

Roderick West Oration

The Heart of Education

March 2022

Introductions

Mr Bowden, Mrs West, to all the West Family present and those who will view this address later, to the many distinguished guests who honour the memory and legacy of Roderick Ian West:

Acknowledgement of Country:

Nura diya mirrung ngurang Dharug/Wangal and Gadigal yura, barangay, yagu yuu burani.
Nala wawa Barker baya didjurigura Dharug, Darkinjung yuu Wonnarua yura dyalgala nura.
Nala yaban, yama, baya ngubadi Dharug, Darkinjung yuu Wonnarua yura Yolngu Yura

Translation (well, what I am trying to say!):

This land always was and always will be the belonging place of the Dharug /Wangal and Gadigal people. We at Barker say thank you to the Dharug, Darkinjung and Wonnarua people who nurture this Country. Let us sing, act, speak with love of the Dharug, Darkinjung and Wonnarua and Yolngu people.

Or in the words of the Yolngu people in NE Arnhem Land

Gululu Bukmak (Welcome to everyone)

Ngarra yaku Phillip Heath (My name is Phillip Heath)

Manymak njarra (I am well)

Manymak dhuwala (This here is good)

Wangal and Cadigal people of the Eora Nation

It is an honour to give the inaugural Roderick West Oration, an educator whose beach towel and flip flops I was unworthy to carry.

This address will attempt to examine three themes:

1. The character and legacy of Roderick West
2. The historical context in which the Education of the Heart unfolded
3. The contemporary experience in which the heart of education is burdened by pain and a loss of meaning, where even leadership itself in the Roderick West manner is imperilled.

Finally, I want to propose that this is a time for a new heart of education that must be expressed in radical hope, just as the incurably optimistic Roderick West would have sought, even when the paradigms of leadership are diminishing.

1. The character and legacy of Roderick West – a personal view.

As Malcolm Brown observed in his Obituary to Roderick Ian West, published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 2 February 2016 under the title “Headmaster who inspired thousands of pupils and teachers”, :

West was appointed headmaster of Trinity Grammar School at the age of 39 and started the following year in 1975. He blossomed to become one of the country's great headmasters. Academic standards soared. From 1978, Trinity was rarely out of the top 10 schools in the state in HSC exams.

Listing some of the distinguished people who flourished under Rod West’s inspiring hand, the obituary refers to perhaps his most famous pupil, Prince Charles at Timbertop. Here amongst the playing fields and classrooms of Trinity, he developed a kind of nursery for leadership and influence, which the Obituary acknowledged.

Of the teachers who worked under West, 31 went on to become headmasters or school principals, including Dr Tim Wright, headmaster of the Shore School, Phillip Heath, headmaster of Barker College, and Graham Anderson, headmaster of Arden Anglican School.

Evangelical in terms of doctrine but favouring a breadth of vision, West was for years a member of the Sydney Anglican Synod. At least 50 boys whom he instructed went on to become ministers of religion, including 44 Anglicans.

Fittingly, the role of Janet West, nee Conti, was recognised. An educator, playwright, poet and historian in her own right, Janet was absolutely steadfast in her support for Rod West and whilst temperamentally vastly different, they were utterly complementary in intellect and passion.

I first met Rod West in late 1980. The School had embarked on the daring task of increasing the size of Year 7 from four streams to six streams and they needed to augment the number of teachers. I had by that time submitted my Honours Thesis on Reformation History, supervised by the flamboyant and perceptive mind of Dr Stuart Piggin. Stuart Piggin had found the History Department at the University of Wollongong as repressively and aggressively secular as his students but he had an immense impact on his students. Somewhat like Thomas Chalmers of St Andrew's University, Scotland, Stuart demonstrated that the study of Christian experience could be a deeply intellectual as well as spiritual passion but it must adhere to the highest standards of historical scholarship attainable, especially in such an avowedly secular department as the University of Wollongong, which resented the popularity of Stuart Piggin's courses in Church History. The work of Stuart Piggin's students was viewed with some suspicion by other academics and several of us fell into this maelstrom during those years. The faculty preferred the study of labour history and the experience of socialism over Christian thought. Despite this, I achieved a First Class degree by stumbling on an extensive debate on the theology of redemption as articulated by 17th century English Puritans John Owen and Richard Baxter. To spend a year of my life embedded in the theology of redemption as contrastingly understood by two giants of Puritan thinking was the most incalculable privilege for me, a former captain of a modest Catholic school in Bellambi, someone who had experienced his own reformation of sorts. I was tempted greatly by the notion of pursuing further research and writing in Church History at the doctoral level. Penury and my approaching marriage admitted other thoughts

