

The Student Labour Programme (SLP) at African Christian University (ACU) is an integral component to whole-life, Christian-worldview education. The SLP has been envisioned for many reasons related to Christian discipleship. Let's start with some clear, historical evidence affirming the potential of such programmes, with similarity to the original Zambian National Service Programme.

### **Booker T. Washington (1856-1915)**

After growing up as a slave in Virginia and receiving emancipation, Booker T. Washington worked his way through Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute followed by college at Wayland Seminary. He was an educator who promoted success for black Americans through education and economic advancement. Dr. Washington demonstrated a concept of critical importance at that time in early American industrialisation. His academic programmes assured the importance of blacks in the industrialising economy of the white-dominated USA, as opposed to only demanding civil rights through protests and other legal avenues. As the first president of Tuskegee Institute (1881), the 25-year-old established industrial education as a key component of higher education in the humanities and sciences. All men and women at the institute were involved in labour and advancing techniques in: building and maintaining the campus, making bricks, constructing facilities, raising livestock and farming, making clothing and learning to provide for their basic necessities. The purpose was not to produce tradesmen, but to produce those who could problem-solve, innovate and teach, utilising various trades through other vocations to advance technology and the economy.



Booker T. Washington

Two quotes from Washington's autobiography, *"The Story of My Life and Work"*, will suffice as evidence of the success of his approach to higher education.



Tuskegee Institute - Student's helping in construction

*"Very early in the history of the school we made it a rule that no student, however well off he might be, was to be permitted to remain unless he did some work, in addition to taking studies in the academic department. At first quite a number of students and a large number of parents did not like this rule; in fact, during the first three or four years, a large proportion of the students brought either verbal or written messages from their parents that they wanted their children taught books, but did not want them taught work. ... it has been ten years since a single objection has*

*been raised by parents or students against anyone's taking part in our industrial work. In fact, there is a positive enthusiasm among parents and students over our industrial work ..."*<sup>1</sup>

*"Three things are accomplished by the industrial system: (1) The student is enabled to pay a part of his expenses of board, books, etc., in labor; (2) He learns how to work; (3) He is taught the dignity of labor. In all the industrial branches the students do the actual work, under the direction of competent instructors."*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *"An Autobiography: The Story of My Life and Work"* (Electronic Edition), Booker T. Washington, 1856-, pp. 69-70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

## **Whole-life, Christian Education in Africa**

Africa was largely industrialised through colonisation and continues to rely heavily on foreign assistance to advance. There remains a serious need for Africans to experience and develop an indigenous approach to industrialisation.



Construction of the ACU Olive Doke Pavilion

Genesis 1:26-28 informs us that humanity was created in the image of God to fulfil His mandate to subdue, fill and take dominion of His creation as His stewards. Genesis 2:15 further expands on that notion of cultivating and keeping the garden, often perceived more broadly as humanity's mandate to create culture. This original stewardship calling is often referred to as the Cultural Mandate. Because of the fall of mankind, their potential as God's stewards over creation could never be achieved. Fulfilment of the stewardship role requires redemption and reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ. Thus, man's Cultural Mandate was re-stated in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)

explaining the need for redemption in Christ followed by discipleship to realise God's purpose. In Christ, humanity can express God's image in obeying all that Christ commanded, including the original Cultural Mandate.

A culture composed of redeemed disciples of Christ, living out of a Biblical worldview, will fulfil the Cultural Mandate. Properly equipped, they will assess existing needs, innovate solutions and advance technology to achieve their stewardship responsibilities in Christ. It has only been a few generations since Africa generally received the gospel. The relatively young African church is only beginning to live out of a Biblical worldview which transforms culture. Discipleship that equips and models fulfilling the Cultural Mandate from a Biblical worldview in African culture is a key purpose for ACU and the whole-life education envisioned. The SLP is the key programme intended to bring that to fruition in a very practical way. The SLP will bring application of the Scriptures to real-life situations and circumstances, both its challenges and rewards, on a daily basis. The SLP is discipleship in its most pure, Great-Commission sense.

## **A Call to Kingdom Labour**

Perhaps you are a Christian practicing a construction trade, farming or business and have a passion to disciple others in the Christian life through your work. We are seeking those who are well-practiced in living out their Christian worldview in the way they apply their craft. In other words, we are seeking those who work with excellence, integrity and thoughtfulness towards others. Perhaps you are a farmer who would consider responding to a call to raise livestock or crops while using that as an avenue to disciple. You may run a business, repair vehicles, manufacture furniture or any other product, produce or repair electronics or office equipment - any of these jobs can be done alongside students while modelling Christian character and discipling young Christians to work unto the Lord and not man. We need these labour disciplers to equip the next generation of African Christians to live holistically from a Biblical worldview so that the Cultural Mandate can be fulfilled in Africa and globally.



Construction of an ACU toilet facility

*Would you consider labouring with us? Please contact us at: [info@acu-zambia.com](mailto:info@acu-zambia.com).*