

Australian Conference on Lutheran Education

Title: 'Direction and vision for leading the learning community'

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Abstract:

The focus of this paper concerns the worldviews of Lutheran School Principals and School Pastors. Essentially, these leaders in a Lutheran school provide considerable direction and vision for the school learning community. The degree to which their worldviews coalesce will often result in positive or negative influences on the whole school community. The aim is to explore a lived reality impacting on the vision of a Christian school. To achieve this, the day to day interpersonal interaction and the degree of cognitive/affective harmony that school leaders are prepared to accept for the sake of the educational vision of the school is considered. This interaction of school leaders is examined through various scenarios surrounding life in a Lutheran school. In this manner the leader's response to these scenarios points to the degree of dissonance between them and assists in the making of recommendations for further action to assist Lutheran school communities.

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this presentation is to examine the worldview of principals and school pastors in Lutheran schools, in order to recognise differences in cognitive understanding, which could impact on this specific relationship in the Lutheran school. The Lutheran Church of Australia in various statements indicates that sometimes these differences can develop into tension. This kind of tension is seen to impact on the school community by causing dysfunction, and hence, a negative impact on school transformative processes. Such dissonance is also considered to divert attention from the purposes of the school.

Reflection on situations involving potential self interest, privilege, equity and equality within the school community helps unmask current school social and work practice. In the examination of reactions to specific scenarios, cognitive compromise for the sake of relational harmony can be identified. The relationship between knowledge and action is important. Thus self reflection by school pastors and principals helps establish the existence of any dissonance between them, and hence, point to action that could help bring better understanding between them. Key drivers underpinning the approach are authority in a school community espousing a democratic and collaborative ethos, tradition in relation to their roles in the contemporary, more socially aware community, church politics clouding role and relationships, organisation between the congregation and school, and interpersonal competence to adequately carry out the role.

THE PROBLEM

As unfortunate as it might be, there is anecdotal evidence of significant dissonance between some leaders in Lutheran schools. A framework has been developed to explore:

- Cognitive and affective states of these leaders disempowering their learning communities?
- The supposed relative importance of interpersonal skills?
- Importance of leader worldview to gain insights into leadership and management of Lutheran school learning communities?

The approach used examined the many verbal activities and interactional arrangements that exist for principals and school pastors in their daily work within

the Lutheran school. It was an attempt to pinpoint areas of dissonance in the theological, educational and interpersonal domains, in order to gain understanding for future direction and action.

Through a series of typical 'snapshots' of life in the typical Lutheran school, research participants were asked to make sense of the manner in which they carried out their daily tasks. These were the ethnomethodological provocations to help disrupt the every day routine of their lives in the Lutheran school. This concerned addressing some taken-for-granted rules that lie at the basis of daily interaction and the manner in which participants individually make sense of their work world. This self reflection allowed for an examination of points of dissonance in the principal-school pastor relationship.

The personal biographies, or worldview of participants for this study were restricted to the theological, educational and interpersonal domains and further limited to those perspectives considered by the researcher as being important to the role of both the principal and school pastor in their daily interaction within the school. Much of this methodology, while significantly reflecting the researcher's own worldview, is nevertheless backed by official Lutheran church documentation.

The data collection was structured on a personal interview, reactions to on-line school scenarios and a document study. There was a spiral of indexicality and reflexivity as the researcher constructed a reality of the relationship between the principal and school pastor, involving the manner in which they interpret their role in this relationship. There was an examination of decision making based on typifications of these roles from the world of a Lutheran school. The study concerned how the participants reflexively constructed understanding so that some structure could emerge, subjectively for individuals and objectively for the Lutheran church.

Further, in this study, human conduct was considered from the perspective of the relationship between knowledge and action. Cognitive or propositional knowledge is that which has been devised as a set of rules or the prescription to gain a desired outcome. On the other hand, the pragmatic, or narrative knowledge, born from individual and community experience brings about self understanding and identity. The researcher considered that the actions resulting from these perspectives are in some tension, as school leaders and their communities try to make sense of their local context. It was the degree of dissonance, and the degree of cognitive/affective harmony that existed between these school leaders, which helped bring about understanding to the research questions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Various church and school distinctives were brought sharply into focus, in order to enhance understanding of the 'taken-for-granted rules' that help shape the social milieu of a Lutheran school. There was an effort to determine to what degree these are points of leadership contention in the contemporary school, which is confronted with changing and competing world value systems.