Stuart Piggin in a weak moment must have mentioned my name to his Uncle, Rod West, the HM of Trinity. I can think of no other reason why Mr West would be willing to meet someone like me who grew up in the fibro clad Housing Commission dwellings of Sandon Point in the northern suburbs of Wollongong. I well recall my first visit to Trinity on a

perishingly hot Tuesday afternoon in late November. I was enthralled beyond words to see the boys of the First XI Cricket Team clad in whites training on the Centre Wicket of the Trinity Main Oval. I had only ever seen school boy cricket on concrete pitches with mats.

Our interview for a History post at Trinity consisted chiefly of discussing the piety of the Moravians and their contribution to Christian Mission - nothing much about the 7 English and History sets that I was about to be allocated as a 22 year old to teach a few weeks later. Afternoon tea was brought by a kindly kitchen staff member to the Headmaster's study on a lovely tray with mint slice biscuits. I politely accepted a glass of water and a mint slice (feeling it was the right thing to do) but quickly regretted it when Rod West grabbed a biscuit, asked me a question and placed the entire mint slice in his mouth while he waited for my reply. The chocolate coating of a mint slice biscuit does not fair well with the Australian summer at the best of times, but it was a fiendishly hot day and when held between the thumb and forefinger of a nervous interviewee searching for a first teaching post at the kind of school I did not know existed outside of fictional novels, it was a catastrophe. The chocolate coating soon ran down my fingers to the cuffs of my brand new interview shirt and suit. Perhaps Rod West was so fanatical by our discussion of the Moravians to notice or was too polite to say anything but Trinity offered me the teaching post and the rest was history.

Rod West saw in me capacity that I certainly gave no thought to being possible. This was one of his many gifts. And I was far from the only recipient. He took boundless trouble to know his people (of whom I was the least) and to nourish the potential he saw in them. I was one of the beneficiaries of this astounding quality. He expected a herculean effort from himself and called upon others to follow in the same manner. Common Room chatter often voiced the view that it would have been wonderful to be a boy at Trinity under Rod West because it was excessively demanding to be one of his staff members. Rod expected the rigours he imposed on himself would be willingly replicated by his staff. I found this inspiring but was faintly distressed when I saw the resentment that it created in others in the Trinity Common Room. The rain dances comically performed by the Maths Department on summer Friday afternoons in the bay windows overlooking Number 1 Oval to bring about the cancellation of the Saturday games unsettled my idealistic sentiments and would have distressed the Headmaster if he saw them. Rod made no apology in his quest to be the complete school master. He expected it of all at Trinity and saw it as the authentic lifestyle choice of anyone serving at an aspiring school.

Even my faltering steps along the pathway he set would be met with enthusiasm that was irresistible. Unconcerned about barriers such as age or experience, Rod West would call you into the most formidable settings without a shadow of doubt in you. Day Housemaster, Boarding Master, exchange teaching in the UK, writer of the School's 75th anniversary History – all in my twenties – Rod never wavered in his confident support of his people like me.

Rod West did not *appoint* his staff, as we might now understand a contracted position under a Human Resources framework – he *called* them to participate in a sublime quest : to educate his Trinity boys. This education would be accomplished in a loving, sacrificial but ambitious manner, following his lead as the complete school master in the finest tradition, and a complete Christian where the character of Christ permeated his every thought. Like the apostles on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, we were called to leave everything and follow him to the wondrous world of service in education.

Late in the night, Rod would return to his study to complete the day's administration, clear his correspondence and work on his papers. He would occasionally call the Housemaster's phone three times and then hang up, which was a pre-arranged signal to visit him if I was still awake or not otherwise in the House.

