



Message from the LCA's Board for Mission

Choices

These days as Australians we have so many choices – we can choose what school we attend (maybe it's our parents who have the opportunity to choose where we will go to school!), where we will spend our holidays, what sport we will play, what career we will attempt to start our working life in, what job we will

However for those who have been born into situations and countries where war, civil unrest, drought, famine, and many other fearful and dire circumstances affect the livelihoods and safety of people - there are no choices.

take next, what we drink and what food we will eat...the list of choices we have in so many areas of life are almost endless for those of us who have the opportunity to grow up in Australia – the "lucky country".

However for those who have been born into situations and countries

where war, civil unrest, drought, famine, and many other fearful and dire circumstances affect the livelihoods and safety of people - there are no choices. As a child, youth, mother, father, disabled, frail or elderly person in such a situation often the only option is the desperate need to struggle for survival. So much of survival to live in these countries and situations is dependent on the ability of people to have something to eat and drink.

It is in some of these most desperate situations in South Sudan, Burundi, Mozambique, Nepal, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia and in the refugee camps of Kenya, that the work of ALWS through LWF is most evident in helping to meet the needs of people. In many and varied ways, through support for the most vulnerable, people are not only given food and water when faced with having nothing – but in time, they are also provided with the necessary education and helped to develop their capacity, and the capacity of their communities to

begin to work together to build their knowledge and the ability to have sustainable food and water security, and to have choices for living.

As Australians we also have choices to make that can help to provide some choices for those who are left with none...what our priorities will be in life, what career we choose, how we spend our money, what causes we support, who we follow, and who we "serve"...these are some of our choices.



"My food", said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work". John 4:34. This is also the choice we have. Will we live a self-indulgent life or will we choose another way? What will you choose?

The LCA Board for Mission gives thanks to God for the partnerships shared with ALWS and for the work carried out through ALWS, in situations and circumstances where the love of Jesus Christ is shared in very practical ways to give people the "food" they need.

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"Give us today the food we need..." Matthew 6:11



Australian Lutheran World Service

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Australian Lutheran World Service
Awareness Week
Food Matters
Focus on food in the developing world

Dare to Dream a Different World



Message from LEA

Food Matters

Two weeks ago, we sat around the kitchen table to discuss Christmas Day. Who is coming for lunch? How many will stay on for an evening meal? As usual we decided to share the catering so that we each contribute towards the day by way of preparing food and meeting costs. The menu will include seafood, chicken, the obligatory leg ham, hot vegetables this year instead of salads, at least one dessert in addition to the customary Christmas pudding, followed by a selection of cheeses and other assorted nibbles. We are bound to enjoy this feast, eat too much and vow not to have so much next year!

Today the request for an LEA message for ALWS Awareness Week surfaced, from beneath a pile of paperwork. The theme is *Food Matters* supported by the Bible text *Give us this day the food we need* (Matthew 6:11). The abundant menu planned for our family Christmas lunch came to mind and sense of guilt was kindled. It got me thinking about the difference between *need* and *want*, the difference between *enough* and *abundant*, the difference between *what matters* and *what doesn't*, about our connection to God which determines our *being* and our *doing*.

Being connected with God is not merely a cognitive recognition of his existence, it is being in relationship with him. Jesus described this relationship when he said 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing' (John 15:5). Using this vine and branch image we see that it is only in growing from the vine and therefore taking on the existence or *being* of the vine that the branch will produce fruit (*doing*).

Fortunately, although our relationship with God is fractured by sin, he provides a grace-filled repair kit. His grace is abundant, all encompassing, for all people. His grace is twofold. It is both *accepting* and *transforming*. *Accepting* grace encompasses God's unconditional acceptance of, and love for, us and assures us of salvation through Jesus' death and resurrection. *Transforming* grace recreates people as

children of God, reorders their priorities to put God first where he rightfully belongs as their lives conform more closely to God's will for them.

Living as a child of God will be reflected in the way we journey through life. It transforms our worldview as we perceive the world and particularly the people in it from a changed perspective and influences



how we respond to the challenges we face. It will be evident in how we live out our vocations, determining how we respond as husband or wife, as a parent to our children, as teacher to students, in conversations, how we conduct ourselves, or how we respond to the needs of those who hunger. Our lives will reflect more closely the fruit of the Spirit, that is 'love' from which flows 'joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control' (Gal 5:22-23).

We are all on a journey from birth to death. **Every journey has a destination** in view, a goal or a priority. On the Christian's spiritual journey our ultimate destination is assured. **Every journey takes time**. It will take the whole of our lives to reach the destination of our spiritual journey. In the meantime, God continues to poke, prod and form us. It is an ongoing process. **Every journey has a path**. The path of the Christian's journey is paved with God's grace. On this path we are remade as grace-filled people (*our being*) who live grace-full lives where the love God bestows on us spills over into, surrounds and transforms our *doing*. Although *being* precedes *doing*, they are intrinsically linked, interdependent and inseparable.

Finding the request from ALWS for a message from LEA certainly gave me a sharp poke and a bit of a prod. May our *being* be reflected in our *doing* as we respond to the hunger of so many people and children in so many places around the world.

Lutheran Education Australia



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