- **Research Question 1**

Can we determine if there are critical differences in worldview through comparing the 'reactions' of principals and school pastors to 'learning community' scenarios?

The scenarios were used as a *provocateur* to stimulate thinking and create a challenge to an individual participant worldview. They proved useful in bringing to the fore degrees of individual cognitive/affective harmony, that is, the degree of cognitive compromise to keep the peace in the affective relational domain.

- **Research Question 2**

Is there a gap in the principal's or school pastor's believed or experiential role and their normative role and phenomenal role?

This was to see how individual leaders positioned themselves in the leadership context. There was a need to examine whether participants came more exclusively from either the theological perspective, in the case of the school pastors, or more from an educational perspective, in the case of principals, or whether there existed a balanced perspective. Additionally there was an attempt to see how they compared in relation to the Lutheran Church documents and statements concerning their respective roles. This self disclosure about aspects of their roles came about through the various reactions to the scenarios, the interview and the document study.

- **Research Question 3**

Can the concept of 'intelligent or emotional' leadership involving the importance of relationships contribute to understanding the new directions and challenges confronting school learning communities?

Answers to this question were anticipated to point to some degree of understanding the 'church' and its various structures as they interact with the many postmodern contemporary values and positions which impact on Lutheran school leadership. The responses helped determine if there were hierarchical vestiges of church organisation impinging on the more collaborative and consultative dimensions that are crucial to the contemporary education context in Australia. Many of these new postmodern initiatives can be easily accommodated and even welcomed in a Lutheran school, but there are others that cannot be. When these arise as issues in the school community, the question was whether the participants were prepared to dialogue or entrench themselves from the position of expert authority. An important consideration of this research was how vital are the individual interpersonal skills of the principal or school pastor to bringing new understandings and perspectives to the various leadership and strategic organisational issues.

- **Research Question 4**

To what extent is the creation of alliances important in establishing a learning community involving school and parish?

This worldview issue involved an examination of the blurring of the responsibilities of principal and school pastor within the totality of the school learning community. This came down to role and authority in particular areas of school life, like pastoral care of students. For example, this aspect of school life has many dimensions, some of which are clearly in the realm of the principal, while others are more in the realm of the school pastor working with students and their families. Student behaviour management was one of the scenarios presented. What kind of alliance or understanding was possible, or advised by the participant, helped point to possible future action at the regional or national level

of Lutheran schooling in Australia. Other important issues examined were school worship, Christian Studies and faith formation. Here the importance of the alliance between principal, school pastor and the school community was considered.

RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

The research participants certainly looked at situations and responded to questions from different angles and from the perspective of unique experiences. The key areas to throw light on the research questions were purpose, role, relationships and alliances.

- **Purpose of the Lutheran school**

A commitment to maintaining a distinctive Lutheran education and a focus on mission and outreach was apparent from comments by participants. Yet the comments indicated very different approaches to the scenarios posed. Reflection on the various school community collaborations (the scenarios) was part of the research design and helped bring focus and direction to difficult school situations. The Lutheran theological distinctives were intentionally in the background of the scenarios and informed the questions posed to the participants. This helped lead to a self evaluation of participants' individual cognitive domains and also an appreciation of the manner in which affective relationships can possibly lead to a degree of compromise in one's cognitive position, in order to allow the school community to be ultimately transformed and reinvigorated. The issue of the purpose of the Lutheran school seemed to revolve not simply around an appreciation of the 'essence' or church doctrine surrounding the Lutheran school, but more around the process of how to bring this essence into meaningful dialogue and interaction within the school community.

