

# VOICES

## Keynote Paper Presented at The Australian Lutheran Conference on Education September 1999

### **Speaker:**

It is the end of the day. I make my way across the empty school campus, through the quadrangle, onto the oval. The sun is setting. The clouds don their rich robes of twilight colours. All is quiet. In my ears, however, the noises of the school day continue to echo. They are the voices of the young, full of excitement and joy, energy and enthusiasm, with the odd discordant note of hysteria or protestation. There is chatter and laughter, the shrill pipes of children's voices mixed with the deeper tones of mature adolescents. They merge into the working hum of the busy classroom. They swell into the excited barracking at a sports carnival. They join together in the prayer and singing that resonate through the chapel. These voices are as familiar to me as my own breathing, and the life blood that flows to and from my heart, for I am a teacher in a Lutheran school. But the bell chimes and the voices fade away for another day. Now there is silence. But further back, beyond the silence, I hear other voices. They come from the past, they carry the words of the fathers and the pioneers, they flow down through 160 years of Lutheran schooling in Australia. They are the voices of our heritage. They tell us what to do.

### **I Kavel:**

My name is August Ludwig Christian Kavel. I was born in September 1798, in Berlin in Prussia. I studied theology to become a Lutheran pastor. In 1826 I found myself in charge of the Lutheran congregation in the Prussian village of Klemzig. There came a time of trouble on our Lutheran Church when the Elector Frederick tried to bring about a union between the Lutheran and Reformed elements of Christendom. Many accepted this, but for me and most of my congregation, it was unacceptable because it compromised some of our most basic beliefs. We resisted and were persecuted. I began to look around for a way out. I resigned my pastorate in 1835, and over the next three years spent the time organizing the migration of my people to the colony of South Australia, where they were looking for free settlers.

We arrived at Port Adelaide in November 1838, and settled on some land on the banks of the Torrens River at a place which we called Klemzig, after our home town. In the middle of our village we built a church and a school. In the church we could worship in freedom according to our conscience. In the school we taught our young people how to read and write and do arithmetic, as well as imparting to them the precious teachings of the church. Other Lutherans soon joined us. For a time there was a settlement at Glen Osmond, and then a permanent one at Hahndorf in the Adelaide Hills. From there we spread into the Barossa Valley. I lived and served at Langmeil near Tanunda where my bones rest to this very day. In each place we built churches and schools. On the mission fields too, amongst the aboriginal people, we always provided places to worship and

places to teach. We always had our pastors and teachers. They were at the heart of the church's ministry.

Where we came from in Germany, it was the practice that the churches provided the schools. It was natural that we should do the same in Australia. There were no other schools anyway, and we believed education to be absolutely essential. Students needed to go to school if they were to take their place as loyal and useful citizens in the new colony. We also believed it was imperative that our children continued in the German tongue, the language of Luther's Bible, our Lutheran Confessions and the liturgy and hymns and prayers of the church. In the beginning all instruction was in German and we carried on the curriculum of Religion, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Natural History and Music from our Prussian schools. More than anything, the German language was inextricably tied up with the distinctive teachings of our Christian faith for which we had been persecuted, and on account of which we had journeyed to the other side of the world in order that they be preserved. It was compulsory, under threat of church discipline, for our people to send their children to our schools.

In my lifetime there were a number of major issues facing our schools. The first was the provision of teachers. We brought a number with us, including two of my brothers, but it soon became clear that we would have to train our own pastors and teachers in the new country if we wanted the two main agencies of the church to survive. There was also the matter of relations with the state authorities. We were very sensitive on this issue because we had come to Australia to escape persecution by the rulers of our day. Although we saw ourselves as loyal citizens in our new country, we wanted no interference by the state in churchly matters. This included our schools. I advocated that we should resist any moves to have our schools subjected to state inspection. I also considered that it would be detrimental to our schools to accept state aid, especially if it restricted in any way, the freedom to teach our children their religious beliefs in their native tongue. Some of the independent Lutheran congregations accepted such aid as early as 1849, but I would not condone it in our schools.

As the sainted Dr Martin Luther once observed: the schools are the nurseries of the church, blest gardens of God's, in which the heavenly Gardener trains the little plants for his heavenly purpose. Outside the preaching of God's Word and the administration of the sacraments, there is no more powerful or important work in God's kingdom than the operation of Christian schools. When we came to Australia over a century and a half ago, we built churches and schools everywhere we settled. Hardly was there a roof over our own heads when we set up places to preach and teach God's Word. We have passed down this tradition of Australian Lutheran schooling to you. It is our legacy and your heritage. Preserve the schools, keep them centred on the word of God and the teachings of the church, and you will provide your children well for the future.

