



broadcast

from the Office for Young Adult & Campus Ministries
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Service Learning & Mission in the World

Vocation, discernment, and service often go hand in hand when it comes to young adult and campus ministries. Whether as the result of an active ownership of their faith commitment, an experience of building and joining meaningful community, or a distilled moment in which they experience a clarity of purpose, service opportunities provide young adults the opportunity to engage with their own sense of calling, faith commitment, and relationship in new and eye-opening ways.

This month we have asked ministers to reflect on their own experience of service as it contributed to and altered their sense of vocation. We invite you to consider the way you have engaged service on a local level to create a space for discernment. What other gifts have you, and those you work with, received from serving the world around you?

Also included in this issue is a note from one of our co-workers at the Episcopal Church Center, the Officer for Environmental and Economic Affairs, Michael Schut. In his letter, Mike outlines a vision for his work and invites young adults, students, and all those who minister to and with them, to take a significant role in moving the church forward with regard to environmental and economic justice, through service, conversation, and education. We invite you to engage with the work and resources of this office as we move forward together to heal broken relationships with creation and with one another.

Finally, we have included a number of new resources (to the right). Please take a look at them and send us feedback. We are here to support the wonderful work you are doing and your input is incredibly helpful. We give thanks for each of you and your ministries!

Paz y fuego,
Douglas, Jason & Miguelina

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A Soccer Field Made Sacred

A Soccer Field Made Sacred

Mike Angell, Diocese of San Diego

Twenty minutes from Dorcas House, an orphanage for children in Mexico, lie a set of pristine soccer fields. I never would have guessed that the soccer fields would be such fertile ground for discussion of God's Mission in

the world, but there they were, and there we were. I had just returned with a tiny group of students from the University of California San Diego, where I had started working as Campus Missioner just that semester, and we had gathered in the parking lot next to the soccer field to recollect before saying goodbye for the day.

I remember feeling like I was sharing something intimate with my students. I had spent the previous year as a Young Adult Service Corps missionary volunteer in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Upon my arrival back in San Diego, the Dean informed me that I was to serve on the board for the St. Paul's Cathedral's newly acquired orphanage. In the few months since, Dorcas House had become a refuge for me. As I was still adapting to life back in the United States, I would make regular trips down to visit the kids, speak Spanish, and to remember my own sense that God calls Christians to cross human borders and embrace all of God's people. I was inviting my new students to share a holy space for me. I was nervous about how they would respond.

I was pleased when they embraced the children from the moment they walked in the door. The little hands reaching out for hugs are impossible to deny. We started with puzzles and books with the little girls as the older boys gathered their gear for the events to come. Our



specific task that day was to take the small group of boys down to a nearby soccer field. We lined up and held hands, threading our way through the crowded and haphazard streets. After about a mile of walking we arrived at the “soccer park” a collection of three small dirt lots, strewn with trash. We only had time for a couple of games before returning again through the maze of alleyways and loading up the cars to go home.

After a long wait to cross through the border check point we arrived back at UCSD and gathered on those pristine soccer fields to reflect. A freshmen pointed out the irony: “It took us as long to walk to those dirt lots as it would to drive the kids up here to UCSD to play on these beautiful fields. Couldn’t we bring them up here next time?” Putting my hand on his shoulder I explained that it would be impossible to get passports and visas to bring the kids up to play. “That’s just not fair,” was his response. Over the next year we had a long discussion about the sinful divisions placed between God’s people. The students began to see their work in crossing the border as a witness to the Kingdom of God. Three years later the UCSD Episcopal campus ministry still takes a trip every month to visit the children of Dorcas House. We’ve been to concerts, ridden water slides, and celebrated Dia De Los Muertos together. And we’ve played a lot of soccer. Even after I left my work at UCSD to attend seminary I would receive regular updates from my former students about their most recent trip. The passion I was nervous about sharing for God’s mission in a small corner of Tijuana has been embraced by a group of students who are passing that passion on to others. It all started on a soccer field.



Life Together

The Rev. Adam Shoemaker, Diocese of Massachusetts

“Life in community is not easy,” I heard myself say, over a cup of coffee at Starbucks, as I was counseling a teen in my parish who recently spoke to me about difficulties she was having with her youth group. And yet, as we talked, it seemed clear how much she valued the relationships she had formed with the other young people in our church – how much they had made her into the person she is today.

