew of its dates at least a term in advance.

- A committee of staff or students or combined was established to coordinate the week.
- Each Home Class or House or Year Level had to decide on a fund raising activity which would stimulate interest and which was in keeping with the purpose of the week. e.g. The selling of raffle tickets in a Porsche would not require a lot of effort on behalf of the majority of students and it is not an activity that can take place within the school day and involve the student body. (see below for some tried and true student fund raisers.)
- Devotions/Chapel messages were planned to suit the theme of the week. Redeemer was blessed with Chaplains who have been very supportive of the Awareness Week concept.
- Contact was made well in advance with ALWS so that resources could be ordered and booked. Other sources of resource material e.g. videos, guest speakers etc were organized.
- The committee planned special events such as a multi-cultural evening and an evening at which there was a display and sale of goods made by the women's co-ops in developing countries. One World shops and other bigger aid-agencies helped in these evenings.
- **Suggested Fund-raising Activities:**

Shoe shine service

Daily morning tea or lunchtime coffee shop. (Ian Hauser, now at Grace College, Rothwell, had this down to a fine art.)

Gold coin chain

Draw a large map of the focus country and invite students to fill it in with coins.

Guess the number of lollies etc in the jar.

Staff baby photo competition

Lip Sync competition. (great for a year level. Staff entries attract a large audience who all pay to view.)

Staff Slave Auction

School lunchtime disco. (primary or middle school.)

Sausage Sizzle

Rice and water lunch day

Redeemer has continued this tradition for the past twenty years. In 2001 their focus was to build a three classroom school building in a remote village in Tete Province, Mozambique. This project was completed and progress and completion photos were provided to Redeemer students. As a result of some basic English being taught to some of the Mozambican students by their Headmaster, communication has begun between students from each school; a mutual learning relationship has been established.

plus

This year Redeemer College decided it wanted some of its Year 11 students to put their commitment to service into action. As a result, 8 students (who applied for inclusion in the trip and were successful out of 53 applicants) and 2 teachers (the total number of visitors determined by LWS staff) will visit the ALWS supported project in the remote Orak District in Cambodia to do some hard manual labour. Under the guidance of the main supervising Teacher, the whole school has undertaken to learn more about Cambodia, its history, its culture and the international LWS approach to development. The preparation program for the students involved has been as follows:

CAMBODIAN VISITORS TRAINING PROGRAM

Training will mostly be on Friday afternoons 3.30pm – to 5.00pm in 8B. I will supply some biscuits and cordial for afternoon tea.

1. Get to know the team. (**Friday 7th May**)
2. What does service mean? How can we serve others, here and in Cambodia? What does Jesus say about serving? What are some of the issues? (**Friday 21st May**)
3. Poverty in our world – why, where, how, issues. Social Justice. (**Friday 4th June**)
4. Lutheran World Service – the organisation and programmes. (**Friday 11th June**)
5. Awareness Week Learning and Preparation (Focus on India). (**Friday 16th July**)
6. Awareness Week (Help where needed)
Monday 26th August – Friday 30th August
7. Cambodia – people, culture, history, geography, problems: No 1
(Friday 20th August)

8. Cambodia – people, culture, history, geography, problems: No 2
(Friday 3rd September)
9. Challenges of Development in Cambodia and other developing countries (Friday 15th October)
10. Social Night (Thai Restaurant – Families welcome.)
(Friday 29th October)
11. Travelling in Cambodia – itinerary, rules, safe travel
(Friday 12th November)
12. Last minute “stuff”
(WEDNESDAY 1st December)

And the **WHOLE SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT** has been

- Commitment to a Cambodian Awareness Week focus
- Attendance at special Cambodian focused devotions
- Participation in the following prayer program.