Sometimes over a glass of sherry, he would recount to me stories of his time in Baker House at King's or his time in the UK or his early years at Trinity. He loved to recount the things that happened to him during his formation and at such times he was unguarded and self-deprecating. He set the direction he wanted to see in School House not by setting out the route but by expounding his views on boarding community life, practices in good leadership or the steps he would take to win over a recalcitrant student.

He extolled the virtue of appearing in the House at unexpected times, especially late in evening, and yarning to the senior boys who were studying. They were "as open as Botany Bay" at such moments and this is when a real impact can be made in their formation.

In his case, the impact was a lasting one and was never contrived. I received an unexpected note from Marty Woods, who had been a member of Baker House within The King's School during Rod West's time as Housemaster. We were members of St James Parish Croydon together for some years and we met again at Mr West's funeral.

“You may know we moved to Japan 3 years ago to help with the Games outreach. Now we have committed to another 3. I mentor 17 Japanese young men and a number of others around the world. I am just about finished a book on mentoring that I am dedicating to Jenny and to Rod. Rod taught me how to be a mentor

He let me mentor the year 7 boys. I have never forgotten this trust.

Rod was a father to me. A struggling adolescent saw in Rod what the Good Shepherd looked like. He was an attractor for the Kingdom. I knew I wanted in.

I smile each time I read the story of Elisha asking Elijah for double of his spirit. Well I feel if I had even half of Rod’s spirit I’d be outstanding...

Every year on Samuel’s anniversary, wherever we were in the world, Rod would send a note to recall and grieve with us. He drove 600 kms on hearing of Samuel’s death to see us. I will never forget how he walked into the hospital with such love and compassion.

I want to be like that.

Twice they paid for us to stay with them at Karpathos. It was there he entertained us with readings of his soon-to-be published book. ”

Marty Woods, Baker House student under Rod West, to Phillip Heath 13 February 2022

In that note, Marty included the poem written by Adrian Lane, another Baker House boy, during Rod West’s final days. It is evidence, if any more were needed, of the lifelong impact of heart-filled leadership.

Be Strong and Courageous

for Rod West: Joshua 1:9

When I tread the verge of Jordan

Bid my anxious fears subside;

Death of death, and hell's destruction,

Land me safe on Canaan's side:

Songs of praises, songs of praises,

I will ever give to thee,

I will ever give to thee.

Oh Rod!

How surreal to be planning your funeral

while you're as sharp as a tack, alert

remembering names and people

How can I thank you enough

for all the remembrances that come flooding back:

the long hours chatting at midnight in your study,

the Latin classes, House Plays, Bible Studies and early morning chapel services,

even when you lost your temper over some unknown mistake –

thereby evidencing your love –

the hard work building the Greek Theatre

among gum trees

with bush stone laboriously hewn and carted

Oh the folly of it!

yet the glory! – soon envied –

the undistracted vision and determination

'One swallow doesn't make a summer'
the commitment to the idea, the principle, the ancient art,
the care for Janet and the kids
and for all the wild boys
you fear you've hurt
in your enthusiastic clumsiness
The frank awareness of your youth.

Yet God
Yet God takes your very breaks
and makes a strength
and makes a life
Thank God He gave us a long afternoon
uninterrupted
to talk about old times, people, and the certain hope of heaven
You've said all these prayers over many years
and always believed them,
but now they flow with precious power
and bring a holy balm:
Be strong and courageous
as you fight this final fight:
The Promised Land awaits:
Safe in the Shepherd's arms.

"Now cracks a noble heart", says Horatio on the death of Hamlet. But Rod West was more Marc Antony, full of passion and purpose and design, than Hamlet, who was wracked by doubts and procrastination. There were regrets and missteps, but rarely doubts or procrastination.

Rod West's life and complexities was a study in cultural and symbolic leadership of the highest order and probably is without contemporary or present parallel, save but in aspiration. His actions were intentional and trusted his own instincts. He was compelled by the love of Christ and he had boundless dedication. He knew his impact and trusted it.

In the words of Graham Anderson, who edited Roderick West's memoir, "The Heart of Education", who wrote to me in the course of preparing for this oration:

Again, it's Rod's humility and finding a great purpose / passion, without being the academic or the sportsman- and he was not sporty! But his ability to convince, influence, to make you feel like you're the only one in the world with him.