The purpose of the Lutheran school as seen through the lens of participant responses centred around four dimensions of concern: the Lutheran ethos, the manner of mission outreach, concern for school community relationships, and leadership for a quality education. This highlighted the articulation of the Lutheran ethos in Christian service and mission outreach to the community through the provision of a quality educational program. A degree of participant cognitive tension was shown in reference to the overarching concerns for worship style, leadership and relationships.

In regards to Lutheran ethos, the focus of the pastors centred more on the theological domain, while the principals seemed better able to integrate theological and educational dimensions. The Lutheran characteristics are service, a quality program, worship, and relationships. These figured prominently in participant responses.

There was evidence of some feeling by principals that pastors are trying to impose their personal preference onto school worship style, a style that is not in keeping with contemporary educational practice. This centred on the manner of school worship organised by school pastors, and particularly that which did not account for new technologies and contemporary educational practice. Principals appeared to be more accepting of the position that in a Lutheran school community there should be an attempt to help people distinguish between the accepted truths and values (Bartsch 2001, p. 73-82) and those that are self-serving human constructs. In this, the principals seemed to align themselves with Greenleaf (2002), who claimed that

too many who presume to lead, do not see more clearly, and in defense of

their inadequacy, they all the more strongly argue that the “system” must be preserved”. (p. 29)

Greenleaf contested that blind allegiance without reflection has led to much alienation and helped develop a sense of purposelessness in schools. The principals made it clear that here were the seeds of student alienation in regard to school worship.

A principal complained that the pastor has authority in the eyes of the church and school community, simply because he is the pastor. This participant considered that the pastor’s experience may well be very dated and he may not be in tune with student centered pedagogy. There was no denial that nurturing of faith is a key element of Lutheran schooling, as is mission outreach, but so too, it was considered, were the development of skills and processes that enable students to work and grow in their community interactions. This response did not deny the confessional truth expressed by Braaten (1983), but rather pointed to the need for particular school pastors to hone up on current pedagogical approaches that might well enhance the manner in which they work with students.

Principals generally were focused on being inclusive in all their school interactions, so a dissonant chord was struck when a school pastor used labels such as ‘old Lutheran’, ‘new Lutheran’, ‘other Christians’ and ‘the unchurched’ and ‘not really church people in the true sense of the word’. These words would seem to be divisive to many in the community, who see that tagging people with these kinds of labels does not have a great deal of relevance to where they are on their faith journey or indeed their understanding of theology. To non Lutherans this could seem “like a mystical metaphor creating a perception of those outside this (Lutheran) organisation as alien or even demonic objects needing conversion to the (Lutheran) truth” (Pattison, 2000, p.178). Rather principals seemed to have more sympathy for the view of Treston (1993), when he wrote about encouraging the discovery of a new worldview impregnated with gospel values. In terms of community, this would seem to the researcher to certainly be a more inclusive approach that leads to better understanding the power of Christian community.

The scenarios stimulated thinking and challenged individual participant worldview. They proved useful in bringing to the fore degrees of individual cognitive/affective harmony or the degree of cognitive compromise to keep the peace in the relational affective domain. There were areas where such compromise was impossible due to cognitive positions taken on what makes a Lutheran school distinctive. Some comments indicated a degree of frustration. For example a principal commented that,

- . we are going to have to go back to square one and getting them (pastors) to see why we have a Christian school and to value the ministry of a Christian school and therefore see that they have a role in supporting the staff at the school in the ministry of the parish through the school.

Another principal comment had similar echoes:

I think the church (and by inference the school pastor) still expects the 1950’s attitude of nurture of our Lutheran families, preparation for becoming Lutherans in the future. And I think they feel that is the charter of the school, whereas I think as principal of the school I feel that charter of the school is one of obviously education and to do that education as best as you possibly can. But more importantly, and running in tandem with it, is an exposure to the gospel and a development of some sort of faith journey or a beginning of a faith journey for the children that come through our

school. Whether they become Lutherans or Catholics or Baptists or Uniting Church members really doesn't concern me. Whether they become Lutherans or not doesn't interest me. I don't feel my role is to put backsides on seats in Lutheran churches in 2015. I think our role in our schools is to bring members into the kingdom of God, if we can, through the work of the Holy Spirit obviously.