The Cambodia Project Prayer Points

- ❖ Thank God for this opportunity to serve!
- ❖ Thank God for the team - pray for a sense of togetherness and family
- ❖ Pray for the reserves - that they may feel included while knowing they may not get to travel

- ❖ Thank God for Redeemer Lutheran College and the support the school has given to such a wonderful project
- ❖ Pray for Lutheran World Service, and in particular the work that they are doing in Cambodia
- ❖ Pray that our trip can be of use to the people of Cambodia
- ❖ Pray that LWS development may help many hurting Cambodian people
- ❖ Pray for continued smooth planning for The Cambodia Project, and for resources to continue to become available
- ❖ Thank God for the support of Mrs Bowden-Ford of Australian LWS, and pray that her work in Cambodia is productive and full of blessings to the people
- ❖ Pray for the learning that is to take place in our group - that we may be willing to learn and grow
- ❖ Pray that we will be able to raise the money needed to keep the price to a reasonable level for us all
- ❖ Pray for Churches to become involved - in prayer ministries and in providing practical support
- ❖ Pray that God would bless us all - students, teachers and families as a result of The Cambodia Project

FOR MORE DETAILS RE-THIS REDEEMER CAMBODIA PROJECT CONTACT MRS SUSAN SENG, C/- RLC.

Discussion and questions on this model.

- Model 3: “Teaching/Encouraging service within a “Year of Service” focus.”
Immanuel Primary, Novar Gardens.

Power Point Presentation by Karen Brown, Pastoral Care Counsellor, Immanuel Primary School. (Contact Karen at Immanuel for details.)

In her presentation, Karen will explain how

- 1) the concept of “service” was introduced to the students
- 2) the students, staff and P&F Assocn were involved in service to an ALWS overseas project.
- 3) the whole school is undertaking service at home.

Discussion and questions relating to Model 3.

These three different MODELS demonstrate how the concept of service can be taught and caught by our students. They are only some of the many different approaches.

Your school may find it easier to lock into one of the World Vision (*we have done it all for you*) projects or others like them. One question comes to mind when we allow students’ involvement in such projects to be the beginning and end of their understanding of service. ‘Is an accurate appreciation of true service really taught through these “*who can raise the most money and so who will win the promoted prize*” approach and the many other similar ones that are out there. I guess we should also ask if through this giving in response to an advertised need, the changes that are brought about are empowering and capacity building for the recipients so that they will eventuate in sustainable positive development?’

We also have to question if our teaching of service has increased our student's awareness of the uneven conditions that exist worldwide and the reasons for such unevenness.

In raising the issue of the World Vision and other similar approaches, I need to refer to the agreement (**Memorandum of Understanding**) that has been signed **between LEA and ALWS**. This agreement reminds staff in Lutheran schools that ALWS is the development/aid and resettlement agency of the LCA, the Church in whose name all Lutheran schools are built. It also highlights the fact that LEA and ALWS mutually agree:

- that Christian social responsibility and Christian service are not an optional activity, but part of the church's total ministry that both demonstrates and declares God's gracious love to the world.
- to encourage within Lutheran schools a continuing program of information and education, consistent with the Gospel message which explores the causes of poverty and its consequences for over one billion people.

- ***All participants will be involved in an activity taken from Canadian Foodgrains Bank...A Christian Response to Hunger.***

***ACTIVITY:** Invite the members of the group to imagine a great meal with family and friends. Ask them to imagine what they would eat, who would be there, how they would feel. Then ask them to quickly choose colours and paint lines, shapes, etc (without much concern for details) that express their thoughts and feelings about a fine meal.*

Have group members set aside their first papers. Ask them to imagine being hungry, not only for an hour but for days or weeks. Ask them to imagine their thoughts and feelings about being hungry. Then, have them paint a second free style picture with whatever colours, shapes and lines seem appropriate. Have a small number of volunteers compare the two pictures and speak about the differences and their feelings about the situations.

Conclusion:

*Viewing of a short segment from the video “ I am Dalit.” to reinforce the need to teach “service/Christian responsibility/social justice” in our schools today. (This video can be borrowed free of charge from ALWS, Box 488, Albury 2640.)

[Teaching Resource materials and other resources that ALWS can offer our teachers can be viewed on the ALWS display booth, No 27.]