No greater example when he was literally dying and phone calls were coming in from all over the world at his death bed. He made the caller unique. I just listened and watched.

And he comforted them rather than vice-versa.

Towards the end of his career as Headmaster of Trinity, Rod West's Memoir recounts the appalling experience of the murder of Year 10 Peter Savage in August 1995. By that time I was the Head of St Andrew's Cathedral School in the city and the senseless murder of a school boy for what appeared to be no other motive than the contents of his wallet sent waves of horror and fear throughout the community of Sydney independent schools.

Under the heading "The Intangibles", Rod reflected on the experience of his school in a time of grieving. Rod loved the visceral symbolism of funeral ceremonies and he hosted many in his time in that beautiful Chapel. They had a powerful impact on us all, especially the parting of our own students: Peter Savage, Andrew Haslam, Peer Skansabakken to name only a handful. In perhaps the most profound line in his memoir, Rod pondered:

"...the end of education is the transmission of loving personality. At the heart of education is the education of the heart." (p. 238)

The “transmission of loving personality”... Perhaps there is no higher purpose for education but the task is made all almost unreachable by the contemporary obsession with league tables and achievement ranks.

Rod West controversially was appointed as Headmaster from the post of Housemaster of Baker House within The King’s School, as we have seen. This was viewed by others as an all too rapid rise by an ambitious ideologue who had been elevated before his due time as a Deputy Headmaster. This suspicion quickly developed into resentment.

His early years at Trinity followed the venerated and adored James Wilson Hogg, himself one of the great Headmasters of his generation in Australia. I count it as an incalculable gift that I was able to interview and research James Wilson Hogg’s Headship while I was preparing for the book “Trinity: The Daring of Your Name”.

Mr Hogg recounted to me the advice he offered to Rod West before the start of 1975: “Change something soon after you arrive. You and I are different, and they must know that.” Rod never shared this with me when I interviewed him for the Trinity History yet even the kindest observers of Hogg’s final years in the early mid 1970s suggested that some aspects of Trinity life had begun to deteriorate. The academic and sporting program needed prompt attention from the new Headmaster. However, advising West to “change something soon after you arrive” was akin to encouraging Gina Rhineheart to keep searching for new mines.

By his own admission, Rod West’s early days as Headmaster were plagued by naivete, conflict and frustration that nearly overwhelmed him. After the public humiliation of the disastrous Speech Night of 1976, Rod felt it was necessary to resign his Headship in defeat. It was one the lowest points of his career and probably his life. The extraordinary legacy that tonight we are honouring may never have eventuated were it not for the wise counsel of Archbishop Sir Marcus Loane. When Rod told the Archbishop that after such a public display of disloyalty and division at the School Speech Night, a Headmaster needed to resign, Loane made the famous declaration: “Nonsense, this is a time to build”.

Julia Anstey (West) shared a treasure she found in her father's papers: a letter from Rod West's Headmaster at The King's School, dated Christmas Eve 1974. When tracing the influences on West's formation as a Headmaster, the letter from Canon Stanley Kurrle to Rod West before the latter's commencement at Trinity is a fascinating source.

The Rev Stanley Kurrle to Rod West,

TKS

24.12.74

In an airletter from Greece dated 13-9-74 you requested 'some words of wisdom on headmastering...' I have jotted down a few thoughts in a notebook since then. Here is a summary of them, in no particular order. I would like to have given examples but dare not, remembering the demands of Christian charity and the possibility of libel action!

Kurrle comments on the relentless pressures of Headmastering:

Like housemastering, headmastering is a 'labour-intensive' activity. You will spend 12-14 hours a day in term time (40 weeks a year, no relief at exam time or during Corps camp) in personal relationships. In contrast to medical practitioners who can concentrate on a part of the body, or a solicitor who spends time in an interview forming(?) over deeds, contracts, etc, a HM's relationships are eyeball-to-eyeball – HM and parent, HM and boy, HM and member of staff, HM and secretary, HM and bursar, HM and visitors etc. There is no let-up, no opportunity to drop your eyes, to relax. It really is intensive and so, by the end of a day, exhausting. ...

