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AUSTRALIAN CONFERENCE
ON LUTHERAN EDUCATION

wise up!

Transforming **Mind, Body, and Heart**
in Lutheran Education



In search of 'The Great Idea'



Patricia Carmichael
is the Deputy Principal
at St Paul's College,
Walla Walla, NSW

Conference delegates attend conferences to search for the next 'great idea'. It is a constant craving, an almost inexhaustible desire to learn something new. Some are referred to as 'conference junkies' – those hoping to get ahead of the pack with the next great idea in education. This quest can be the search to solve a problem – to find the answer to a problem that has been a growing concern amongst colleagues back at your school and gnawing away on the tip of your laser pen. And so when you find it, it is a revelation, a drawing back the curtain to reveal that one idea that can cause instant renewal and immense satisfaction. And you know you have found that great idea when you feel the 'Aha! moment', followed by an inexplicable calm and a drawing into the speaker who both enters your mind space and soul, speaking only to you as you weave the idea into your personal world of teaching and learning. And so when soul and mind shiver in response to the 'Aha! moment', you feel satisfied; you feel it was worth the two day drive from Walla Walla to Brisbane (I am waxing lyrical here – it was not one of my better ideas) and all is well with the universe and all is wonderful. Certainly the food was truly wonderful! It transformed my body greatly.

Great ideas are not easily come by. They are not born to parents of mediocrity and complacency. Bishop Munib Younan attested to that. They grow out of turmoil and pain. We attend conferences searching for answers to problems we have in our teaching lives, indeed in our LIVES. Anyone who doesn't have a problem to solve in their school has a problem. A lot of those problems are not really new are they? What would you call a great idea? Throughout history there have been some great ideas in education: Socrates and his idea of the critical thinking community, Plato and his Republic. Plato's concept of *paideia* is about mind, body and soul developing in equilibrium and, hey, wasn't that what our conference was about? Socrates gave us great ideas to think about, especially his ideas on fatherhood and teaching your children for the future. The following quotation is ascribed to him:

Could I climb the highest place in Athens I would lift my voice and proclaim, 'Fellow citizens why do you turn and scrape every stone to gather wealth and take so little care of your children to whom one day you must relinquish it all?' And Beware the barrenness of a busy life.'

He was of course talking about spending quality time with your children, taking time to teach them and play a little. Vygotsky was the play master. Today, browsing online reveals so many links in education that profess to hold the answers to solving problems in the classroom. There are no right answers though, are there? Each of our schools has its own particular community. They are each unique. Each child is a unique child of God. How often are we told that but really pay no attention to it? Truly?

For me, the most important guide post for a futures education is to be able to teach self direction and creativity. These are two areas of education where I am searching continually for the next great idea. I use these two topics as 'lenses for discretion' in the quest to improve my teaching and learning to meet the needs of the unique child of God. And yes, I use these as the litmus test for a great conference – one that has great ideas. You must study the philosophy of Knowles. I would imagine that you have never even come across this man's ideas. Read Knowles and the link to andragogy; and even better study his ideas on his dream village, a place where the body, mind and soul of a child are nurtured and shaped. This man's ideas will change the way you go about your day at school. The conference gave us all a chance to discuss these kinds of concepts as each delegate prayed and dwelled on the ideas of others.





Bishop Munib Younan

I attend many conferences. I confess, 'My name is Patricia. I am a 'conference junkie' ever in search of the great idea in education'. So did I find the next great idea in Brisvegas? Well, congratulations to the conference convenors, the sunshine was divine. God sent it just for us all to share. The extra curricular expeditions up and down Brisbane town were wonderful. Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum of Kabul. Now they had incredible ideas. I experienced 'flow' in each delegate's conversation over lunch. (By the way, 'flow' is a sublime experience. Read the papers of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi for a truly enlightening experience). I experienced the quest for better teaching in each delegate's personal world – back in their classroom, with their colleagues, with their soul mates. Each session that I attended presented the passion of the presenter's journey from the perspective of their world of education. I learned to think about and decide how to incorporate

a 'curriculum of mutual respect' back at my school, which was a refreshing challenge. I carried back to my school the passion of the presenter's core concept. Adrian Francis and his iBook's information – thank you; I can share this with my colleagues and use this in my classroom. Thank you David Folker, a wonderful young teacher who shared his knowledge and ideas about collaborative iPad Apps; some pretty nifty ideas were exchanged. Great – I can do that in my school. Vera White and Rob Rohde, you have both worked together and really are passionate about what you do. Teacher quality is the very core of improvement in student achievement. I have used your ideas to rethink my approach to teacher quality. Yes! The concept of transforming education through creativity provided new ideas and places to visit on the learning journey to the land of *Wise Up!* and the city of Brisvegas. I even made a new best friend. Hi Julie!

