

# God's love – our care

## THEOLOGY UNDERPINNING THE PRACTICE OF LUTHERAN CARE

### FOREWORD

At the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) National Synod in 2003, a statement on the theology and practice of caring ministries was adopted. The paper had been prepared by Lutheran Community Care in South Australia and was endorsed by the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations.

At the 2015 National Synod, a resolution was passed that the paper be revised. This work has been undertaken under the auspices of the Committee for Ministry with the Ageing and Lutheran Community Care in South Australia.

The revised document presented here is for use in Bible study groups within the church and its institutions. It is a resource that is available for those who work within the LCA's caring ministries: aged and community services, schools, local and overseas missions and those providing aid overseas.

The document provides the biblical and theological foundations of caring and draws on the work of Australian theologians as well as those providing diaconal or caring ministry. It weaves together biblical texts, and themes from Lutheran theology, that explain why we are involved in caring ministries.

The questions within the document are designed to help you to think about how you care. The ones at the back, which reflect contemporary situations, are more challenging.

## 1. GOD IS LOVE

**1.1** The Bible teaches that God is 'merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness' (Ex 34:6). St John says that 'God is love'. God's unfathomable love for humanity is shown in the first chapter of the Bible, where we read that God has made us in God's image, as partners with God in the care and conservation of creation. God remains passionately involved with creation – sustaining it, delivering people from their slavery to sin and suffering, and restoring all things to their original goodness and wholeness. God's passion to restore relationships with people and all creation is a constant theme in the Bible, reaching its full expression in Jesus Christ, in whom we see God's merciful heart most clearly.

### *From the Bible*

**1.1** God is merciful and gracious (Ex 34:6–7).

**God is love** (1 John 4:8,16; 1 Cor 13).

**All people are created in God's image** (Gen 1:27).

**God sustains creation** (Ps 104).

**God delivers people from slavery to sin and suffering** (Ex 3:7–12).

**God restores to original goodness and wholeness** (Ps 103).

**God's merciful heart is seen in restored relationships** (Col 1:15–23).

### *For Discussion*

**1.1** Since I am created in the image of God, what does that mean for how I see and treat others (who are also created in the image of God)?

In what ways can I contribute to restoring relationships with people and all creation?

# 2. GOD PARTNERS WITH PEOPLE

**2.1** Jesus' ministry is one of mercy and inclusion. Jesus reaches out to all people with a ministry that addresses all their needs: spiritual, material, physical and emotional. He heals the sick, casts out demons, sides with those who are marginalised or excluded and eats with outcasts. Jesus responds with compassion to those who shout out with the beggar's cry, 'Lord have mercy'. Jesus' ministry of mercy is perpetuated in and through the community that believes in him as God's crucified and risen Messiah and who see in him the long-awaited final sign of God's mercy to sinful humanity. Through the forgiveness and renewal that believers receive at worship, the Holy Spirit revives them for a life of service and empowers them to respond as Jesus does. In fact, where there is no ministry of mercy, the genuineness of the church's worship and confession of faith must be called into question. It is natural to show special care to one's relatives, friends and fellow believers, but Christlike compassion reaches out beyond all ethnic, social and religious barriers, even includes enemies, and expects nothing in return.

**2.2** Caring for people by helping them in their need reflects the mercy of God; it is a vivid display of the partnership that God has formed with people. Having been rescued from slavery in Egypt, the Israelites were called to show mercy to the most vulnerable: the poor and homeless, unprotected people like widows and orphans, victims of injustice, and outsiders living among them who we would today call migrants and refugees. Reflecting God's mercy to us by showing mercy to others, and indeed to the whole of creation, is a sign of belonging to God's people.

**2.3** Biblical history records the Israelites' constant forgetfulness of God. The prophets railed against them for their uncaring mindset, which was reflected in unjust practices, cruelty and violence. Ultimately, they reaped the harvest of their wrongdoing through exile in Babylon and the occupation of their land. It is vital, however, that we don't draw the conclusion that ancient Israel was somehow worse than any society at any point in history where the voice of those whose cry for help goes unheeded.

## *From the Bible*

**2.1 The ministry of mercy accompanies faith** (Gal 5:6b; James 2:17,26).

**Christ-like compassion reaches out to all** (Matt 5:44–46a).

**2.2 We are called to show mercy to the most vulnerable** (Ex 22:21–27; 23:1–9).

**2.3 Social injustice is denounced** (Isa 5:8–23).

## *For Discussion*

**2.1** What does compassion look like, feel like, sound like, taste like? How can I show love and compassion to those who are difficult to love?