## **II Fritzsche:**

My name is Gotthard Daniel Fritzsche. I was born in the German electorate of Saxony in July 1797. Like Pastor Kavel, I became a Lutheran pastor. Like him I also became convinced that it was wrong to join the Union Church which the Elector Frederick wanted to impose on his people. I did not originally think I would emigrate however, but spent a number of years as an underground pastor to those Lutherans who insisted on having their own church. I was a wanted man, travelling at night, at the mercy of the elements, hidden in attics, always under the threat of arrest and imprisonment, ministering to the continuing Lutheran communities. In the end my health began to suffer. Pastor Kavel had

also written to me from Australia, asking me and those of my people who could travel with me, to come and join him and build a free Lutheran church in the colony of South Australia. In the end we came, arriving in 1841.

Many of the people who came with me settled in the Adelaide Hills. Lobethal became the centre of my ministry and it was there that I first got involved in Lutheran education. Pastor Kavel had indicated to me that one of the roles he wanted me to fill in the colony was as a teacher of future pastors and teachers. A year after I arrived I was already at work with a little band of theology students who followed me wherever I travelled, learning their Greek vocabs and listening to my lectures on the Bible and Confessions. In 1845, we erected a small building, a slab hut, at Lobethal. This is where our first pastors and teachers learned their calling.

In 1845, only four years after my arrival, our little Australian church was split in two when Pastor Kavel and I had a major disagreement, and we, and our followers, along with our churches and schools, went our separate ways. The main doctrinal issue was that of chiliasm or millennialism, the belief that Christ would return to reign on earth a thousand years before the end of the world. We also disagreed on the matter of Pastor Kavel's Agende, his constitution for the Australian Lutheran Church, which I and those who followed me, refused to grant as much status as he desired. Even though we separated, however, both strands of Lutheranism continued to emphasise the importance of education and schooling, including that of future workers in the church.

It was very difficult to provide the buildings and the teachers for our schools. Even among our own people, there were many who underestimated the importance of Christian schools, where dedicated teachers strove to inculcate the truths and principles and ethics of the Christian religion into the minds of children as the way to eternal happiness, and as the true incentive for right conduct, and the true remedy for evil. People so easily despise Christian schools which are the true bulwark of the state and the very cornerstone of good government, because they produce good citizens. In my opinion no-one performs a more important work in the community than the teacher of children. I would ask them: "Who will give our children the religious instruction they sorely need? The State cannot do it; the parents have not the time, and in many cases not the ability. The Church alone can do the work satisfactorily through its schools."

It is my firm belief that a secular education of the mind and intellect is not only insufficient on its own, but it is downright dangerous. It is giving a person knowledge without the vision of how they might best use it. That is not to underestimate the importance of such learning itself. A general education, with all its disciplines and areas of learning, provides an essential background and tools for all of us, including those who would serve God. In my time I always stressed that we should teach to make good citizens, that we should keep alive the German language of our faith, but above all the religious instruction of the young was the basis for all proper schooling.

I also promoted very strongly the need to recruit and train teachers for our schools. You can even do without buildings, as I first did and as our Lord did during his earthly ministry, but you can not have Christian education without teachers who have their minds and hearts firmly dedicated to, and informed in Christian faith and knowledge. We have to select the best people to become teachers, we must train them properly in religious and secular knowledge, and we must have the training facilities and the people to do this. If we do not provide such teachers, our schools will come to grief. We must also as a church and as a community show proper honour and respect for teachers. On them

depends the future of the church. They must also be properly paid so that they can follow their profession without anxiety for their earthly survival and that of their families.

All these things cost money. We always found it difficult. But, as a church, it was a high priority, even though many of our people did not treasure it as they might have. Of course, even in our time there was the possibility of the government authorities providing some money. I always stressed two important principles on this matter. The first was that the teaching of religion should never be in the hands of the state. That is not its business and when it gets involved, it corrupts Christian teaching. Nor should money from the state be used by the church to teach religion. It is the church's responsibility to make sure it provides funds for its own essential work.

I worked in my ministry in the church in Australia for twenty-two years. I experienced the hard work and privations of grinding out a living in a new colony. The split with Pastor Kavel and the divisions of our little church were a matter of great sadness to me. I lost my wife after only a short marriage and our child as well. My health was never very strong. But I also experienced some of the great joys of working in God's kingdom. One of my fondest memories is of wandering the countryside with my three pastor students, Hensel, Oster and Stempel, and training those first teachers like Mueller and Boehm, passing on to them the breadth of knowledge afforded me in my education, especially equipping them for their special role in the church. There is no greater joy in working in God's kingdom than opening hearts and minds to new knowledge, especially that of our precious Christian understanding and faith. To you I commend this great heritage.