I realized, in fact, that her anxiety actually stemmed from the tension of potential conflict with those that she cared so deeply about – a tension that I learned, as a Micah intern (part of the Episcopal Service Corps), can often be important as one tries to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.”

When I began my Micah year, I found a copy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s book, “Life Together,” sitting on a table in my new room. As I flipped through the book, my eyes fell upon this passage; “the serious Christian, set down for the first time in a Christian community, is likely to bring with him a very definite idea of what Christian life together should be and to try to realize it. But God’s grace speedily shatters such dreams.” This seemingly paradoxical statement was surprising to read but I soon came to value the wisdom of Bonhoeffer’s words for any Christian wanting to be of service in the world.

Micah taught me, whether through my community of fellow interns or within the urban church where I worked with refugees from Sudan, that oftentimes it is the intentionality and care that we invest in seemingly simple, every day relationships that can often be most important. And this often means conflict – it means learning to truly listen to and value those who may be very different than you. Conflict is often the medium God uses to help us grow. Conflict, particularly amidst communities that we seek to serve, usually signals that we care enough to remain engaged. Micah taught me, as Bonhoeffer understood, that conflict can often be a surprising sign of grace.

As a Young Adult Service Corps (YASC) missionary in Brazil and now as a parish priest, this lesson continues to shape and inform my sense of mission within the communities that I serve. In Brazil, I came to see service almost solely as a practice in community building – an end in itself as opposed to a means to an end. The mission was the often forgotten work of living amidst the day-to-day tensions that arose in this small community that I lived in on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. The mission was about trying to find God’s presence and to make God’s presence known in and through this community life.

This lesson has been amplified as I continue into my third year as the assistant rector at Christ Church in Andover, MA. This is the longest I have been a part of any Christian community since I was a child and so it has meant learning to live and serve amidst this dynamic and creative tension in new ways. Life in community isn’t easy but in a world where people feel increasingly isolated, the lessons it has to teach us might ultimately help us to bring about the healing we seek for both ourselves and our world.



called
to serve



Called to Serve

Virginia Holt, Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

“Preach the Gospel always, and if necessary use words.”
-St. Francis of Assisi

As a Young Adult Service Corps member in South Africa in 2007, I got an artistic flare and painted this quote on some notebook paper and tacked it next to the light switch

in my room. The painting was not beautiful, but the words were inspiring and allowed me to serve those in a foreign land.

My year as YASC volunteer changed my views and life in many ways, but within the context of service it altered my career path and goals. I have a degree in business administration and had always envisioned myself in power suits sitting behind a big desk. Why did I become a Service Corp member one would ask? Because of an uncomfortable stirring feeling deep within my soul which I could not ignore, I knew God was saying that He had other plans for me, and of course He did. I began volunteering at Settler's Hospital in Grahamstown with hospice patients and in the Children's Ward. Within two weeks of spending time with the sick and dying, I had found my true calling... I wanted to become a nurse and return to Africa to serve those who were in need of adequate medical care. I had never been interested in the medical field before and loved that my school days were over, but within a month of returning to the States I was back in school studying Anatomy and Physiology to gain admission into Nursing School.

Before my year as a YASCer, I thought of service and ministering as separate entities. Serving was more what you did without thought and in a group. Ministering, on the other hand, to me was more personal, deep one-on-one conversations with a purpose or preaching. In South Africa, I found I was a minister through actions, not my words. My service and ministry was praying with the mothers of dying children, holding a newborn no one wanted because of a positive HIV status, and holding hands with those who were alone in their final days. I learned that service is not an unconscious act as I had previously thought, but a conscious, individual, God driven opportunity to minister at the same time. I've learned that serving is a gateway to preaching the gospel, and without service one misses a chance to open others' eyes to Christ's love. Service is an important part of being a Christian, and through service, ministry comes, and through ministry, souls are healed, and when souls are healed, they are filled with God's love.



Economic and Environmental Affairs

VOICES & RESOURCES OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH CENTER

Economic and Environmental Affairs and the Episcopal Church

Michael Schut, Associate Program Officer at the Episcopal Church Center

Dear Young Adult & Campus Ministers,

Hello from the Seattle office of The Episcopal Church Center, which I share with your Associate Program Of-

ficer, Jason Sierra. He invited me to send some thoughts to you from my position as Economic and Environmental Affairs Officer for this issue of Broadcast.

