



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

Six Challenges - Six Mysteries

DVD Script

Challenge Four

Sequence 1 – Introducing the Challenge

Little feet walking down a road. Some are on their way to an elite school. Some to a public school. Some are bare feet going to a school in Cambodia or Africa. Some are going to work in a field in India.

Which path will our children walk?

Will they learn to walk with children who have no shoes and whose path seems to go nowhere?

Will the privileged children in our Lutheran schools have any genuine compassion or concern for other children?

Or, more to the point, what **SHOULD** Lutheran Education be like for our privileged children?

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 explore another of these challenges.

Challenge Four

A 2020 Lutheran School will have a conscience that is active in the school community and alive to the social needs and injustices in our world.

The Boxing Day tsunami in 2004 sent shock waves around the world. But more than that, it evoked a response of compassion from millions of people everywhere—even among the poor.

Yes, events like the tsunami evoke compassion. But what creates a conscience? What moves people beyond compassion to having a conscience? What moves people to face and fight the injustices of our society that leave so many people poor, dispossessed or broken?

The fourth challenge in our 2020 charter is that we develop schools with a conscience, schools aware of the injustices of our world and schools ready to get involved in ways to overcome these injustices.

Sequence 2 – The Challenge of Bishop Ishmael Noko

Dr. Ishmael Noko, the head of the Lutheran World Federation, was one of the main speakers at the 2004 ACLE Conference. He challenged us to look beyond our comfortable school boundaries to see what is really happening in the rest of the world.

He spoke about the rest of the world as an extended human family of which we, in Australia, are a privileged part.

He urged us not to exclude anyone from that family—the poor, the refugees, the persecuted, the outcastes and those with HIV/AIDS! They are all part of our human family in our common home—planet Earth.

That means, said Bishop Noko, we need to understand and face racism, casteism, classism and any other bias against people who are dubbed different or unimportant.

Bishop Noko said: ‘The exclusion of anyone on the basis of gender, race, colour, nationality, class, language or religion offends the image of God in that person.’

Bishop Noko challenged us to move beyond local agendas and national agendas that tend to separate us from our family, to a human agenda where we know and struggle with our brothers and sisters wherever they may be suffering.

We in Australia only need reflect on how we treated the stolen generation. We only need to ask ourselves whether we have really faced the shame of that injustice. Did we, in our schools, move from compassion to conscience? Did we really say sorry by including this wrong in our collective school conscience?

Did we really say sorry with all of those words?
Did we really say sorry when we marched down the street?
Did we really say sorry for stealing away
The lives and the hopes of those little brown feet?

If we really say sorry just what will it mean?
Will we feel what they feel when walk down their street?
If we speak true the shame on the journey to heal
Will hope stir again in those wounded brown feet?

Sequence 3 – Initiatives in Lutheran Schools

One school that is seeking to develop compassion for children in other lands is St Johns Primary School in Highgate.

By learning about the poverty and oppression of the children in Cambodia, these students are not only developing compassion, but beginning to ask why. Why this poverty?

Another school that is developing a sense of compassion is Horsham Lutheran Primary School. Grade Three children visit the old folks in a nearby home to bring them some joy.

Let me tell you about a very different school, a Grihini school. These are young women from the hills of South India. They are the poorest of the poor. They are below the caste system. Many of them are drop outs from Primary School. The school they are attending was created by people with a conscience. And this school is committed to social justice. These young people learn not only reading and writing, but also health, sanitation, nutrition and how to change their poor oppressed villages

The task is to create a conscience in our schools that will affect the future of the human family.

As Bishop Noko added, it is the Lutheran schools rather than the institutional churches that are in a position to take the lead and develop human values in the youth of society, values that are grounded in our faith. And that is quite a challenge!

Sequence 4 – Exploring the Challenge

What does it mean for our schools?

It means moving beyond compassion to conscience.

It means having the courage to take a stand with those who are being oppressed, those who are being dispossessed, those who have been made outcasts.

It means NOT taking the side of their masters, the powerful and rich who exploit the weak and the poor.

For our schools to cultivate a conscience we need to move beyond talks in chapel about those in need to a school orientation that embraces social justice. We need to ask:

Does my school entrance policy, for example, espouse affirmative action for underprivileged students?

Does my school dare to read history, literature, society from the perspective of the poor and oppressed?

Does my school enable its students to get involved in social justice activities in the community that are more than token acts of kindness?

Does my school take a public stand on issues and injustices found in a given community?

Is my school a school with a conscience or an elite school that remains isolated and comfortable?

It only takes a decision to focus publicly on one such issue to begin the debate and stir the conscience of the school.

A number of our schools have sought to overcome racism and similar biases through multicultural educational policies. The drama program at Redeemer Rochedale illustrates how one class comes to terms with the issue of injustice.

Another school where social justice is becoming a part of the curriculum is St Peters in Brisbane.

Sequence 5 – Introducing the Mystery

The Challenge of Bishop Noko still stands:

I have hope in schools that they will take the lead in the fight against injustice.

Are we ready to take the lead? Are we ready to create schools with a social conscience as well as human compassion?

Some might suggest that a concern for social justice is something we should only consider as citizens but not explicitly as Christians!

Far from it!

Creating a conscience about the poor and the broken in our human family is connected to another great mystery of our faith.

And that mystery is known in Latin as
theologia crucis: The Theology of the Cross!
OR The Way of the Cross

Mystery Four

Theologia crucis and the conscience principle!
The mystery that the way of the cross creates a capacity to identify with those who suffer injustice.

Sequence 6 – Exploring the Mystery

Theologia crucis means the theology of the way of the cross. The opposite is the theology of glory.

The way of glory is the way of power and winning regardless of the consequences.

Many even try to use Jesus and religion to gain power, to exclude, to control and to earn accolades!

The way of glory is the way of the master who dominates and diminishes others.

Jesus made it clear that following him meant identifying with the poor and outcaste. As he said, 'Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these my children, you did it to me.'

Let me tell you a personal experience about this word of Jesus. I was walking through a remote village in India. An old woman, one of the so-called 'untouchables', was in the middle of the street cleaning a very filthy drain with her bare hands. That was her job! Suddenly I was repulsed. It was disgusting. I felt that she was indeed 'untouchable'!

'How can I be Christ to her?' I asked myself.

Then it came to me. That was the wrong question.

That woman was being Christ to me.

Following Christ means walking the way of the cross and becoming a servant not a master: As Jesus said,

You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognise as their rulers lord it over them and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you. Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mark 10.42-45)

Sequence 7 – The Closing Challenge

We are at the crossroads.

Will we accept this challenge and follow the way of the cross or succumb to the temptation of following the path to glory?

It is easy for affluent schools to become more and more elitist, more and more obsessed with public success.

Are we ready to create schools that have a conscience about the injustices in our human family – at school, in the community and beyond.

Some Lutheran schools have a very real compassion for poor children in other countries. Some schools are involved in great community service programs.

Are we ready to go a step further, to understand what causes injustice and to take a stand against the injustice we discover.

Are we ready to walk the way of the cross, to identify with the poor and the broken as Jesus did?

We are the crossroads.