### **III Boehm:**

My name is Traugott Wilhelm Boehm. I was born into that generation who found themselves strangely transported to the new colony of South Australia. Although born in Germany in 1836, I have no memory of the fatherland as I travelled with my parents and my five older brothers and sisters to this new land when I was two years old. We arrived in 1839, and my earliest memories are of growing up in Hahndorf where my family settled. My father had a block of land in the main street where my Academy still stands to this very day. My father was a carpenter and he was involved in building the first Lutheran school in Hahndorf, so from an early age it seemed I was meant to be involved in education and learning. It was always a great love of mine, and my life was built around it.

When I finished my primary schooling I enrolled with Pastor Fritzsche at his Lobethal College in order to do the preliminary training to become a Lutheran teacher. After three years I went to Bethany and studied there under Pastor Meyer to complete my theological training. My teacher training took place under that grand old man of early Lutheran schooling, Teacher Topp. From him I learned the rudiments of my craft. My mind, however was ever restless for wider knowledge so I went to Tanunda for a time and studied under Dr Muecke who was in charge of one of the more liberal congregations. He was a man of advanced social and theological ideas with a broad scholastic knowledge. From him I acquired a wider view of the world.

In July 1854 I was installed as a teacher in the Lutheran school at Hahndorf which was just over the fence from where my family had their property. From the very beginning I was uncomfortable in the school, because of the extremely conservative elements in the Hahndorf congregation. For instance, it was regarded by some to be an impediment

that I had wider interests in philosophy, science and the arts. My membership of the local Hahndorf Institute, especially my role as secretary, was an anathema to some of them. I was told at one time that there should be no other books in the school besides the Bible and Luther's catechism, and that I should not even be teaching secular subjects like Geography. Such narrow mindedness was appalling to me, and it meant that the local school was condemned to poor standards of education.

After three years of such uneasiness, in 1857, when I was only 21 years old, I decided to leave the congregational school and start one of my own which I built on my father's original land in the main street of Hahndorf. It was not in direct opposition to the congregational school because it provided further education for those who had completed primary schooling. There were some Lutherans who supported me in this venture. They too saw the need for such a place of higher learning as a background for the professions and as a training facility for future pastors and teachers. There were also those who were hoping I would fall flat on my face. I called my school the Hahndorf Academy and it progressed very well. In 1861, many Lutherans had come to see the benefit of such a school and it was amalgamated with the congregational school. Enrolments grew to 160. We attracted students from other areas. It was the largest such school in the colony.

My Academy flourished during the 1860s and provided the Lutheran and wider community with a reputable agency for education. Then in 1869, the local forces of Lutheran conservatism came down on my head once again, over the Humboldt affair. Strenz, the principal of the congregational school, and I allowed our students to take part in a ceremony celebrating the life of Humboldt, the great German scientist. This was condemned by many in the congregation. It was alleged that we were promoting scientific atheism. Strenz made a public apology but I refused. I declined to bow to such petty and malicious insinuations. The next year in 1870, the congregation wanted me to subject my school to the supervision of the local pastor. This was the final straw. I withdrew my school from its arrangements with the Lutherans and opened a Realschule which offered advanced non-denominational Christian education to the general community.

My ties with the Lutheran Church were close to breaking during the early 70s. I felt much misunderstood. People mistook my love of the arts and sciences as a sign I was not a faithful Lutheran, I who had studied under Pastor Fritzsche and the venerable Teacher Topp. During the 60s I had been a strong voice for the proper training of pastors and teachers. Therefore, when the church was looking to establish such a facility, I offered to sell them my school to form the Hahndorf Lutheran Teachers Seminary in 1876. I remained on the staff and over the next decade we graduated a dozen teachers for the schools of the church. When the church bungled the finances and got into difficulties, I purchased my school back again in 1883, but I made sure it still trained teachers for the church. In 1887 I finally sold my college to non-Lutheran interests and moved to Murtoa in Victoria where I established another private school. The Church followed me there too and I was part of the establishment of the new Lutheran College in Murtoa, and for a while taught Music there.

What advice have I to offer you from my experience? The first is never to confuse a thorough Christian education with narrow fundamentalism. Academic standards are important, a promotion of all the aspects of learning, literature, science, philosophy, the performing arts, are essential ingredients in a Christian education also. I always believed strongly in the proper education of teachers who needed to be trained in the

teachings and theology of the church, as well as a more general education. In difficult circumstances, I gave the best years of my life in the pursuit of these goals. I commend to you the great Lutheran tradition of high academic standards, excellence in the arts and a broad Christian education.