Much of what I see my work to be about is simply to help us all recognize the grace and beauty of all creation, and that our faith calls us to love all of it. E.O. Wilson, the noted Harvard ecologist, coined a beautiful term for this: biophilia. He contends we are actually hard-wired to love life.

If that is the case and, as Oberlin professor David Orr writes, our “alienation from the natural world is unprecedented,” then we live with profound and often unrecognized grief: being alienated from that which we love.

Though blame for that alienation is sometimes placed at Christianity's doorstep, we do have a rich theology and worldview which I believe is actually crucial in bridging the alienation. And that theology must be practically expressed.

Of course in your leadership roles you have an opportunity to influence the choices of those whom you serve. And the community-building, educational programs you facilitate can lead to awakening us to our connection with all of God's creation and help heal the alienation to which Orr writes.

When I reflect on my work and the work of the church as a whole, in the context of ecological degradation and economic injustice, I am often struck by the importance of Christian formation. To me, that formation must emphasize the rather obvious yet often overlooked fact



The Episcopal Church
welcomes you

that our ministry happens some “place.” That place is Earth. And we all need to be “formed” in such a way that we not only know that our faith, our tradition, and our theology include a rich ecological ethic but also feel that ethic in our hearts and bones.

I find spending time with others both in silence and in prayer/conversation outdoors opens doorways to this sort of knowing and feeling. I like to encourage that, when possible, service learning and experiential education opportunities seek to make connections between social, economic and ecological justice. We, as a church, tend to recognize our faith’s call to care for people...but not so much the rest of creation. So helping people see those connections is important, and can even help them see in new ways.

Below I briefly describe some of the resources that might be helpful to you in this area of ministry. I would very much welcome hearing back from you about resources you are already using, programs you have developed.

Please know of my interest in working together. As you know better than I, young adults have grown up with more ecological awareness than their parents. They want and need their church to be relevant and prophetic to today’s crucial concerns and it seems to me are drawn to parishes engaged in economic and environmental justice efforts.

Thank you for your work!

Blessings in it, Mike Schut

Books:

Sallie McFague’s *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril*

Bill McKibben’s *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*

Ched Myers’ *The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics*

Books with Community-Building Study Guides:

Over the years I have edited and partially authored anthologies of writings from a wide variety of authors, with built-in study-guides meant to guide individuals and small groups on a journey into important matters of the heart, designed to build community, and encourage specific actions to help bring about a more just and compassionate world. The books are available through bookstores, Amazon, and the publisher, Church Publishing (<http://www.churchpublishing.org/>):

- *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective* (1999)
- *Food and Faith: Justice, Joy and Daily Bread* (2003)
- *Money and Faith: The Search for Enough* (2008)

Advocacy:

- To bring about a world more closely resembling God’s kin-dom, we must work together. Encourage young adults to sign up and engage with the Episcopal Public Policy Network (www.episcopalchurch.org/eppn).
- The Episcopal Network for Economic Justice (www.enej.org/resources.htm) has some wonderful resources on their website.

Action:

- More and more churches are creating “Green Teams.” There may well be ways to incorporate that sort of work within your ministries, the buildings in which you work, and so on. Visit the Episcopal Ecological Network’s website for advice: <http://eenonline.org/educate/GTFAQ.htm>.
- The three areas in which individuals have the greatest environmental impact are transportation, food choices and how they care for the place they live. Earth Ministry’s resource “Caring for All Creation” provides prayers, liturgical/worship and educational resources and actions focusing on those three areas. <http://www.earthministry.org/resources/publications/CFAC>
- Finally, Interfaith Power and Light is a “Religious Response to Climate Change.” They have tools to measure both an individual’s and a parishes’ carbon footprint. www.theregenerationproject.org

Organizations (working to connect social and ecological issues, job training and the like):

1. Solar Richmond www.solarrichmond.org
2. Sustainable South Bronx www.ssbx.org

Liturgical Resources:

- Web of Creation <http://www.webofcreation.org/Worship/resources.htm>