These comments indicated a confident understanding of the underlying Lutheran themes concerning the role and purpose of the Lutheran school, but they also revealed an underlying tension for this principal.

One principal indicated further underlying tension in the following comment:

Some pastors, I think, feel threatened by the school and because of this feel a need to impose and transfer the limitations they place on their churches in relation to worship style etc onto the school. It is impossible to get useful dialogue between Pastor and school in a climate where teachers are 'fearful' of doing something wrong or non Lutheran.

Another principal comment added to the notion that tension was simmering just below the surface. The principal claimed that:

Pastors are used to working on their own with a large amount of autonomy. The nature of their work also necessitates them being unyielding theologically which is important. However, this unwillingness to give and take can translate into all areas of endeavour and make pastors difficult to work with. Pastors have to work with people where they are at, not where they think people ought to be!

In contrast, school pastors also felt considerable tension in their working with a Lutheran school. One school pastor made it quite clear when he said:

To restate the position, as our schools have experienced rapid expansion, tensions have developed in relationships between the pastor and principal. I think a root cause of these tensions has to do with the ability, or otherwise, the pastor has to exercise the authority given to him by the church, in the school context. On paper there is obviously a clear delineation of responsibilities between the pastor and principal, but in the context of the school environment, and given different agendas, politicking, hierarchies etc, the principal can easily end up being the determinative authority on issues which are not in their domain/areas of responsibility.

Another school pastor offered a solution to the tension by indicating the issue was more relational. He stated that there was a need to:

... relax the formality of the perception of pastor... considered more just like a member of staff... rather than just have them come in and do a specific thing and then go.

Finally, a school pastor lamented his situation as follows:

In theory at least a pastor does not have to be under the authority of the principal when exercising authority given to him in relation to the office of pastor, e.g. word and sacrament ministry, and office of the keys. In practice, there is clearly dissonance. Evidence suggests that pastors often have difficulty in exercising this authority because even in areas for which the principal is not accountable to school council (e.g. worship), they (principals) still have 'assumed' power to shape the nature of worship to some degree.

The comments above indicated a number of worldview positions taken by both principals and school pastors and the existence of a degree of oppositional tension between the two groups. There was polarisation about how these groups view the purpose of the Lutheran school as it played out in practice. Some of this may have had to do with leadership relationships, but there appeared to be causal link to the issue of role and authority, discussed in the next section.

- **Role and Authority**

Role and authority was a key area for examination. There was a degree of dissonance as principals focused more on student needs and relationships, with school pastors being more intent on maintaining a traditional Lutheran liturgical and teaching practice. School pastors demonstrated strong personal preferences concerning worship and teaching practice. There did not seem to be any great doctrinal divide, but rather the interpretation and manner of bringing this to the students and the community. This outcome reflected the position that individual worldview theological perspective can cause personal cognitive and relational tension to either the school pastor or the principal in their defined role. Some of this may have to do with interpersonal skills, but there was the notion that their respective main foci (worship and student needs) caused disparate thinking over the role and the authority they have.

It was apparent that a degree of worldview tension exists between the principals and school pastors over the issue of authority as it relates to the school. Principals tended to hold views that appear more balanced in terms of the integration of theological and educational dimensions. School pastors tended to reflect more on their role and their authority in the theological domain. One school pastor commented, "I can come in with the authority ... the authority of the office" and another remarked "I am a called servant of the word and I bring the word of God". Thus pastoral authority appeared to translate into conflict about the manner of carrying out school worship and other outreach activity. Principals were critical of school pastors, who find it difficult to engage with students, in what is considered by them to be an appropriate learning manner. The attempts of both parties in Lutheran school leadership to explain their situation appeared littered with misconceptions about the intent of each other.