## **IV Ey:**

I am Johannes Martin Rudolph Ey. I was born in Germany in 1837 and came to Australia with my parents and my brother in 1855. After a short time I was recruited as a teacher in Lutheran schools. They just caught me as I was leaving Adelaide for the Victorian goldfields.

After 1855 I taught in the Lutheran schools at Klemzig and then Lobethal. However in 1857 I was appointed as head of the Lutheran school in Hahndorf on the resignation of teacher Boehm who went off to start his Academy. Some of the Lutherans in Hahndorf regarded Boehm as being too liberal in his views and practices. In me they found someone of a more conservative mould. I was always a strong advocate for Lutheran schools which were centred on God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions. I believed that outside influences from the state should be firmly resisted and that Lutheran schools should be independent and free to provide a sound Christian education and training for the people of the church. I found much support for this point of view among the Lutherans of Hahndorf.

However, problems arose in my relations with the Hahndorf people in the 1860s when their Lutheran school was considering the option of applying for a government grant. Naturally this source of revenue was very attractive to many of our schools because it meant that there would be sufficient money to provide better facilities and pay teachers properly. The only problem was that if you accepted the money, you were not allowed to do any religious teaching during the school day. Some of our schools found ways around this. A few taught religious instruction anyway and got away with it if no-one complained. More often, the religious instruction was given before or after school so that even if the school premises were used, it was technically not happening as part of the official school day. The people of Hahndorf wanted to accept a grant and operate in this latter manner. I disagreed with them strongly. For my part I believed that giving government money to Lutheran schools was spreading corruption among our people. They, for their part, thought that I was too narrow-minded and conscientious. As a result, in 1862, I resigned my position as head of the Hahndorf school.

The 1860s and 1870s were a difficult time for our schools. The government grant controversy raged through these decades with church and school leaders taking different positions on the matter. The new generation of church leadership were often ambivalent about their position, condemning it in some quarters, campaigning for it in others, with some allowing it to happen in the congregational schools. By 1874 there were more than 30 German Lutheran schools in South Australia receiving government grant money. There were even those who wanted to give up on Lutheran schools, to hand them over to those who could afford to provide them. For my part, I still considered them to be essential to the future of the church, and that they should be free of the taint of government money. I wrote widely in the church's publications. I decried the loss of the church's zeal and commitment, and the decline of spirituality among our people. I believed that only the church was capable of carrying out the work of education worth its name, and the state should cede any interest in schooling to the church. At a time when

the religious curriculum was being relegated to outside school hours, I pointed out that instruction in religion should be the crowning point of all instruction. All the means used to develop mankind's mental powers should serve one great purpose, education for godliness and the fear of God. Religion is central, not a mere appendage in a Lutheran school. I regarded it as an anathema for a confessional Lutheran to allow the confession of their faith to be forbidden at any time of the day.

I became an ordained pastor of the church. In my congregation at Carlsruhe, the majority of the congregation, along with Teacher Becker, decided to accept a government grant for the school in 1874. I forbade it. I wanted them to support me in my renunciation of state aid. When I was away one Sunday, they agreed to accept a government grant anyway. So in 1875 I resigned as their pastor. The church's leaders intervened and I was reinstated. The next year I left anyway and went back to my beloved Lobethal where I served as pastor for the next seventeen years. The government probably saved us from ourselves in 1875 when they abolished state aid to denominational schools just as happened in Victoria three years earlier. Sure, we lost some schools, but the ones which remained became stronger. Those which had become dependent on government grants became state schools, but nearly all our loyal Lutheran schools survived on their own. By 1900 there were still almost 50 Lutheran schools operating in South Australia.

The spiritual health of the church often declines in prosperous times because people start to think that God is not so essential to their lives. After the first twenty years of struggle in our new land, we Lutherans started to taste the fruits of our labour. We became self-satisfied, and no longer saw that the lifeline to our God, who had provided us with the strength and blessings to endure the hard times, was so important. We forgot how crucial our schools were in this process. I was one who had the responsibility to remind them, as I remind you: keep your schools. Keep them independent and distinctive. Make God's Word and his Gospel the centrepiece of your educational endeavour. Neglect these to the peril of the church and your children!

## **V Langebecker:**

My name is Theodor Friedrich Langebecker. I was born in Prussia in 1845. I decided to become a missionary and studied at the Gossner Institute in Germany. As a young man aged twenty two, I accepted a call as pastor to the Lutherans in Toowoomba in Queensland.