The pilgrimage to Brisbane was worth the drive because the time to contemplate and exchange ideas is important. I feel very Chaucer at conferences: all on a pilgrimage, all full of life stories to tell – to anyone who will listen! I experienced an utmost stillness and complete absorption in the idea of transformation of the ministry of the cross. The transforming power of hope and forgiveness through Bishop Munib Younan's address and the idea of the 'multilayered identity', learning to see others in the image of God; these were great ideas to dwell on. These transformed my mindset. This was something to take back to my world of turmoil, although not quite Palestine. For this I felt humbled and heartsore but thankful. This was a celebration of passion. I am glad I went. That was a great idea.

Wising up through transformation



Dianne Eckermann is the Principal at St Martin's Lutheran College, Mt Gambier, SA

Worship, the heart of our Lutheran schools, was also the heart of ACLE. Just as Lutheran schools are worshipping communities ACLE was a worshipping community of educators coming together in the transformational love of Christ. Coming together each day with other members of Lutheran education from across Australia united us with each other in praise and thanksgiving for all God has done and continues to do for us and our schools.

Worship during ACLE 4 combined the traditional, contemporary and even the magical in an experience that united everyone in ACLE. Intertwining Aboriginal spirituality with the Christian message acknowledged the spiritual heritage of Indigenous Australians while placing it in a context of Christian worship. A smooth flow from Indigenous dance to worship was the beginning of a mixture of cultures, ranging from traditional Australian Lutheran worship to a message from a Palestinian Lutheran!

Bishop Henderson's opening address was described by one 'acle-ite' as a beautiful explanation of law and gospel. In a thought-provoking address he provided the fourth ACLE conference with an understanding of how minds can be transformed helping us to balance the tensions that we meet on a daily basis in Lutheran schools. Transformation is the change from within, unlike conformity, the pressure from without. Bishop Henderson challenged us to 'wise up' to the theme of



the conference, 'transforming body, mind and spirit', by recognising opportunities for transformation everywhere in our lives.

Worship on the second morning demonstrated a variety of ways that worship can speak to us. Sacred dance added meaning to well-known songs, providing opportunities for reflection in a challenging, rewarding form. Worship in the form of dance spoke strongly about transformation of body to wise up to the Lord's transforming love. The magic continued with an address based on Ephesians 3:16-21, the transforming love of Christ. In a wonderful visual demonstration Kirsten Munchenberg, chaplain at St Peters College, showed us many ways in which a mere balloon can be transformed and in doing so reminded us that we work through God's transforming love with those around us.

Finally, during closing worship, Bishop Munib Younan, president of the Lutheran World Federation, spoke about our duty to help students to be critical, to challenge them to find the truth, a sign that the Holy Spirit is working, transforming. Despite the distance

between his country of Palestine and our home in Australia, the aims and goals of our Lutheran schools remain the same. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, transforming our hearts, we are united in acknowledging that all our education is nothing without developing spirituality.

Bishop Younan mentioned an Arabic saying: 'A small stone can hold a big building'. As teachers there are times when we may feel like very small stones. However, our work with the young people in our care means we are building great buildings day after day, transforming them – mind, body and spirit. Our worship at ACLE 4 was transforming for all of us, leading each of us, body, mind and spirit, closer to the transforming love of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Top left: Students enhance worship with dance
Top right: Bishop Henderson
Bottom left: Students enhance worship with dance
Bottom centre: Indigenous dance leaders
Bottom right: Aunty Carole Currie represented the traditional land owners.



Welcoming the stranger to ACLE



Gene Clark is the Principal, Peace Lutheran School, Gatton

What's better than spending some time in Adelaide with PNG Program Assistants Colin and Ruth Hayter, visiting Lutheran schools and also the Gorge Wildlife Park? Attending the Australian Conference on Lutheran Education in Brisbane, of course! At an informal dinner prior to the conference LEA Executive Director, Stephen Rudolph welcomed invited overseas 'strangers' to Queensland and encouraged informal sharing with representatives of the various arms of the Lutheran Church of Australia: Lutheran Education Australia, Lutheran Education Queensland, Australian Lutheran World Service, LCA Mission International, Australian Lutheran College, Lutheran Media Ministry and the Lutheran Laypeople's League.

Then it was time for these keen educators to 'Wise Up'. The Adrienne Jericho Memorial Scholarship Fund (for the training and professional development of Lutheran educators of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Papua New Guinea), together with Lutheran Education Australia sponsored the following overseas delegates:

- » Dr Jonathan Laabs, Executive Director, Lutheran Education Association (US)
- » Dr Richard Fischer, Distinguished Professor of Music, Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois (US)

- » Ridwin Purba, Education Secretary, Lutheran World Federation National Committee (Indonesia)
- » Basa Hutabarat, Executive Assistant, Lutheran World Federation National Committee [Indonesia]
- » Elwin Piarawan Zebua, Teacher, SMASwasta Kristen BNKP Gunungsitoli (Indonesia)
- » Mangantar Napitupulu, Principal, SMK GKPS-3 (vocational school) (Indonesia)
- » Sharon Mamangi, Deputy Head Teacher, Lanakapi Lutheran Primary School, Lae (PNG)
- » Gobuta Kosieng, Principal, Nawaeb Lutheran High School, Lae (PNG)
- » Serah Tapo, Principal, Bumayong Lutheran Secondary School, Lae (PNG)
- » Mr Duaro Embi, Assistant Secretary, Christian Life Studies Division, Lutheran Education Department, Lae (PNG)
- » Mr Rae Wane, Head Teacher, Tega Lutheran Primary School, Mt Hagen (PNG)
- » Mr Peter Siwi, Head Teacher, Lutheran Day Primary School, Madang (PNG)