**2.2** Who are the most vulnerable (the poor, homeless, widows, orphans, victims of injustice, migrants and refugees) in my community and in my workplace? What role can I play to advocate for the vulnerable?

**2.3** There were many occasions when Israel, like today's societies, failed to stand up for the vulnerable. How/when have I failed to hear a cry for help?



## INSPIRED BY COMPASSION

**3.1** The Christian church is the fellowship of all who believe that Jesus died and rose again for them, just as God planned it. We are like the Israelites of old, drawn together by the story of how God has rescued us and continues to provide for us and serve us. In fact, worship is called 'divine service'. The words of the story we hear assure us that we are loved, forgiven and equipped to share love with others.

**3.2** In holy communion we believe that Christ is most profoundly present with us. The image of one body with one Spirit united with Christ is helpful. We look after the body by providing for the needs of the people of God. It is no accident that we collect the offering, a symbol of our time, talents and treasures, before communion, to be used for the care of one another and the proclamation of the word to all the world so that all may come to know Christ. The post-communion thanksgiving prayer typically expresses the close connection between faith and love when it asks almighty God to 'graciously strengthen us in faith toward [God] and in love toward one another'. This generosity extends beyond the church to all people, because Jesus is God's gift to the whole world, not just to those who currently know him. In Christ the world's needs become our needs as we all participate in the one human family.

**3.3** The earliest believers shared their possessions and looked after those in need. They appointed specially gifted people called deacons to supervise this ministry of care.<sup>1</sup> Mutual care and hospitality among Christians was particularly important in the age of persecution, when believers were often imprisoned and their property confiscated. We are offered the invitation: to 'not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have the opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith' (Gal 6:10).

**3.4** The church has a long tradition of serving the needy through direct gifts and through establishing institutions like hospitals, and community service organisations to care for the aged, those with disabilities, the homeless and other vulnerable people. In former centuries where no social services existed, the needy were often totally dependent on the church. Martin Luther urged local Christian communities to set up a 'God's chest' (*Gotteskasten*) out of which material help could be given to the poor and needy. It is only in the last several decades that we in the Christian west have seen an increasing number of non-faith-based organisations and the entry of for-profit organisations providing caring services.

### *From the Bible*

**3.2** There is one body and one Spirit (Eph 4:4).

**3.3** The earliest believers shared their possessions (2 Cor 8:1–7).  
**Deacons were appointed** (Acts 6:1–6).

### *For Discussion*

**3.1** We are loved, forgiven and equipped to share love with others. How can I share love with my neighbours, my work colleagues and the people who receive the services of aged and community care?

**3.2** We participate with Christ in the care of the one human family. What could that participation look like in my community?

**3.3** Who provides a ministry of care and a ministry of hospitality in my community? Describe what it means to be hospitable.

**3.4** How can I serve the needy?

<sup>1</sup> The term 'deacon' comes from the Greek term *diakonos* which means servant or waiter.