Outside of South Australia, the second state to which there was the most German migration in the nineteenth century was Queensland. There was active recruitment of Germans to that state by the government. They wanted them for indentured labour to build the roads, bridges and railways in their rapidly developing state, partly because they had the technical expertise, but mostly because they were considered to be good workers. When their period of service was over, there was plenty of land to select. By the 1850s large numbers of them were attracted to Toowoomba and the Darling Downs. With the exception of the Bethania settlement south of Brisbane, most Queensland Germans did not come from a strong Lutheran background, half of them not even Lutherans at all. The great father of Lutheranism in Queensland was Pastor Schirmeister, a former Lutheran missionary to the south seas, who travelled all over southern Queensland from his base in Brisbane, ministering to German communities and organising them into congregations. He did this in Toowoomba too, eight years before I came in 1867.

When I arrived in my new parish, one of the greatest needs I found among the people was for a school. There were no state schools at that stage, only an Anglican one, as well as a college for young ladies. Local Lutherans did not have much access to those. One of the first things I did then was to start up a school in the church building at Phillip Street. I was the main teacher there for three years until we were able to procure the services of Wilhelm Guhr, also trained as a lay missionary in Germany, as our teacher for the next twenty years. The school taught in German and English, concentrating on literacy and numeracy and other academic disciplines, as well as imparting to the young, Lutheran doctrine and Bible knowledge. It met the needs of the local Lutheran people very well.

Seven years after I arrived, I began to have trouble with my eyesight. I decided to go back to Germany in order to get medical attention. After that, I went to the United States where I spent seven and a half years as a pastor. In 1883 I returned to Toowoomba to find Teacher Guhr and his school prospering. In 1881, the St Paul's congregation had built a new church, and when I returned plans were being made for a separate school building and teacher's residence as well. These were completed and opened in 1884. It was a great day for Lutheran education in Toowoomba. We had a big opening with a number of preachers and received wide press coverage. It gave me an opportunity to enunciate for the congregation and the community our reasons for having a Lutheran school. I stressed to the people how important it was for them to keep the German language alive among their children; German was the language of science, it had a rich literature, and with the great influx of German migrants to Queensland, it would continue to be a major local language, as evidenced by the fact that Toowoomba continued to have more than one German newspaper. There was commercial sense in maintaining the language as well. But, most important, German was the language of the Lutheran faith. If young people were to stay in the church they had to be able to use the language of Luther's Bible and the liturgy.

Not many years later, in the 1890s, however, the school began to wane. Teacher Guhr became a pastor in 1890 and moved on to a new parish. I carried on the school myself after he left but could only afford one day a week of teaching in my busy schedule. I did this for fifteen years to gradually declining numbers, and I had to give it up in 1905 when I became President of our church in Queensland. For a time Miss Kate Mengel took over as teacher, but gradually it became a Sunday School only, with most Lutherans attending the state schools which were now provided by the government.

What happened in Toowoomba, also occurred all over Queensland and parts of New South Wales where similar schools had been in operation. By the onset of World War 1, even the Bethania people south of Brisbane had lost their school, although it lingered longest. One of the main reasons was the difficulty of finding suitable teachers. Ours was one of the strongest schools because we had Teacher Guhr for twenty years. Bethania managed to recruit some from the south. But there was no training programme in Queensland for Lutheran teachers, and many schools met their demise because there was no one suitable to teach in them. We Queenslanders also were more widely spread, and integrated with the local community more quickly, losing our cultural distinctiveness at a greater rate. There was also the problem that many of our people spoke Plattdeutsch, Low German dialect, rather than the Hochdeutsch, or High German, of the educated which made German schooling much more demanding for the children, and resulted in it not being reinforced in the home. But most of all, it was the easy availability of state schools which lured families away. Even those who wanted a



religious grounding for their children thought that they could still gain this through a Sunday school programme rather than a Lutheran day school. By the time of my death in 1909, unlike their southern counterparts, Lutheran schools in Queensland had virtually died as well.

I found that there were many who would support a Lutheran school because there was no other alternative. Many, however, lacked the commitment to Christian schooling, which is at the centre of the church's involvement in education. Lutheran schools have always tried to give a solid education for citizenship and vocation while providing a strong grounding in Christian faith and belief. Most people will say they want both, but they have their priorities. Where Christian nurture is not their greatest priority, we learned in Queensland that Lutheran Schools have a much greater fragility. In your day, Queensland Lutheran schools provide for as many students as the rest of the states put together. Most of these schools are young and tender plants which will need careful tendering if history is not to repeat itself. Never take your schools for granted. Make sure they have a ready supply of teachers. Nurture your families in the faith so that their commitment to Lutheran schooling is real and permanent. I, too, commit our Lutheran schools to your care.

## **VI Krichauff:**

I am Carl Justus Gabriel Krichauff. I was born in Hamburg in Germany in 1852. I came to Australia where I already had some relations in 1877. My first job was as a teacher in a state school in Siegersdorf in South Australia where I taught for three years, and then in the country at Stockwell. It was not long, however, before I was asked to teach in Lutheran schools, at first in the Martin Luther school in Adelaide. In 1893 I was appointed as the teacher at the Lutheran school at Point Pass north of the Barossa Valley.