As well as attending many workshops that helped them gain some knowledge and understanding of education in Lutheran schools in Australia, these overseas educators ran an elective session themselves. Indonesian and PNG participants told of their educational environments, the gifts they had and the challenges they faced. Their classrooms lack resources, teacher student ratio is high and discipline can be a challenge. Improved teacher training is necessary.

The hardships of being a woman leader were outlined by Sharon Mamangi. Her faith was evident as she quoted many words from the Bible, including 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me' (Philippians 4:13). She is breaking new ground in PNG thanks to her faith in our God.

Mr Peter Siwi reflected on his visits to Australian schools in Adelaide. 'No matter where we live, students are still the same. Their smiles are always there!' The Lutheran church had changed Ridwin Purba's island of residence and he was proud of how it had become a place of education.

After their stories were told, the elective session concluded with a wonderful sharing of song.

Overseas delegates were grateful for the ACLE learning opportunities made available to them. Serah Tapo's words, 'Thank you from the deepest part of my heart', were heartfelt and sincere. Eagerness to stay partnered with Lutheran educators in Australia was evident. These countries continue to seek to improve education. They see learning together and building relationships with Australian Lutheran schools as an important part of their journey. Although we work in very different environments we are truly connected by our faith and a common desire to educate children in a Christian environment. I am hopeful that Australian Lutheran schools will continue to seek connection overseas to make dreams come true.

Minds and hearts were touched and relationships transformed in all sorts of ways at ACLE, but perhaps none so much as my heart was touched by these wonderful people. In the beginning we welcomed strangers; we said goodbye to newfound friends.



PNG guests at ACLE. Photo courtesy of Rosie Scheffe



USA guests at ACLE. Photo courtesy of Rosie Scheffe

Both being & doing through transformation



Janet Abercrombie is the Head of Junior School, Good News Lutheran College, Werribee, Vic

During the ACLE conference, both Bishop Younan and Bishop Henderson encouraged Lutheran educators to think beyond their classrooms and consider ways in which we can serve our communities and the world at large. The natural Lutheran follow-up question is *What does this mean?*

Initially, 'thinking beyond our classrooms' conjures up images of service learning – all the things we can *do* in thanksgiving for what God has done for us. But service is about *being* as well as *doing*. Bishop Younan said that we should 'come as we are – with faith, weaknesses, strengths and a knowledge of our cultural and religious identity' (student panel, 30 September). In the world of lesson plans, behaviour management, assessment deadlines and parent conferences our *being* can get lost in daily tasks. We have just enough energy to fulfil our contractual obligations let alone be fully present for those whom we serve.

The good news is that God transforms us. Bishop Henderson's sermon explained that

'worship through transformation invites you to be fully present to God and to one another. Everything you do is your act of worship'. When God transforms us our focus widens to include both tasks and relationships.

A transformed being allows God's Spirit to lead us to opportunities for service beyond our classroom walls. We see opportunities to work in the church or local communities. We find service learning opportunities that infuse heart into the written curriculum. *We* are transformed and *our teaching* is transformed.

Encouraging students to be and do

The struggle for identity is part of the late childhood and adolescent experience. Students work to make sense of peer rejection, learning difficulties and family circumstances beyond their control. Bishop Younan, having lived through personal struggle as a refugee, stated that 'values of love and justice are not empty platitudes for those who have experienced difficulty'. Our students are poised to soak in God's love as they work through the difficulties in their own lives.

By giving students a safe place to grow, and providing a rich religious and cultural identity, we prepare them to exit our school buildings with the self-knowledge and values to share the gospel respectfully and authentically.

Then, as knowledge of the world unfolds, students see others struggling with pain and injustice. The 'others' may be classmates or the 'others' might be persons with ideas with which they strongly disagree. Students learn to engage in authentic dialogue with peers and adults, coming with their pains, joys and sufferings and listening to find the common values through which conversations about the one true God can begin.

Being and doing together in Christ

Lutheran schools effect long-term change in the world. We have many opportunities for service in our local, national and global context.

Our Lutheran schools exist to serve Christ and the world. We have the opportunity to preach the gospel and build a society in which people can live peaceful and productive lives.

School is temporary. Education is for life. Jesus is eternal life.

Left: Stephen Rudolph with Bishop Younan
Top right: Neville Otto and Glenice Hartwich of LCA Mission International leading an elective
Bottom Right: Bishop Henderson





Bishop Younan with Bronwyn Dolling and students from St Peters Lutheran College, Indooroopilly Qld

Blessed are the peacemakers

On the opening morning of the ACLE conference, the leader of the Lutheran World Federation and bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, Rev Dr Munib Younan, evoked a powerful image of reconciliation, an image born from one of the most explosive religious media storms of recent times.