# 4. GOD'S TWO HANDS – SAVING AND CARING

- 4.1** Jesus' love moved seamlessly between words and actions. He would teach, and then he would heal. Healing the whole person was Jesus' focus, and it has been the focus of the church as well. But Jesus did not create social programs, build retirement villages or seek political power. His words evoked faith in God's new way in the world, and his actions were signs of what that new way would look like, when this current world with all its neediness comes to an end.
- 4.2** So what happens to the real needs people experience today? Are they the concern of the church, or should we devote all our time and energy to proclaiming the good news, so that people will receive the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation? Some churches have answered these questions differently. But Lutherans believe that both are important; they are not mutually exclusive. We recognise that Jesus' chief concern is that we 'make disciples of all nations' (Matt 28:19). But we also recognise that the people of God are called to join in the work of healing, restoring and sustaining God's groaning creation (Rom 8:22).
- 4.3** Lutherans make sense of the scope of this reality by speaking of two kingdoms, arenas or aspects of God's work. These aspects are visualised as the two hands of God which do different but complementary things.
- 4.4** God cares for the world with his left hand, that is, through the state (this includes all levels of government), the law, social organisation, the family, and the goodwill of gifted individuals who are eager to improve the wellbeing of all and distribute resources fairly. God's left hand is to be identified with the work of caring for creation and for those God has created.
- 4.5** God's right-hand work is the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the provision of the gifts of baptism and holy communion. These gifts of grace create faith in God's unfailing love and foreshadow a future to be enjoyed beyond the limitations of life as we know it. God's right hand is God's work of saving.
- 4.6** One loving and merciful God deals with the world in two different ways, with two different hands. Christians understand themselves to be engaged in both aspects of God's care.
- 4.7** The care that is provided in the world is a service of God's left hand, whether it is by Christians or by non-Christians. Resilient, healthy and loving families exist in communities of any faith or of no faith tradition. All people who act for the good of others participate in God's ministry of care; likewise, all people who receive care are beneficiaries of the ministry God provides with his left hand. Lutheran aged and community services employ staff from a range of faith backgrounds, as long as they have appropriate skills and training and a compassionate heart.
- 4.8** The Lutheran teaching on vocation highlights the honour we have in working with God through our work, our family life and our participation in life in our community. God has called each of us to live out God's purposes in all aspects of our life. We value working alongside people of other faiths who also share in God's work without necessarily being aware of it in the same way.
- 4.9** The Lutheran teaching about the two kingdoms keeps us aware that we are also Christ's people, and our care serves people with the love of Christ in word and action. Many Christians work in secular caring institutions, bringing a quiet witness to Christ as they provide quality care. At other times Christians establish their own caring institutions with a more overt mission and vision to make Christ known to people.
- 4.10** An awareness of being God's two hands in both saving and caring allows our care to be truly holistic. As we address the whole person as someone made in God's image, we are able to affirm the varying spiritual and religious expressions of people as aspects of the unique

way that God has created them. People who offer care as part of God's left-hand work will also recognise spiritual need and distress and seek to address this. Our prayer as Christian carers is that our faith is active in love (Gal 5:6); that we do everything with the utmost integrity; and that we are renewed as vehicles through whom the Holy Spirit can heal and transform people through the gospel.

## *From the Bible*

**4.2 Jesus wants us to make disciples of all people** (Matt 28:19).

**4.5 It is God's will that all people are saved** (1 Pet 1:3–4).

## *For Discussion*

- 4.1** How can I contribute to healing the whole person – spiritually, physically, emotionally, materially?
- 4.2** Reflect on your congregation/ministry. Give examples of proclamation and examples of healing, restoring and sustaining.
- 4.3** Participating under the 'two hands' of God places the Lutheran aged-care facility and Lutheran community service in a position of creative tension. As God works with both his left

hand and his right hand, the Lutheran facility or service is challenged to clearly identify its role in each of these areas of responsibility, recognising that in both they serve God. To maintain the appropriate balance between 'left hand' and 'right hand' is a continuing challenge: clearly distinguishing the two, but neither confusing them nor separating them (adapted from *A God who speaks and acts* by M Bartsch). When do Lutheran aged-care facilities and Lutheran community services contribute to God's left-hand work and when do they contribute to God's right-hand work?

- 4.4** How does God care for creation?
- 4.5** How does God save creation?
- 4.6** How do I join in with God's caring and saving?
- 4.7** All people who act for the good of others participate in God's ministry of care. How can I show appreciation to all who act for the good of others?
- 4.8** God has called us to join him in the world through our work, our family life and through participation in our community. What roles has God called me into?
- 4.9** How can I shine the love of Christ in my words and actions?
- 4.10** What does caring with integrity look like? How can I serve those around me?



# 5

## THE ESSENCE OF THE CHURCH – WORSHIP, WITNESS AND SERVICE

**5.1** Through the sacrifice of Christ, God confers on believers the free gifts of the forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. St Paul summarises this reality: ‘By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works so no one may boast’ (Eph 2:8–9). It could be argued, as a result, that nothing needs to be done except to celebrate God’s grace. If this were true, the needy would soon be neglected and grace would be cheapened.