As a teacher in the Lutheran school system, I was very sensitive to criticisms about the educational standards of our schools. Many of our teachers were not properly trained, curriculum varied from school to school, and there was always a lack of funds. As state schools became available, and as government funding was at first refused and then no longer available, it seemed as if we could not compete and remain viable in the new era. There was also prejudice against our schools because it was perceived that we taught no English, only German, and that we were not training our young people to fit into an English speaking society. There was a threat that our schools would be held open to public inspection and closed if they did not meet certain standards. I felt impelled to defend our schools in the public forum. I told our people: "In spite of free education and inspection by the State, a Lutheran school can hold its own perfectly well, provided there is trust in God and hard work." That was my firm belief.

But I had to admit there was much work to be done. Something had to be initiated to build up our teachers. Up until the 1880s and 1890s we were all operating independently, making our own way as best as our local resources allowed. Therefore, I assembled a Lutheran Teachers Conference. Thirty-eight teachers came to our first convention. We formed a Teachers Association - a Lehrerbund. I was the first president and continued in that role for thirteen years. Other conferences followed. A number of problems became evident. First of all, there was a need to regulate and balance the curriculum offered in our schools. I personally wrote an outline for the content of what each school should teach. I made sure there was a proper balance between German

and English instruction so that our young people would be able to function in an English speaking society while they still retained the linguistic ability to use the language of their faith and worship and heritage. I also pioneered the acceptance into our schools of text books which the state education department produced. Through these measures, our Lutheran schools lifted their standards and provided a schooling experience which was more comparable with that of the state schools.

Some things I advocated did not come about. I wanted a Lutheran Board of Education which would introduce policies and practices to end the lack of cohesion between, and isolation of, Lutheran schools. It would be their job to supervise existing schools, promote the provision of new schools, even provide an inspector for the schools to ensure that teachers were competent. These things were not to happen in my lifetime.

However, one of the greatest experiences of my life came when I moved to the Point Pass school. It was there in 1895, with President Rechner and Pastor Leidig, that I played a part in establishing a new college which was to become one of the great learning institutions of the Lutheran Church. Later it was called Immanuel College, but in those days we called it the Anstalt. I was one of those who influenced Pastor Leidig to conceive of such a project. I could see the glaring need for a higher education for those who would become pastors and teachers in the church. Besides teaching in the congregational school all day, for many years I would teach in the Anstalt before school and after hours. I did this for ten years until I was exhausted and retired from my position in 1906.

My advice across the years is this. Make sure your Lutheran schools are worthy of the name of schools. Professionalism of teachers, relevant, balanced and strong curriculum content, adequate and effective resources are essential to any place of learning, including a Christian school. Your teachers are your most precious means of accomplishing your aims. Make sure you get the best. Make sure they are properly trained in both the sacred and secular domains. Provide for their professional development, especially in those areas which make your schools distinctive. Help them to identify with the larger vision by bringing them together for conferences and in-servicing. Never apologise for what you and your schools do. You have a great heritage. Preserve it and sustain it.

## **VII Peters:**

I am Wilhelm Peters. I too came as a migrant to this country. I was born in the German region of Pomerania in 1850. At a young age I decided to become a missionary and when I was old enough I went to study at the Hermannsburg Mission Institute. When I graduated in 1877 I was sent to Melbourne in Victoria to work among the growing population of Chinese who had come with the gold rushes. On arrival, I found that these people were already being catered for and soon began to concentrate on the needs of the Germans in the colony. Pastor Goethe of Melbourne had begun to organize Lutheran congregations in Victoria and I worked with him. I began taking trips into the country in order to minister to Germans there as well. Two years after I arrived, I became the Lutheran pastor at Murtoa in western Victoria.

During the next ten years a number of important things happened to me while I was serving at Murtoa. First, I got married to my wife Emilie who was a South Australian Lutheran. We had a family. I worked in a part of Victoria where there were many

Lutheran settlements and congregations, mostly formed by Lutherans who had migrated from South Australia. Many of these settlements had their own Lutheran schools, and it was always a great difficulty in finding suitable teachers for them. I was also one of those pastors who began to look towards America rather than Germany for theological insight. I read the publications of the Missouri Synod with great interest, a church with a strong educational tradition. Mr Wilhelm Boehm, who had previously conducted the Hahndorf College moved to Murtoa in 1887 and I had in my mind that if the South Australians could not get themselves organised to provide us with a training institution for pastors and teachers, we would do it in Victoria.