On the complexity of relationships, where there is immaturity on staff or amongst the parents:

You will find that you will be constantly dealing with immaturity. You expect it amongst the boys most of whom are immature young adults. Be prepared for it amongst staff and strangely, amongst parents, particularly fathers. The marks of immaturity amongst adults are:-

Self-righteousness, self pity, illusions of grandeur and self perfection, much talk about dedication , a low level of loyalty;

Inflexibility, inability to compromise or negotiate, or take advice;

Personal pride and so a lack of ability to learn from events (or take advice);

Poor control of some emotions;

Poor judgment and hasty action;

Practice of favouritism (and its opposite) a tendency to treat people as things (hence the inflexibility); my son, my interest, my cause, my subject cannot be wrong, never tell a lie, etc etc;

Self centredness;

And, in some, a love for (and dependance upon?) gadgets and hardware.

What can you do about immaturity in adults, particularly staff? Mostly they are able, enthusiastic, and hard working when their own particular interests are involved, and some are able easily to relate to and communicate with the young. So, you will have to learn to live with them and be patient with them. Praise them when you are able and, when an opportune moment arises, rebuke them gently (for they are always prickly). Above all, hope that they will grow up as they grow older.

About punishment and justice in schools:

Here is a thought or two about punishment. A headmaster has, in fact, great power. Council and parents willingly give it to him and wish him to use it. Do so but use it sparingly and effectively. It will appear that you will use your HM power most in a context of punishment when you are **1** legislator, **2** judge and jury, and **3** executioner wrapped in one. Nowadays, where **1** and **2** are concerned you will probably seek advice. However, you will have to make it clear that it is advice and that will make the final decision. (You will be responsible for the decision whoever, in fact, makes it.)

I punish for three reasons:-

- a) As a legitimate act of retribution
- b) As a deterrent
- c) With the hope of reformation.

When you punish really punish. Be righteously indignant but never, repeat never, lose your temper. Never, repeat, never humiliate. It causes hurt, it reeks of injustice, psychological sadism, and injustice. People loathe sarcasm and pettiness and will never forgive you for it. Yes, generally, they approve of hardness providing it is fair, predictable, and consistent.

On relationships with School Council:

(P 4 and 5 - Section on Council relations, communicating, being loyal and ensuring they are informed early.)

And on self-awareness and the need for family support:

Deliberately and continually assess, and ask Janet to help, your spiritual, physical and mental health. Whilst on the one hand you must avoid self pity (sic) and over-concern about yourself you must not assume that you will be able to drive yourself for 70 hours a week without wear and tear. If you work late and long without care the School may benefit for a time; Janet and the children will not. In other words consciously divide your time between the School, professional bodies, outside interests, and Janet and the children.

This self-pity business is important. There will be times when you will think that no one is trustworthy except Janet. It will not be true, of course, but at the time will appear to be. Elijah's wish in 1 King's 19 4c may well be your experience on occasions; his experience in the second half of the chapter will also be your experience, because of your faith in the same God.

Canon Kurrle was parsimonious with praise, but he described Rod West as the most effective housemaster at The King's School.

There is much more to be written – of your function as headmaster to define teach and maintain standards of all types to boys and staff, of the need to enthuse staff, of the constant need to keep a balance between the good of an individual and the good

of the School, of the need to strike a balance between strength and the ability and/or humility to compromise, of the need to learn public relations, and so on. If I go into these matters in depth this letter will never be finished.

Be assured that I will watch with the greatest of interest your growth into headmastering. You quickly developed into the most effective housemaster in this School. There is every reason to believe that you will develop into a most effective headmaster.

Yours sincerely,

Stanley Kurrle “

Canon Kurrle was on the Council at St Andrew’s Cathedral School when I commenced my first Headship in 1995. Together with Miss Joyce Gibbins, retired Principal of Kambala School in Edgecliff, these two experienced educators offered boundless sagacity to me in my own troubled commencement in this work. I recall Canon Kurrle expressing to the School Council of St Andrew’s in my presence: “the new Headmaster had the support of Year 12 and this was essential for future success. He is doing superbly.” With the copious financial, reputational and enrolment difficulties we were facing in the mid-90s I did not feel any such sense of optimism particularly about my own capacity, what he said gave me so much encouragement. Perhaps it was Canon Kurrle’s understated wisdom and passion that lends it power. Although written nearly five decades ago, his letter to Rod West remains applicable today.