**5.2** Different biblical writers use different ways to show the essential connection between the gift of grace in Christ and the life of service to others. St Paul, for example, appeals to baptism. In baptism we have died to sin and risen with Christ to a life of renewed service. We have a new identity. We love the world like Jesus did and we share in the work of sustaining the old while proclaiming the new. It comes more naturally now for us to care than not to care. Other writers point to the contradiction of being loved by Christ and failing to love other people. St James speaks even more strongly about the scandal of ‘faith without love’, claiming it is dead. And the Lutheran Confessions make the bold claim that ‘this faith is bound to yield good fruits’ (Augsburg Confession VI).<sup>2</sup>

**5.3** So the church’s ministry of care is a vital and natural part of its existence. The church cannot exist without worship in which God speaks

and acts in mercy and God’s people respond in thanks and praise. The church cannot exist without witness to the gospel. The genuineness of both worship and witness is shown in the ministry of care, where faith is revealed in seeing and valuing people in need and working to ensure goodness for them. It is true love in action and is often referred to as the ‘diaconic’ work of the church. This service is tangible evidence for the world of Christlike servanthood (*diakonos* is Greek for servant or waiter). Worship, witness and service belong together as functions of the church.

### *From the Bible*

**5.2 In baptism we die to sin and rise with Christ** (Rom 6:1–4).

**There is a contradiction between loving Christ and failing to love other people** (1 John 3:16–17).

**Faith without works is dead** (James 2:14–26).

### *For Discussion*

**5.1** Augustine of Hippo purportedly said ‘Love God and do as you please’. Discuss in the light of Ephesians 2:8–9.

**5.2** Discuss what motivates you to action.

**5.3** When do I act as a servant or a waiter for others?

<sup>2</sup> Likewise, they teach that this faith is bound to yield good fruits and that it ought to do good works commanded by God on account of God’s will and not so that we may trust in these works to merit justification before God. For forgiveness of sins and justification are taken hold of by faith, as the saying of Christ also testifies in Luke 17:10: ‘When you have done all [things]... say, “We are worthless slaves”.’ The authors of the ancient church taught the same. For Ambrose said: It is established by God that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved without work, by faith alone, receiving the forgiveness of sins as a gift.

# 6. LIVING IN CHRIST THROUGH FAITH AND IN OUR NEIGHBOUR THROUGH LOVE

**6.1** Every human being has value by virtue of being made in the image of God. Meeting human need requires no justification, for to be compassionate is to be truly human. Christians know this because they know Jesus Christ, who is God's mercy in human form.

**6.2** The Old Testament theme of God identifying with the poor reaches full expression in the New Testament, where we read that the fully human Jesus became poor in order to make others rich. After the resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples and displayed hunger and his physical wounds. So also today our risen and ascended Lord continues to appear before the world and before us in the face of all who have been buffeted by the storms of life: the hungry and thirsty, the poor and the stranger and the sick and imprisoned. In serving them, we are serving Christ, even though we may not be consciously aware of this service. To know this truth serves as a powerful antidote to paternalism. We are served by the poor even as we attempt to serve them, and so we get in touch with our own poverty. As we give to the poor, the poor also give to us. Our experience may be that we receive far more than we give. We strive to provide Christian care that is highly professional, while avoiding the kind of professionalism that assumes that the carer has all the answers.

**6.3** The church's ministry of care is truly Christian as it is inspired, motivated and empowered by the mercy of God in Christ. It is inclusive, and it asks for nothing in return but the joy of serving those in need. In that way it brings glory to God who is the source of all grace, mercy and truth – 'a God – merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness' (Ps 86:15). In fact, by showing love and support to those in need through acts of caring, we embody God's message of love in Christ. Such activity has its own integrity. It is not a means

to an end, but a legitimate end in itself when offered graciously and unconditionally. To quote Martin Luther: 'A Christian lives not in himself but in Christ and his neighbour. Otherwise he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith, and in his neighbour through love'.

**6.4** In the words of the Lutheran Church of Australia's vision statement, we 'see God's love in Christ coming to life in people everywhere through a Lutheran church that joyfully receives, lives and shares the gospel.'

## *From the Bible*

**6.1 Jesus became poor to make others rich** (2 Cor 8:9).

**Jesus shows his humanity** (Luke 24:36–43).

**Jesus appears in the world in the face of all who suffer; when we serve the suffering, we serve Christ** (Matt 25:31–40).

**6.2 God is love** (1 John 4:9–12).

## *For Discussion*

**6.1** What does being compassionate look like?

**6.2** What are some examples of paternalistic attitudes or actions that you have experienced? How does that differ from what professional Christian care looks like?