The year was 2005; a Danish newspaper had inflamed the world by publishing cartoons derogatory of Islam. Across the Middle East violence and bloodshed had flared, spilling towards the West.

In Lutheran school classrooms in the Holy Land, where the student population is almost evenly split between Christians and Muslims, students from kindergarten to year 12 were asked to wrestle with the question: 'Does freedom of speech give us the right to desecrate religious symbols and traditions of the other?'

And so something which had caused hatred became, in the classroom, a means of discovering each other's point of view, and learning how to overcome difference through peacemaking.

'In this dialogue, they recognised that mutual regard and respect for the other is the foundation of peaceful co-existence, of a life filled with hope', Bishop Younan said.

Bishop Younan is himself a Palestinian refugee—he holds a UN refugee card from 1948—and credits his education with helping him to overcome victimhood to live a full life of witness to Jesus.

'In my own life, were it not for the many teachers and mentors who taught and nurtured me throughout my life, I would have simply accepted the status of refugee and resigned myself to being a victim.

'It was through education that I learnt victimhood is not God's intention for me', he told the conference.

And he believes education is the way to overcome terrorism.

He quoted Malala Yousafzai, the courageous young woman from Pakistan, who was critically injured by extremists for promoting education for women. She told the UN that the extremists are frightened of education.

'We were created to be enlightened', Bishop Younan told the conference, 'and our enlightenment is a gift from God that draws us closer to our creator. Education is about more than sums or proper grammar. Education is the light casting out the darkness; it is love casting out fear; it is strength casting out weakness.'

He challenged Australian Lutheran schools and churches to think about how they can partner with their counterparts in the Holy Land, for our mutual education about others.

[We thank Serena Williams and The Lutheran for this article]

A governance perspective



Bishop John Henderson



Bronwyn Dolling, Geoffrey Butler and Meg Noack



Dr Monique Beedles,
Chair, St Peters Lutheran
College Council

College councils for Lutheran schools around Australia are made up of volunteers who give their time in service of the church. They have an important role in making decisions that impact on the future of schools. Many factors guide this decision making, but at the core of these is our faith as Lutherans. College council members have a role to ensure that the work of the school is consistent with the values of the church.

In this context, it was interesting to hear LCA Bishop John Henderson speak about the origins of Lutheran education and spark some discussion on why the church is in the business of schools. While Luther had the aim of educating a largely illiterate population so that they could read the Bible for themselves, there are undoubtedly added layers of complexity when we consider education in the 21st century. As those who make decisions about education, we should not let that complexity cloud our clarity of purpose. The question of the role of ministry in schools goes directly to our strategic purpose and is one that should concern school councils, principals and everyone involved in Lutheran education.

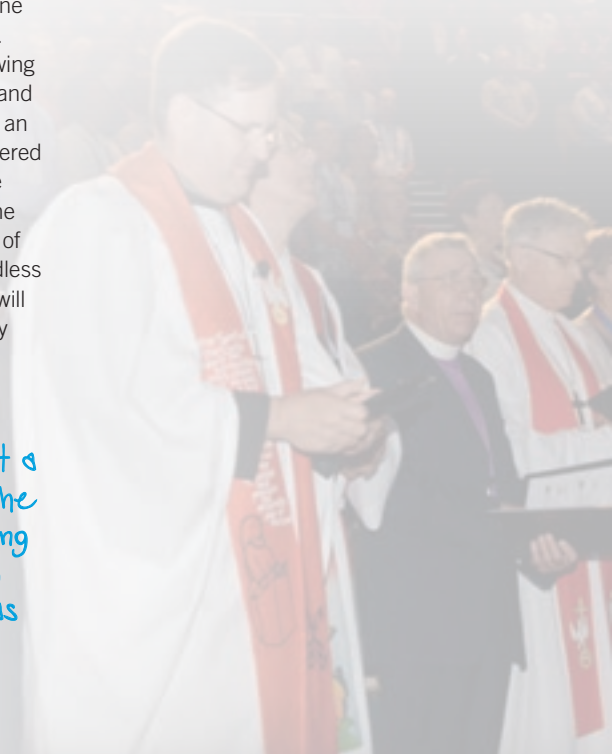
Bishop John touched on the role of schools in maintaining and progressing a civil society and that this is a justifiable motive for the church to be involved in schools. Without an educated population with the intellectual skills to question lawmakers and society as a whole, we run the risk of losing the freedoms that allow us to worship and practise our faith. This is a privilege that many people around the world do not enjoy.

The idea of civil society and the nature of freedom itself were picked up by Scott Stevens, religion reporter for the ABC, in one of the afternoon mini-conference sessions. Scott argued that there is a danger of allowing too much freedom of choice in education and in society at large. This leads to a risk that an individual's right to choose will drive unfettered consumerism and not necessarily advance a civil society. Instead, Scott saw part of the role of education as teaching discernment of choice, so that in a world of seemingly endless choices the outcome of quality education will be the ability to make choices that are truly good and for the benefit of society.