With the gradual demise of teacher training in Hahndorf, I began to campaign for some other institution to be started for this purpose. There were some who believed that we should adopt the model of training teachers through apprenticeships at schools, but I believed they also needed a thorough academic and theological grounding at a place of higher learning. I told the church: "If we do not provide capable teachers in our schools we are sending our Lutheran Church in this country to its grave." In 1890, I personally donated a block of land in Murtoa for a college of higher education for the church. I had some support from fellow pastors in the region, but the general church would not take responsibility for it at this stage. For the next ten years we ran the college from our parish. I was the Director, a duty I fulfilled as well as caring for my parish. Three years after we started I became President of my church in Victoria as well. My wife Emilie set up a sewing circle in order to raise funds for the school, and she served as house mother to the boarding students for many years. On our early staff we had Mr Boehm for a short time, also Mr Marks the primary teacher, and an Anglican, Mr Gray, was the main teacher of academic subjects. Later we also employed Mr Kunstmann who was the first of the teachers we recruited from the Missouri Synod in the United States.

At the turn of the century we had problems in our school which I found very distressing. Despite criticism in some quarters, I had always supported Mr Gray who was not a Lutheran, as an important member of our staff. Gradually, however, it became clear, especially after the arrival of Mr Kunstmann from the United States, that there was a split in our school community. On the one hand there were the students who were training to be pastors and teachers, and on the other hand those who were there mainly for a higher education. Mr Gray was the mentor of this secular faction and Mr Kunstmann of the theological students. Mr Gray, who it proved was more of an agnostic than an Anglican, did not help matters by referring to theological students as "sky pilots". I came to attract much criticism for having Mr Gray on staff. I asked him to resign and he responded by opening his own school just down the road, naturally attracting some of our students. There was a period of unrest. Finally we asked Professor Graebner from the Lutheran Seminary in St Louis in the United States to intervene. He helped bring resolution to the situation. I apologised for my part in the whole issue and in 1901, I resigned as Director of the College and moved to New South Wales to work in the church there.

Concordia College in Murtoa trained nine pastors and thirty-three teachers during the last decade of the nineteenth century. My wife and I gave it the best years of our lives, sacrificing much of our home life. We also lost a son to typhoid at Murtoa. People have described me as a very energetic man. I had a strong ringing voice I used with great effect from the pulpit and in the classroom, I loved strong coffee and I owned a fast buggy with a pair of fiery horses. My thorn in the flesh was my eyesight, and I eventually had to give up my ministry because of blindness. I was also blind for too long to the negative influences in the school with unhappy results. My great satisfaction was to see

Concordia College, after it moved to Adelaide, go on to be one of the great educational institutions in the Australian Lutheran Church.

In my ten years in education I learned a lot. I learned that schools only happen if someone makes them happen, that they are seldom formed by a synod board or committee, but because a group of people somewhere are committed enough to make them a reality. Then when others see what can be done, they will support you, but there must always be people of vision to get things going. I also learned that the theological orientation of staff is crucial to a Christian school. No matter how good teachers are at their profession, if their hearts and minds are not influenced strongly by their relationship with their Lord, schools will become fractured in their policies and practices and wander alien paths. I also learned that we have a simple choice. Either we can, through our Lutheran schools, make a strong impact on the minds of the young, and so ensure the future strength of our church, or we can give it up and let other influences mould their hearts and minds. In the end that is no choice at all. Lutheran schools are essential. I commend them and their future to you.

## **VIII Leidig:**

I am Georg Friedrich Leidig. I was a Bavarian by birth. I was born there in 1870. When I was seventeen years old, I enrolled in the Lutheran Seminary at Neuendettelsau. When I graduated four years later, I accepted a call to become a missionary to aboriginals in the colony of South Australia. The missionary work was short lived as there were problems with the work among the Dieri people where I was sent. Within a year, I became the pastor in the Lutheran congregation at Point Pass. In that same year I married my wife, Maria, who came from Germany to join me.

Some people have described me as having been a dapper young man, self-possessed and full of ambition. Young people full of energy and confidence can sometimes give that impression. When I came to Point Pass, there were two important influences who informed my thinking. The first was the President of the Immanuel Synod, Pastor Rechner, with whom I had a close relationship, and who always gave me his support. The other was Teacher Krichauff at the local Lutheran School who had a vision for the educational needs of the church. Under their influence I began to conceive a vision of an Anstalt, an institution of learning, which would have two main purposes: first it would be a place where people could send their older children to live for a time while they underwent intensive confirmation instruction. And second, it would also be a place where pastors and teachers for our congregations and schools could be trained.