**6.3** How would you finish the following statement: 'When Christ lives in me and in my neighbour, I ... '?

**6.4** What is the role of forgiveness in my workplace, in my daily activities, in my home and in my relationships?

# 7

## MARKED BY INTEGRITY

**7.1** Christians will continue to care in their grassroots relationships and will provide support for others to do the caring. While some Christians will seize any opportunity as one to care for others, some will take up voluntary work as their way of caring, and others will equip themselves for a professional role in a ministry of care.

**7.2** In an increasingly complex world, Christians will equip themselves to attend to the needs of people in many settings, with recipients of care and their advocates being ever more articulate about the quality of care they seek. In fulfilling their desire to provide excellent care, Christians will eagerly seize opportunities to ensure that they receive and provide ongoing and up-to-date training.

**7.3** Lutherans have much to learn from others and can offer the wider church and the world our rich theology of care. We also improve our care by keeping up with the changing trends of care, standards and definitions that carers in the community work with. As we continue to articulate our theology and reflect on it, we will practise our care with ever greater skill, awareness, integrity and spirit.

### *For Discussion*

**7.1** How can I support others who offer a ministry of care?

**7.2** In what ways could I prepare myself for a ministry of care?

**7.3** How can I bless others in their caring?





## WORKING TOGETHER WITH OTHER CHURCHES

**8.1** All Christian churches undertake caring ministries, and they express their rationale for caring in different and complementary ways. No one denomination has yet found the perfect way forward, but all are concerned to live out God's perfect love. The Lutheran teaching of God's two-handed ministry is a helpful way to articulate God's ongoing steadfast love in our world. The Lutheran Church is committed to continuing ecumenical conversation by offering the characteristic Lutheran emphasis on grace, while being open to hearing similar and different things in the churches as they reflect on and address matters of social justice and caring ministries.

**8.2** As Lutherans in Australia and New Zealand, we have much to learn from our sisters and brothers around the world and their diaconic ministries and services. Many of the staff working in Lutheran agencies are from different faith backgrounds, and this provides a setting for dialogue and mutual appreciation of each other's traditions.

**8.3** We also find ourselves at times working with other churches in the provision of caring ventures. For example, the involvement of Christian churches around Australia in advocacy for human rights and social justice matters (such as supporting refugees and those impacted by gambling) provides a space where the churches can collaborate.

### *For Discussion*

**8.1** Caring ministry in the Catholic tradition often places an emphasis on social justice. In what ways could Lutherans learn from an emphasis on social justice?

**8.2** What do you know about Lutheran services in Australia, New Zealand and overseas?

**8.3** What examples of ecumenical cooperation are you aware of?

# Digging Deeper

## SOME MORE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

### GOD IS LOVE

- God is passionate to restore and sustain all of creation. What more could you do at home and in your wider community?

### GOD PARTNERS WITH PEOPLE

- Read Exodus 22:21–27 and Exodus 23:1–9. The reference to the ‘resident alien’ is mentioned more than once: ‘You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt’ (Ex 23:9). See what you can find out about the refugees in Manus or on Nauru. Why did they choose to leave their homeland? What did they lose? What did they hope to gain? How does this verse apply today?
- Deuteronomy 24:5–21 includes a list of laws for the Israelites to follow in Old Testament times. There are references to helping the alien, orphan and widow who were without any means of support in biblical times. There are references to withholding wages from poor and needy labourers. How do these verses speak into society today? How many items of clothing do we have that were made by workers receiving a less than fair wage?
- We see references about how we should treat widows in the Bible as they were vulnerable due to the lack of support and were prone to poverty and abuse. There are now systems in place in our society to provide some material and emotional support for vulnerable people. What other forms of poverty exist in our community? Are there particular needs that widowers might have?

- We have seen a number of formal apologies made to groups of people in our society. Read Kevin Rudd’s apology to the Stolen Generations or Malcolm Turnbull’s apology to Forgotten Australians. What other formal public apologies have been made to marginalised groups? Are there any that should be made?
- Check out some media sources and see what evidence you can find in today’s society of mercy and justice being shown by individuals, families and governments. What evidence can you find of a lack of mercy and justice?
- If you are concerned about a particular issue, you may wish to write a lament (an expression of grief or sorrow or regret) about such a situation. Consider whether you want to share it more publicly if it is a matter that is really important to you. With whom could you share that lament?