There was a positive buzz to the ACLE event, with almost a thousand delegates enjoying the company of colleagues, catching up with old friends and sharing learning and new ideas. It was fantastic to be a part of this.

The ACLE dinner epitomised the mood of the conference as a whole. It is the only conference dinner I've ever been to where the dance floor was full even before the main course was served!

As we take what we have learned back to our schools, we say a big thank you to the many people who worked hard to bring ACLE 2013 together and wish the next organising committee well as they plan ahead for ACLE 5.



Sing a song for ACLE!



David Simpfendorfer is the Head of Music, Pacific Lutheran College, Meridan Plains Qld

'I want to be transformed; I want to be enlightened for the ride...' These are words that a group of year 12 music students at Pacific Lutheran College (PLC) had penned as the opening words to a song called *Sunrise* which was composed to be sung within the PLC community in their regular chapel services. Their teacher, David Simpfendorfer, Head of Music, is passionate about their voice and the potential to harness the emerging understandings about belief and faith that students can offer, especially in the context of their journey which the song is ultimately about. As a composer, his deepest musical love lies in music for worship that is shaped and written by the people who are involved in the process of being transformed and sharing their understanding of God's love through their gifts. This process formed a part of the composing component that comprises one third of the students' learning in year 12 music in Queensland.

Each year students work in class on this project resulting in fresh music that links our faith, our church and our culture. David says, 'The impetus is often found after scanning the repertoire and finding what is either missing or dated. For instance, there is currently a lack of 'journeying' songs which are stylistically relevant, so there is opportunity to change this'.

David has been composing for 30 years and, like Bach, is a passionate and active Lutheran

who was trained in the contemporary music of his day. 'This is where the comparison with Bach ceases', he says, 'as the time to master technique isn't available in my vocational role'. He recently penned the theme song *Wise Up* for the ACLE4 conference in Brisbane. This song is based on Psalm 1 and ties in the wisdom of God and the transforming qualities given through the sacraments. His band, Empty Cross (MTX), forms the basis of the worship band with students and teachers from Pacific, Grace and Prince of Peace Lutheran Colleges.

'MTX is in its fifth incarnation and is always a community/mentoring band, made up of a mix of students, teachers and parents and, in its present form, a college council member. The church is in constant need of quality music from qualified musicians who are linked to our schools and colleges and who can draw out of the pews students who need the mentoring and assistance to play for worship. These kids are the musicians who will replace us. The last 20 years have seen a diminishing in the value of church music through a dominant marketing strategy from other denominational influences. Although many churches do 'Lutheran music' well, there is a danger of losing the core Lutheran theology which is too precious to be undermined. We

must value music in our congregations and schools, linking them by building dialogue and relationships through our valuable chaplains and pastors. The music teacher is the qualified musical practitioner and needs to be a leader in this field'.

Another desire that David has is for a community of Lutheran composers from schools and churches to share their music freely across the country. He believes musicians to be conduits for the music, which is a gift from God, and so it's one we can pass on freely to our congregations and colleges. 'Composing is a by-product of my vocation and away from work it's a reality that I actively develop and enjoy'.

(Lead sheets for the music *Wise Up* and *Sunrise* are available for use from dsimpfendorfer@pacluth.qld.edu.au)



Wise Up
D. Simpfendorfer 2012

Introduction

Voice

Verse 1 & 2

1) When you were touched by the wat or God spoke to you a
2) Be like a tree grow ing by the stream, pro ing gon er out
beut what He had done He took you by the hart and the ind you
fell in sea son. Don't be the straw blown by winds of
through the death and the ris ing of His son. Now this re deem ing
change a long the road to re i n. F
in the bread and
ac ri fice lets you a live your life in thanks for all He's done.
wise the Lord h a comes to lift the bro ken heart ed.
You are al live and called to live in ser vice with God's
and through the tree at and son groans the ang in sta sing of what the
on by Son. Wi se up to the Lord's trans form ing love, that's the start.
Lord has star ted Wi se up C/e F B7d E7 Cm7 F#m4 F
Ki se up let His word trans form your mind bo dy and han r
1. B7A7 E7g G6 Gm Bridge F/a B7 G7b
I We have seen His star, we have
seen the stone rolled aWay We've His feet and hands, His words of



LSA office staff at the conference dinner

Food, fellowship, F-Troop & photos



Jane Alexander is the Deputy Principal, St John's Lutheran School, Jindera, NSW

On a balmy Brisbane evening, nearly one thousand ACLE-ites, partners, conference presenters, special guests and sponsors converged on the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre for the ACLE Gala Dinner.

Following welcome drinks and the chance to mingle with colleagues and friends, admire the fashions and share conference highlights and experiences thus far, the attendees were ushered into the magnificent Grand Ballroom for dinner.