As always, it is hard to inspire others with projects like this, so in 1895 such a college was opened in our parish at our expense. We had an enrolment of two students. It gradually grew. I taught there in addition to my parish duties. Krichauff helped out when he was finished at the primary school each day. We could teach at odd hours because the students boarded or lived close by. Up until 1900, students lived in the manse where my wife looked after them. In that year however, we opened a new building. This came after I had campaigned strongly for the support of the wider church. Some funds were donated, but the church did not see fit to take ownership of the school. That was left to me and our congregation. The college, despite this, continued to grow. We enrolled girls as well, we added to our staff, and in another role I took on as Editor of the Synodical newspaper, I kept the affairs of the school before the eyes of the general church. I never lost an opportunity to lecture my fellow pastors on the need for their support as well. I

urged them to look to the future, to give their children, boys and girls, the opportunity to train for a profession and to gain an education based on the Lutheran Church and its teachings, preserving the German spirit and character of our culture as well as equipping them to serve God. Finally, in 1907, I was elected President of the Immanuel Synod and continued in my other roles as well as being Director of the college. In that same year, the synod, finally, after twelve years, actually took over ownership of the college. I was 37 years old.

Our college continued to provide higher education for the young people of the church. There were moves to shift it to Tanunda, which was regarded as more centrally situated, but that did not eventuate. World War 1 came, and as President of Synod I was under threat of internment for most of the war. I always kept my bags packed for that eventuality. I put myself in danger when I made a point of visiting President Nickel of the other Lutheran Synod when he was interned. This on top of all my duties was a great strain. My two oldest boys who had gone to Germany to study were caught there during the war. Then, in 1914, my second son died suddenly at his school. Later, the eldest was conscripted into the German army and wounded in battle. My world collapsed around me. I became ill in mind and body. I struggled on. In 1920 I resigned as President of Synod, and from my parish. And in the next year, the greatest break of all, I resigned as Director of my beloved college. I retired to Tanunda where, four years later I died, and over a thousand people attended my funeral as I was laid to rest next to Pastor Kavel. I was only fifty four.

The students at the college used to call me “The Boss”, not only because of my position but also because of my manner. I could be very fierce, and I could be very impatient. I always had problems with my eyes and lost sight in one of them. I took great delight during my latter days in my De Lage car which the boys kept polished for me, and which I once drove through a gate without opening it. My great support in my life was my wife, Maria, who for many years cared not only for me and our children, but also for the young people who boarded in our home and in the college. She was always strong and remained so even when I became ill. In my day it was the men who occupied centre stage in the growth and development of our schools, but our college would never have been possible without my beloved wife and her unpaid hours of dedication and care and labour. My great joy was my three boys, all great scholars. My great pride was my Anstalt, Immanuel College, and the work that was done there for the future of the church. Among those students at Point Pass were thirty future Lutheran teachers, twenty-nine pastors, five missionaries, two seminary lecturers, three college principals and the first President of the united Lutheran Church of Australia.

For every worthwhile project to succeed, there has to be faith and hope in God, there has to be leadership, there has to be sacrifice and there has to be determination and hard work. My Anstalt, my Immanuel College, grew out of such things. You still have it with you and it continues to prosper. Use it, and all your schools, to the glory of God!

## **Speaker:**

These are some of the voices that ring in our ears. There are others, some contemporaries to the ones you have just heard, even more who came later. The story of Lutheran schools has two main phases, the first wave and the second wave. The voices we have just heard are from the first wave, the first eighty years, when the foundations

were laid and the traditions were set. There was a vast ebb in the tide of Lutheran schools in the 1920s after the consolidation of the state systems and the closure, by government decree, of the forty-nine Lutheran primary schools in South Australia during World War 1. The second wave grew gradually and became the post-war Lutheran school boom of our own era. Nearly eighty percent of our current Lutheran schools have started only in the last forty years, and over half of these in the last twenty. We would have to resurrect just as many main players for the last eighty years if we were to do justice to that period. Some, indeed, need no resurrection, still being alive and full of life, and among us today. Some of the issues would be the same, some different. But today we have listened to the pioneers, the fathers. Their voices sound strongly from the past. Before we take stock of how we are doing today, and how we might approach the future, well might we pay them some heed.

On the school oval, the sun has almost completely set, just as it has on the twentieth century. Aware of our heritage, and equipped with the best traditions of the past, we do not fear the night of uncertainty ahead and look forward to the challenges of the new day and the new century God will give us.

Thank you.

RJ Hauser  
September 1999

*Note: The historical figures presented here are as accurate as possible. Some of their words have been taken from actual records, others invented to depict real attitudes and opinions. Any misrepresentation is a result of poor historiography rather than intention, and their depiction in this presentation is executed in a spirit of respect for the fathers.*

*RJH*