### INSPIRED BY COMPASSION

- ‘Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again’ (Luke 6:30). Does that mean that you have to help every person who approaches you for money when you walk through the streets or is it okay for you to put your head down and keep on going? What if you are overseas and there are a lot of beggars on the street, what do you do?

- In Luke 10:25–37 Jesus teaches about loving our neighbour with the parable of the Good Samaritan. The term ‘good Samaritan’ is one that is widely used in society today. What is the wider understanding of the term in our community? You could ask around among your family, friends and neighbours and see what they understand by it.
- See what you can find out about priests, Levites, Samaritans and any other aspects of the Good Samaritan story, and prepare a version of the story from each one’s perspective.
- ‘So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith’ (Gal 6:10). Does this text mean that we only need to help Lutherans or Christians? Does it countermand Luke 6:30? Read further in Galatians and see whether you are able to understand why this was written.  
  
See Matt 9:27–31; 15:21–28; 17:14–21; 20:29–34; 25:31–46.
- Jesus travelled around ‘proclaiming the good news and curing every disease and every sickness among the people’ (Matt 9:35). Wherever he went, people asked to be cured and he helped them. Faith is an important part of that healing process. Have you ever prayed for healing for someone? And if you have, have you seen God’s healing hand at work in response? How do we pray for those who are sick? What should we think or believe if the person doesn’t get better?
- Matthew 25 is a strong message about helping the needy. The church has organisations that help the poor, the needy and the ageing. Why should we actually help people rather than just giving money to worthwhile organisations?

- Check out various translations of Mary’s song of praise (the Magnificat), Luke 1:46–55. Why do you think the world’s hurting people were on Mary’s mind when she learnt she was pregnant with God’s Son? Discuss the different ways God reaches out to people. Whom might Mary be asking God to bless if she were singing the Magnificat today?

## **GOD’S TWO HANDS – SAVING AND CARING**

- Ephesians 2:4–10 contains the powerful assertion that we are saved by grace. It is reiterated in Titus 3:4–8 and 1 Peter 1:3–5. How would you explain ‘saved by grace’ to someone who knows nothing about Christianity?
- Jesus’ great commission in this text is to make disciples of everyone (Matt 28:19). How can this be done in our aged and community services?
- Our church congregations exist primarily for the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Have a look at your congregation’s constitution and talk about how you as a congregation are fulfilling your objects.
- How should a congregation respond to a person with mental health problems coming into worship services? Whose responsibility is it?
- A homeless person has taken up residence in front of the church office. What should be done? (cf ‘A neighbour comes knocking’ by Lutheran Community Care, SA)

## **THE ESSENCE OF THE CHURCH – WORSHIP, WITNESS AND SERVICE**

- Augustine of Hippo purportedly said ‘Love God and do what you please’. What do you think he meant? How does that fit with Martin Luther’s statement: ‘A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject of all’.

## TO THINK ABOUT

- What does oppression look like? Many of us are from middle-class backgrounds. There are people within our communities who come from less privileged backgrounds. In what ways are you an oppressor of those who are different from you? What can you do about that?
- In what ways are you oppressed within your school, church or community? What can you do about that?
- What is your family's story about why you are living in this particular place? What were they leaving from? What were they coming to? See how far back you can trace your story.
- Discuss the following statement: 'I really only love God as much as I love the person I love the least' (Dorothy Day).
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed in 1948. See what you can find out about Australia's contribution to the development of this document.
- How can the Universal Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) be enforced universally? Or is that unnecessary?

## FOR FURTHER READING

### WHAT LUTHERANS BELIEVE

[www.lca.org.au/our-beliefs-and-teachings](http://www.lca.org.au/our-beliefs-and-teachings)

### LCA DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS AND THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS

The Lutheran Church of Australia has statements on:

- Christian vocation
- God's creation: a sacred responsibility
- Human rights
- The two kingdoms and social ethics

They are found here: [www.lca.org.au/cticr](http://www.lca.org.au/cticr)

### DIAKONIA

'Diakonia in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment', Lutheran World Federation

### SOME OTHER PERSPECTIVES

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council website  
[www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au)

'For those who've come across the seas: justice for asylum seekers and refugees', Social Justice Statement 2016-17 from the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council

'A place at the table: social justice in an ageing society', Social Justice Statement 2016-17 from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

'Theological basis of shared values', UnitingCare Queensland

'Code of Ethics', Anglicare Australia



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