After a warm welcome from the evening's MC, Anthony Mueller, attendees joined Pastor Paul Smith in saying grace. Together, we affirmed with thanks all that God gives us, before enjoying a sumptuous three course dinner including many tastes of Queensland. The locally sourced seafood, beef and other fine produce was showcased in an array of dishes that were appreciated by all.

The speaker for the dinner was author and raconteur John Harms. A fan of F-Troop and the Geelong Football Club, John shared many random anecdotes about 1960s Lutheranism and fond memories of his connection with Lutheran schooling. He brought himself to

tears whilst expressing his thoughts about the warmth, diversity and place in society we share as members of Lutheran school communities.

Talented Gold Coast band, *The Zookeepers*, provided live music for the evening. They even managed to get attendees on the dance floor between the entree and main course – a first in the history of ACLE! The band's efforts kept the party animals, young and not so young, entertained and dancing until the night's end. A photo booth, staffed by conference sponsors, Academy Photography, was also provided for the evening. This proved highly entertaining, with the vast majority of delegates taking the opportunity to don some props, 'glam' it up and have some fun for photos, as you can see.

The Gala Dinner would possibly be classed by many ACLE-ites as a conference highlight. It was an excellent inclusion to the conference program, as evidenced by the level of enthusiasm and enjoyment throughout the evening, and in many 'Tweets' and Wednesday morning conversations.

As such, on behalf of dinner attendees, I would like to express special thanks to the joint dinner sponsors, LEA, LEQ, LESER and LSA, together with the ACLE organising committee, for providing such a wonderful opportunity for old friends and new to gather together, kick up their heels, rejoice and celebrate being part of, or connected to Lutheran Education Australia.



Pastor Paul Smith



John Harms

From the business end at ACLE



Lester Kerber is the Business Manager, Luther College, Vic

This horse walks into a bar and the barman says, 'Why the long face?' I sometimes think that Lutheran school employees seem to have this impression of Business Managers. They have a degree of trepidation when they walk into the Business Manager's office or encounter him/her in the yard. I think it must have something to do with the fact that Business Managers commonly look after the school's purse strings and the school's business activities. It is of course a fallacy that Business Managers are grumpy old men and women who have long faces. A case in point: I'm one of the smiliiest, lovable people around, ever willing to have a laugh and look on the positive side of life.

So what has this to do with ACLE 4? For one thing, I see myself as an integral part of my school and I endeavour to take an interest in all facets of school life. Throughout my many years within Lutheran schools, I like to think that I have embraced the culture: *the vibe of Lutheran schooling*. And attending ACLE is a great way of being exposed to this vibe.

ACLE 4 was a golden opportunity to develop and network. Spiritual renewal was a significant aspect of the conference. The plenary and worship sessions provided an opportunity to hear from Lutheran world leaders like LCA Bishop John Henderson and Bishop Munib Younan, the President of Lutheran World Federation. These guys were inspirational and very passionate about



Felicity Torpstrom, Robyn Teakle, Karen Schoff and Michelle Keller

being Lutheran and part of God's family. Bishop Younan emphasised his belief that education gives hope. This is so true from my experience, when I have witnessed people who lack understanding because there is the absence of education acumen to cope and get along in this sometimes complex world.

And it was soooooo great to catch up with colleagues from the past – Andrew, Adrian, Anthony, Anton ... the list goes on and on. Some looked a little wider and greyer since last we met while others had managed to withstand the test of time. It was also sensational to meet lots of quality new faces.

ACLE 4 and Derek Bartels set the benchmark for the use of technology at a conference. If I needed to find out anything about anything, all I had to do was check out 'the App'. Alan November was burning the midnight oil on the other side of the world while instructing me on the intricacies of using Google – how cool was that!

There was something at ACLE 4 for everyone: insightful revelations, clues in using technology, hints on developing wellbeing and resilience. I particularly liked the bubble blowing session. It reinforced my belief in the importance of being a glass half full person rather than one with a half empty perspective.

It's a pity I have to wait another four years until the next ACLE. I hope LSA SA/NT/WA can reach the benchmark height set by the LEQ organising team. The key now is to set about incorporating the insightful concepts and revelations that I think will add value to my life into habits that will continue to develop and grow.

Wise Up? I'm sure I'm now much wiser after experiencing the joy and fulfilment that was ACLE 4.



St John's Lutheran School Kingaroy staff



Dr Meg Noack



Lester Kerber (right) with Graeme Huf, LESER Business Manager

From the chair of the ACLE organising committee



Anthony Mueller is the Principal, Faith Lutheran College, Redlands, QLD

Nearly 1000 delegates attended ACLE 4, the 4th Australian Conference on Lutheran Education, in Brisbane September 30-October 2 2013. The event was a great success, affirming Lutheran educators, providing wonderful learning opportunities and celebrating our schools and the Christian faith. It was so successful perhaps because it encompassed all that is invaluable about Lutheran schooling.

Worship was at the beginning and end and in parts in between, ensuring we acknowledged who we are and whose we are.

