



DVD Script

for

Six Challenges - Six Mysteries A Charter for Lutheran Education

**The following six DVD scripts
are essentially the text of the Narrator used in the DVDs.**

**These scripts do not include the text of students,
staff or principals of the various schools involved in the DVDs.**

**These scripts are included in this manual
to assist groups and group leaders in their deliberations.**

Six Challenges - Six Mysteries

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DVD Script

Challenge Three

Sequence 1 – Introducing the Challenge

Before us is the mighty Murray...and a few frogs!
The Murray looks as mighty as ever. Is it really?
Is the Murray dying like so many of the frogs along the river?

The Murray points us to one of the many ecological crises facing our planet. Our waterways! Do our Lutheran schools care?

What role should ecology play in Lutheran Education in the future?

The 2004 ACLE Conference threw out a number of challenges for Lutheran Schools to consider as they plan their futures.

And those challenges have been condensed into a new charter for Lutheran schools to explore.

We now look at the third of those challenges.

Challenge Three

*A 2020 Lutheran School will be planet conscious,
living on Earth as our fragile home, aware of a new global
consciousness and inter-connectedness.*

When we look into the distance the world seems so vast, the sea seems to go on forever and the sky seems to spell infinity.

As we move towards the horizon, it keeps moving ahead of us as we move towards it. I have often felt that the horizon is where the infinite meets the finite, where heaven meets Earth.

And it all seems so vast, so eternal, so unreachable! But is it?

Ever since the first image of our planet was beamed back to us by the astronauts, our perception of the world has changed.

We now see our home is a small green-blue planet, a living piece of stardust, a precious piece of matter that is fertile and fragile.

Our view of the world has changed dramatically!
The mighty Murray is a living vein in our precious planet.

Sequence 2 – The Challenge of Peter Ellyard

At the 2004 ACLE conference, Peter Ellyard challenged us to face this image of our planet and imagine a new world through our schools.

He introduced us to the idea of ‘planetism’, living and learning in our world as ‘an inter-dependent planetary system’.

And that inter-dependence extends from the water we all share and the oxygen we all breathe to the global society we now inherit and the common crises we all face.

We are all in the same boat, a boat called planet Earth.

The problem, says Ellyard, is that some people, especially our leaders, are more like cowboys than cosmonauts. Instead of viewing our planet as a precious home for all peoples, they see it as body of resources to be mined and exploited.

They are like cowboys who live in the legends of the past, who try to govern by fear rather than inspire with hope. They want bigger and better ranches, businesses, churches. They want to keep things tribal and separate. They prefer to harness nature rather than preserve it.

The question we face is whether our schools have developed a genuine ‘cosmonaut’ vision of our planet.

Do the imaginative learning contexts we develop remain confined and controlled, or do they free us to explore our connections with the amazing plants, places and people of the whole planet?

Do our students get a sense that they are an integral part of a vast exciting eco-system called Earth?

Sequence 3 – Initiatives in Lutheran Schools

Cornerstone College is one of the schools that is taking the ecological crisis seriously. I am with some students from Cornerstone College who involved in an environmental Water Watch Program.

Another school seeking to raise the ecological awareness of both students and the community is Horsham Primary School. These students explore the wetlands of the Wimmera and the creation story of the Wimmera River with an Indigenous leader.

Sequence 4 – Exploring the Challenge

One of the problems we face in the Christian tradition is what has been called ‘heavenism’.

Heavenism is that approach to life which says that heaven is our true home so it doesn't really matter what happens to Earth. Earth is material and disposable, while heaven is spiritual and eternal. So Earth can be exploited while heaven is celebrated! As someone said, ‘We are all going to heaven so to hell with Earth!’

We even devalue Earth in some of our hymns. We sing, for example,

*Guide me O Thou great Jehovah
Pilgrim through this BARREN LAND!*

Barren land, indeed! Perhaps we need songs that celebrate Earth as God's sanctuary rather than as a ‘barren land’ we endure on our way to heaven.

Of course, there are lands we have made barren by our greed and ignorance. One such place is the so-called ‘badlands’ at Unity College in Murray Bridge, a piece of land the students, together with the Indigenous elders of the Coorong, are replanting with Indigenous food sources.

The opposite approach recognises Earth as our God-given home. Earth is a free gift of God, a precious planet, a fragile life form. And we are entrusted with caring for this corner of creation. Earth is to be preserved and celebrated, not exploited and harnessed by contemporary cowboys.

That raises the issue of how many of our Lutheran schools have become eco-schools where every aspect of the school program reflects a concern for preserving and healing our planet.

How many schools have had the courage to conduct a complete environmental audit and have begun to modify their ‘lifestyle’ accordingly?

To what extent have our schools considered ecojustice as a legitimate focus of their curriculum planning?

Earth has been abused, especially in the past century. By clearing thousands of hectares of rain forest and destroying numerous living species, humans have committed what might be considered ‘crimes against creation’.

What does that mean for our future?

Sequence 5 – Introducing the Mystery

You may well say to me, ‘Habel, Earth is just a ball of dirt, a finite piece of matter, a speck of stardust, so why worry about saving the environment?’

The Grampians may be majestic but they are just a pile of rocks, so why worry about them?

Earth will disappear at the end of the world, so why worry about becoming planet conscious here and now? Why worry?

Because there is a profound mystery connected with this planet, a mystery that ought to make us rethink how we relate to Earth.

And that mystery is known in Latin as
finitum capax infiniti: the finite embraces the infinite!

Mystery Three

Finitum capax infiniti *and the planet principle!*

The mystery that the finite embraces the infinite, that the material holds the spiritual, that God’s presence is in, with and under every piece of this planet.

Sequence 6 - Exploring the Mystery

Finitum capax infiniti. This Latin expression refers to the mystery that the finite can hold/embrace/contain the infinite.

Luther emphasised this mystery in connection with the Lord’s supper. Some theologians of his day argued that the bread and wine were but symbols or signs of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist. Luther insisted that the body and blood of Christ—a rich dimension of the infinite—were present in, with and under the bread and the wine.

Of course, the presence of the infinite, the God we know in Jesus Christ, is not confined to two pieces of Earth, namely bread and wine. God’s presence fills all the Earth.

This mystery is clear from the vision of Isaiah when he says:

*Holy! Holy! Holy is the Lord of hosts!
The whole Earth is filled with God’s glory!* (Isa. 6.3)

The glory of God, you will recall, is that shining presence of God that settled on Mt Sinai as a great fire cloud. Later that same fire cloud ‘filled’ the tabernacle. And even later the fire cloud of God’s presence ‘filled’ the temple.

The seraphim in Isaiah's vision announce that God's presence does not just fill the temple. It 'fills' all of Earth.

The infinite presence of God fills more than bread and wine, more than a tabernacle or a temple! It fills our planet.

If so, then we ought to treat Earth as sacred, as a living temple of God, as a planet to be celebrated not exploited.

The glow of a sunset might suggest God's presence in the evening, but the infinite presence of God fills every part of our planet, all the time!

Sequence 7 – The Closing Challenge

There really is no option. This is a challenge that all Lutheran schools must face. We must become planet conscious to survive.

Quite a number of schools have made a start. Some have water watch schemes. Some plant trees. Cornerstone students even find healthy frogs in their stream.

All of this is just a start.

We must transform our schools into planet conscious centres.

That means three things: being conscious of our place as schools on the planet, being conscious of the condition and needs of our fragile home called Earth, and being conscious of God's infinite presence in every corner of creation.

We are all part of one wide web on this planet—connected with frogs and water and waterfalls and with God who is the infinite in everything—including this frog.