In summary, Rod West possessed the vision, the capacity, the oratory, the careless bravery, the abiding humility, and the powerful, even romantic sense of Christian mission in education to lead not only a school to excellence but also to inspire a generation of Christian leaders of whom the speaker tonight is but the least.

2. The historical context in which the Education of the Heart unfolded

A disturbing question remains – can these qualities be replicated and adapted in a new era? How much of the confluence of gifts identified in Rod West found their fertile soil in the historical context and in the setting of Trinity Grammar School: aided by a supportive Chair, gifted students and families, dedicated senior staff members, which included outstanding educators such as Dr Tim Wright from Shore, Graham Anderson from Arden and over thirty others who went on to Headships under West’s influence. These are considerable advantages for any leader to enjoy in a Golden Age.

Rod West had little regard for risk assessments and Workplace Health and Safety preoccupations. Today such an attitude could lead to reprimand or removal from office. He led adventurously at times, as those of us who attended his Coogee Beach runs with the School House would readily attest. I well recall swimming across Gordon’s Bay in one such outing, bringing up the rear as I felt I ought, when I turned back to see young boarder Ka Kit Wong going down for his final breath! He was a non-swimmer.

“I am grateful that the Lord saw me through, albeit by the skin of my teeth.” *The Heart of Education*, p. 239

As the former Head of Oxley College and International Grammar School, David Wright, once said to me, the present world is “guilty of neglect by overprotection”. Even though he may be correct, such dangerous ideas nowadays are anathema for Heads of schools. The consequence is to drive leadership into the safe but becalmed waters where children find it harder to be inspired.

The role of Dr Janet West in her husband’s success should be acknowledged. As “The Heart of Education” editor, Graham Anderson observed, Janet’s role was as influential as it was expansive:

Hosting dinners, accompanying Rod to school events etc. But also playing F/T parent, Doctorate in Th- women in the church, various ahead of their time women treatises in academia, fictional / historical drama for performance, ghost writing and editing THoE and her fabulous shake the status quo poetry: a writer, feminist, public intellectual, as influential as her husband- without necessarily baking the scones for the ladies auxiliary?

It was a time when the wives of Heads played a vitally important role in setting the tone and culture of a school.

When Rod West was appointed Gough Whitlam was Prime Minister. The Fraser years gave way readily enough to the Hawke and Keating era which prevailed for most of his tenure at Trinity. Neville Wran and Rod Cavalier prevailed in NSW before the Public Education reforms of Terry Metherill under Nick Greiner set Independent schools into a Golden Age. Expansion of enrolments, rapid developments in capital works and new opportunities in curriculum and travel provided unsurpassed riches in the lives of students. Australia celebrated its bi-centenary with renewed national sentiment and whilst the financial recession and high interest rates environment of the late 1980s (the “recession we had to have”) tempered expansion for a time, this was a time of buoyancy for schools and for Trinity. It was fertile soil for Rod West to plant his vision.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse was still two decades from presenting its findings. In some ways, the Wood Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service in 1997 was the forerunner national Commission into Institutional Responses to sexual misconduct in schools. The public alarm about the status and influence of independent schools was voiced after Rod West retired in 1996.

The information revolution, which has massively disrupted education as well as all other facets of contemporary experience, began its rise in the 1980s. Schools like Trinity enthusiastically embraced the opportunities by developing computer laboratories and mechanising systems. The more untameable concomitant of the digital realm, social media, is generally acknowledged to have originated in 1997, a year after Rod’s retirement from Headship.

Leadership in schools is vastly different now, robbing its leaders of much of the romantic flair that thrived in previous generations. The philosopher king is but a memory and good oratory has been undermined by the need for brevity and clever command of visual media. I read with irony, for example, Canon Kurrle’s 1974 observation:

A headmaster has, in fact, great power. Council and parents willingly give it to him and wish him to use it. Do so but use it sparingly and effectively.