Students of our schools played a prominent role throughout the program. Being part of official proceedings, the Q and A sessions, the music ministry, the learning demonstrations and the pre-session presentations maintained our **focus on our students**.

Naturally, professional **learning** was a major objective of the conference and the opportunities for this were significant.

The **community** that encompasses our Lutheran education network was hugely evident, and something that was only enhanced by this event, as people caught up with colleagues, renewed relationships with past work friends and networked to make new education contacts. A significant shift is the use now of information technology through media such as twitter to make contacts and access significant resources online. It also enables concurrent background professional conversations to be happening constantly.

ACLE was a wonderful **celebration** of Lutheran education through the program of the conference, whether it was through worship, the wonderful sharing of learning and ideas from school to school or the social times of networking and fun.

ACLE had a wonderful mix of local, national and international delegates and sections of the program. We certainly took a **global perspective** at many junctures as we worked with Lutheran education folk from the Holy Land, America, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

From a planning perspective it was wonderful to see these core elements of what makes Lutheran schooling so special rise to the surface and become front and centre in ACLE.



ACLE was a wonderful experience and a great time for our Lutheran schools as the people of Lutheran education met in worship, learning and celebration, joined in community building, had students as a focus, with Australian and international colleagues, all built on our foundational Christian values and faith.

We join in thanking our Lutheran education and church communities for their participation and wonderful support of this truly memorable event.



Ann Mitchell, Chair BLEA, and Stephen Rudolph, LEA Executive Director, thank Sue Kloeden and Anthony Mueller for their outstanding leadership in organising the conference





Rev Noel Noack, Bishop LCAQD, and Rev John Henderson, Bishop LCA at the closing worship service

Reflections on ACLE 4



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The key challenges facing Lutheran education in Australia

The fourth Australian Conference on Lutheran Education, held in Brisbane from 30 September to 2 October, has come and gone. For the approximately 1,000 able to be present it was a well organised event in a fantastic venue that provided a chance to catch up with other Lutheran educators around the country, and even the world, with a number of guests from PNG and Indonesia, and international speakers from the US, Scotland and Palestine. But now that it's over, and teachers, principals, school administrators, school pastors and others have all returned home, what are they going to say when asked, 'So what was it all about? What are the big messages to bring back from ACLE 4?'

The theme of the ACLE 4 was *Wise Up! Transforming Mind, Body and Heart in*

Lutheran Education which gave broad scope to keynote and workshop presenters. With regard to keynote speakers the biggest chatter around the conference was about the presentations of the two bishops. Bishop Munib Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land is the current general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation and Bishop John Henderson is the newly installed Bishop of the Lutheran Church of Australia. Both spoke twice and set the tone for the conference with their focus on the theme of education as transformation.

Bishop Henderson talked about interior and spiritual transformation and told participants that 'transformation is always experienced from within. It is the gospel, not the law. We are transformed from the inside out'. Transformation, he explained, 'invites us to be fully present to God and each other'.

Bishop Younan stressed education as a key to transformation not only in the personal but also the political sphere. He said, 'Education is the primary transformative power that can change the world', and drew upon his own experience as a refugee, telling participants that his access to education was the key

to his taking up the pathway of Christian ministry, rather than following a life of crime and resentment over his own displacement. Through his own experience and his experience with Lutheran schools in Palestine he has discovered that 'the power of education frightens the extremists' precisely because it is transformative. Education is 'the light that casts out darkness, it is love casting out fear, it is strength casting out weakness'.

The fact that the most positive responses and the most comments on twitter concerned the presentation of the two bishops says something very important about the interest and concern of Lutheran educators to remain connected to their theological foundations. Many expected polite applause and toleration of the two bishops, making the obligatory appearances at such an event. What we got was two church leaders who came prepared to address contemporary Lutheran educators and to do so along the lines of the conference theme. If some had been wondering why so much time on the program had been given over to the respective leaders of Australian and world Lutheranism, no one was asking that question when Bishops Younan and Henderson had finished speaking.

The interest in and commitment to staying connected to our theological and spiritual foundations was also to be seen in the workshop presentations with eight of these focused specifically on worship or spirituality, including a recurring Taizé experience in the reflection room, and at least two others focused specifically on the role of theology in Lutheran schools, including a well-attended joint presentation by ALC education lecturers Merryn Ruwoldt and Ruth Zimmermann. If Australian Lutheran educators are looking to quietly distance themselves from the theological and spiritual foundations of Lutheran schools, as is sometimes feared given the experience of other church-related school systems, there was certainly no evidence of this at ACLE 4. Indeed, quite the opposite.

Other themes that stood out among the 90 workshops presented were wellbeing and positive psychology with four workshops dedicated to this topic, in addition to the keynote address by Dr Thomas Nielsen of the University of Canberra, and the concurrent keynote address by Kari Sutton of the Queensland based Happiness Institute. With the rise in interest in a positive and pre-emptive approach to wellbeing among both students and staff in the last several years it was no surprise to see Lutheran educators, with our strong tradition of pastoral care of students (as seen for instance in the results of the 2013 Better Schools Project) taking a genuine interest in the possibilities presented by positive psychology for schools. Similarly, the restorative practice approach to resolving behavioural issues drew significant interest with three workshops on the topic.

