

ACLE REFLECTIONS

Two years ago, with the writing of the LIFE Christian Studies materials well under way, a concerned and interested principal asked me: *'Well Adrienne, what is your next challenge?'* My reply came quickly: *'The September 1999 ACLE Conference'*.

If that principal were to ask me the same question at morning tea this morning, I would instantly reply *'recoverrecovery from the let down'*, but then I would seriously say *'working with the outcomes of the conference'*.

The planning committee always saw three aspects to the outcomes of this conference:

- (1) Each one of us, whether a Year 3 classroom teacher, HOD of Health Education, school governor, pastor, administrator, tertiary lecturer or business manager, is challenged to allow the conference to inform whatever we do.
- (2) As each school engages in review and reflection, or planning and development, it is challenge to allow the conference documents to be part of its situational analysis and context.
- (3) On a national level the BLS is committed to work with the outcomes. This conference is identifying key issues that we can either neglect to our peril or pursue with significant gains.

Thus my next challenge is to listen to, to learn from, to lift up and to gain leverage from the outcomes of this conference. It is not for me now to highlight the significant issues that I see, but to pay attention to the ones that you have generated. My role is thus to make a commitment to walk with you to work through these issues to ensure that these days do not become merely a jumbo talkfest.

I believe that over the past ten years a consensus has emerged over the role and place of schools within the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA). They are about quality education and opportunities for ministry. *The LCA and Its Schools* document describes this clear statement of intent and it provides a framework in which we must now address the specific issues that have probably not just emerged, but have been ignored for far too long. The BLS is committed to leadership in this area.

Hesselbein of the Drucker Foundation recently highlighted three features of leadership in the contemporary environment:

- Leadership is a matter of how to be, not how to do: it is quality and character.
- Leaders succeed through the efforts of their people: they build personal commitment to the common task.
- Leaders build bridges: within and without the organisation.

This conference reflects our commitment to these leadership values:

- It is being rather than doing. Thus reflecting and dreaming are valued.
- It is about focussing on, and affirming the importance of, all involved in Lutheran education.
- It is about building bridges within Australia and beyond.

Our international connections have been highlighted. Within Australia Lutheran schools value their relations with other non-government schools. A particularly important relationship for us is with the National Council of Independent Schools'

Associations (NCISA) and it has been a pleasure having Fergus Thomson, NCISA Executive Director, at this conference.

I want to especially thank those who have encouraged the BLS and the planning committee to dream big with this conference: to plan for more than 78 principals to attend; to consider a conference setting to maximise our time together and then to consider sponsors and trade displays. The attendance of 407 has greatly exceeded our expectations. Thank you all for coming. Our overseas guests have added a new dimension to our proceedings and expanded our horizons and we have valued having you with us. A special thanks to our sponsors and trade displays. You have enabled us to do much more than would have been possible otherwise.

We are grateful that President Steicke and other Presidents have spent these days with us and affirmed us by their attendance. I also acknowledge the support of the resort staff who have treated us royally and made our visit an experience worth having.

Page 17 of the conference handbook outlines those who have worked so hard for this conference. Thank you so much. There has been a real team approach with a number of committees and individuals contributing wonderfully over the past 18 months. My heart wants to mention names, but my head says that if you do that, you will not be able to stop. Above all I acknowledge a bounteous God who has given us strength, wisdom and courage.

Finally I want to leave you with these challenges:

- Lutheran schooling happens at the local level. If anything comes of our days together it comes in, with and through you. Do not wait for claps of thunder with innovations from on high. I encourage you as individuals to think that 'If it is to be, it is up to me'.
- May the writing and reflection at this conference be the catalyst for ongoing research and writing on Lutheran schooling in this country. I know the BLS will want to provide channels for this ongoing writing and reflection.
- Let the networking generated by this conference bloom. One of the lasting benefits from these days will be the links that have been made. The list serve to be established next term will facilitate this.

Thank you for coming and may today be the beginning of great things. It has been a pleasure to work with you and now to walk with you under God on this initiative.

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