The present situation might render the sentence: “A headmaster has, in fact, great *influence*. Council and parents willingly give it to him and wish him to use it. Do so, but use it *constantly and effectively*. Past injustices and extravagances has, perhaps rightly, stripped institutional power from its leaders and established a regulatory regime that past Heads would have seen as intrusive and even insulting. The era of the demagogue Head has probably passed forever. In a recent workshop conducted with the Barker College Foundation Board, the graphic below attempted to capture the seismic cultural shifts now facing institutional leadership.

Relevant shifts: Australia 1980s-2020s



Hence, it is reasonable to suggest that the cultural and symbolic leadership that Rod West practiced with such artistry requires a new expression, a new metaphor in the contemporary setting.

- 3. The contemporary experience in which the heart of education is burdened by pain and a loss of meaning, calls for a new expression of the old truths; and a new metaphor for leadership that seeks for the transmission of the loving personality.**

At the heart of education is the education of the heart. To borrow from T. S. Eliot (of which I know Rod would approve were he here), the heart is “an infinitely gentle, infinitely suffering thing”. This has not changed.

The approach to educational leadership of Rod West and the many who influenced him set the transmission of loving personality as his purpose under God. This has not changed.

The call of Jesus to lead in love and service has not changed.

And those qualities of Christ-like leadership have weathered all the turbulence of the past and will endure these difficult days that continue to test us if we fix our eyes on Jesus.

Christian leadership as expressed by Roderick West and to which we who are gathered in his honour aspire

- a. is virtuous - its joy and delight is in God's Kingdom and His righteousness
- b. It is compassionate - it moves us to tears to see the suffering of another and summons us to heroic acts to prevent it.
- c. It is service (*doulos*) – ultimately to sacrifice all you are for the lives of others

“Lord, teach me to be generous;
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;
To give and not to count the cost;
To fight and not to heed the wounds;
To toil, and not to seek for rest;
To labor, and not to ask for reward -
except to know that I am doing your will.

- d. It is visionary – it calls on others to lift their eyes to a greater vision of God's Kingdom and to play their part in achieving it
- e. It is forgiving – love never keeps a record of wrongs
- f. It is courageous – even when the spirit is diminished, the cause of loving Christ's children continues to call us on

These qualities are enduring and can be adapted to all time zones and to all ages of human experience. They are the substance of the education of the heart because it is in the living of them that we express the fullest version of our humanity and the source of our deepest fulfilment.

The role of the Head is to create the learning society within a school; to nourish and shape its ethos; to influence its climate and provide a secure place for children, young people, their teachers, and their parents safely to experience being fully alive in mind and spirit, free of the fear of exclusion or rejection, infused deeply with love each day and in every way. We need experts in learning, of course, to enliven the minds and deepen the available knowledge. But following the pathway of Roderick Ian West, we need leadership for all ages – leadership that is virtuous, compassionate, serving, visionary, forgiving, and courageous.

I conclude with several lines from one of the hymns that I remember him loving when it thundered to the organ in the Trinity Chapel all those years ago. Whenever I hear this hymn, I am transported back to the Chapel in Summer Hill. I remember Rod's exultant oratory loving to pronounce the hymnist's name: Count Nicolaus von Zinzendorf. I remember Rod West's call upon us all the stand in the righteousness of Jesus:

5 Till we behold Thee on Thy throne,
In Thee we boast, in Thee alone,
Our beauty this, our glorious dress,
Jesus the Lord, our righteousness.

1 JESUS, the Lord, our righteousness!
Our beauty Thou, our glorious dress!
Midst flaming worlds in this arrayed,
With joy shall we lift up the head.

2 Bold shall we stand in that great day,
For who ought to our charge shall lay,
While by Thy blood absolved we are
From sin and guilt, from shame and fear?

3 Thus Abraham, the friend of God,
Thus all the saints redeemed with blood,
Saviour of sinners, Thee proclaim,
And all their boast is in Thy name.

4 This spotless robe the same appears
In new creation's endless years;
No age can change its glorious hue;
The robe of Christ is ever new.

5 Till we behold Thee on Thy throne,
In Thee we boast, in Thee alone,
Our beauty this, our glorious dress,
Jesus the Lord, our righteousness.