Apart from the theme of transformation, picked up so ably by bishops Younan and Henderson, and the significant interest in worship, spirituality and wellbeing, if there was another major theme that ran through the conference and even, at times, seemed to upstage the official theme, it was technology.

For many attendees, ACLE 4 was the first conference experience in which there was no printed workshop program and no booklet of speaker resumes and maps of the conference centre. Everything was available on the ACLE web-site and participants were asked to bring iPads or iPhones to access the information and even to interact with the speakers in some of the sessions. For those without the technology, mini iPads were available at the convention centre to borrow. One of the keynote presenters, Alan November, speaking about the use of technology in the classroom, presented via video link and took a survey of attendees via email and phone responses during his talk. The use of ICT through the conference, and in its lead-up, could not go unnoticed. The few remaining techno-phobes among us could be forgiven for thinking our LEQ hosts had gone a bit out on a limb with the exhibition of all that could be done using the latest technology. Was this really what Lutheran educators wanted or needed?

The answer was to be seen in the number of workshops given over to some aspect of the use of technology in contemporary education. With 17 workshops out of a total of 90 it was by far the most popular topic on the minds of both presenters and attendees. Educators have been making use of technology for many years, but perhaps never before have the

availability of technology and its applications for the classroom been increasing so rapidly. Many teachers present went to school at a time when computers were massive machines used only by universities, the military or major industry. Some of the younger teachers grew up with PCs in the home and their school would have had a computer room. But now many schools, even at the primary level, find every student with his or her own lap-top or, increasingly, iPad. Assignments can be written and submitted and the teacher can interact with the student and mark their work, all electronically. Students can ask questions and search for information on the net, gaining information or contributing to a discussion in real time. But of course, they are also able to message friends, play games, and access sites that may not be so desirable, all while sitting at their desks, ostensibly engaging in assigned tasks. It was clear that Lutheran educators, like other educators, are struggling to come to terms with both the great possibilities and the challenges presented by the ongoing ICT revolution in education. It is the first time in the history of education that in many cases it is assumed that the students know more about a topic or tool than their teachers. Indeed, many a struggling participant in some sessions could be heard to mutter, 'I'll have to ask my daughter how to do this when I get home.' Clearly ICT advances have become an integral part of the educational transformation process in our classrooms, as well as a critical transformational component of education itself.

ACLE 4, like previous ACLEs, provided a unique window into the life and pulse of Lutheran education in Australia. It highlighted





big challenges and changes, but also a healthy, vibrant system very much aware both of the issues it faces and its core theological, spiritual and educational values.

Bishop Henderson, in his opening talk, pointedly asked, 'ACLE 4, where to from here?' When we next check the pulse of Australian Lutheran schools at ACLE 5 in four years' time it will be important to see what actions have been taken to manage the many transformations occurring within modern education while seeking at the same time to remain firmly grounded in our core theological and spiritual values.

ACLE 4 put a spotlight on a number of key critical issues that Lutheran education will need to intentionally address. At the risk of leaving out other very significant themes to come out of the conference, I would suggest four meta-challenges emerged out of the keynote and workshop presentations as well as the discussions and evaluations coming out of ACLE 4. Lutheran Education Australia is challenged to:

1. Continue to build upon the theological and spiritual foundations of Lutheran education. Specifically, there is a challenge to clarify and strengthen the relationship between Lutheran schools and Lutheran congregations. Also, there is a need to strengthen the theological and spiritual identity of our schools through such areas as Christian Studies and school worship.
2. Be more intentional in our efforts to promote the wellbeing of students and staff. Specifically, how do Lutheran schools take advantage of the emerging contributions of positive psychology and restorative practice in schools in a manner that reflects our existing core values?
3. Think through the implications of ICT for teaching and learning in light of our core values. There is no doubt the application of ICT in our classrooms will continue to increase rapidly. The challenge before our schools is whether we simply let these advances run their course in an unreflected incorporation of new technology, or whether we are able to think through the implications of the changes to the educational process brought about by these advances in ICT. Specifically, do we understand how and why ICT is changing the way we teach and learn? Do we understand the changes ICT is having on the values, social skills, relationships, perceptions of truth, etc. of the current generation of students?
4. Prepare and support our educators to be transformers of minds, bodies and hearts. Bishop Younan said ACLE 4 could be summarised by the concepts of formation, reformation and transformation. If we are to continue to form and transform students then we must also be able to continually re-form our structures, systems and educators. Specifically, will we adapt our teacher training to reflect the emerging challenges of contemporary education; and will we offer high quality and appropriate PD opportunities to help educators keep pace with these changes?



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2013 TEACHER HONOUR ROLL

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LEA salutes staff who have taught in Lutheran schools for thirty years or more

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