This leadership positioning appeared to fit Greenleaf's concern about an assumption of many people within schools that they alone know what another ought to learn and are justified in imposing it because it is backed by official sanction (Greenleaf, 2002, p.180). Thus school pastors seemingly became obsessed with form and function in the more 'foreign climate' of a school. This then translated into tension over the manner in which students learn about the Christian faith. How does a catechesis approach fit with contemporary pedagogical practice? This was a question obviously to be debated but arguments over authority and legitimacy are considered by many in the Lutheran community to be counter-productive and dangerously divisive.

The Church has anecdotal experience of this tension between principal and school pastor and sought to clarify the relationship by setting out guidelines about how the relationship is seen (Board for Lutheran Education Australia, 2002). This document titled, *Relative responsibilities of pastor and principal within the*

Lutheran school, attempted to clarify the authority and role of the school pastor in the world of the Lutheran school. The section on responsibilities and relationships states:

An ordained person acts within the proper structures of the church. For all ordained pastors there is a clear responsibility to be answerable to the president of the district in which they work in matters of doctrine. As well, they must be prepared to place themselves within the organisation to which they are called to service, accepting its structures and limitations on their freedom, so long as such structures do not prevent them from executing their particular role.

The (school) pastor is responsible to the principal and comes under the jurisdiction of the school council except where a teaching of the church is at stake. The district president will determine if an issue concerns a teaching of the Church. (Board for Lutheran Education Australia, 2002, p.2)

Similarly this position is spelt out in the Principal Handbook (Board for Lutheran Schools, 1999). Essentially this means dialogue and recognition of the responsibilities, of each party, is vital. However, at the same time, some new understanding is required about authority, as Whitehead and Whitehead (1993) pointed out:

Once we recognise a leader's access to truth as being like our own – often partial and conflicted, sometimes wounded by bias and error – then we are no longer relieved of responsibility... Authority in a community of faith is not simply what they do to the rest of us – whether we judge them to be good-hearted or malicious, enlightened or hopelessly out of touch. The rest of us are more than simply observers of how religious authority functions. We are all active participants in authority. (p. 29)

The Whiteheads (1993) suggested that when meaningful dialogue about the issue of legitimate authority occurs, not only between the recognised school leaders, but also amongst the wider school community, a true 'authority partnership' emerges. This they claimed allows for community transformation since there is recognition that individual members are also part of that authority. The specific designated leaders are able to recognise that authority is not simply conferred, but rather is made meaningful through interaction and dialogue. This enables conflict and controversy to be faced with new eyes, not simply out of fear, but rather as a mutual partner in authority, "recogniz(ing) both the benefits and limits of the patterns of authority that we have established among ourselves" (Whitehead and Whitehead, 1993, p. 33).

This establishing of a 'moral voice' or authority sits well with Sergiovanni (1996, p. 96), but it also points to the need for sound interpersonal skills on the part of both principal and school pastor as they work together in the school. However, often the issue is not one involving relationships at all, but rather whether the individual leader can reach cognitive harmony concerning an issue or new direction. This depends on their worldview and long held belief patterns, which may, or may not, easily accommodate change and a repatterning of worldview. Unfortunately this all too often relates to the worship and teaching style employed directly within the school in which the school pastor finds himself.

Examples were quoted by principals where school pastors were inflexible in the face of new pedagogical trends and where long held personal preference held

sway over anything theological. On the other hand principals believed that they were keen to adapt new learning approaches (e.g. multiple intelligences theory) to areas involving faith formation. They inferred that here a sense of partnership is needed to forge new perspectives and a transformed worldview. Sound interpersonal skills, as outlined by Gardner (1997), Goleman (1998, 2002) and Mant (1997), were suggested to assist this transformative process and therefore assist both principals and school pastors reach common understandings on their roles and responsibilities in the Lutheran school.

In summary, school pastors appeared more focused on the legitimacy of their role within the Lutheran school and therefore tended to explain the leadership relationship and school organisation more in terms of their authority. This tended to be because they often felt marginalised in the world of the school. Whereas principals seemed to approach the relationship with more focus on what is best for enhancing student understanding in relation to faith matters, school pastors seemed more concerned with legitimacy. The ingredient that seemed to break down this barrier was the relational bond that could be formed through respect and tolerance for each other's role and a preparedness to discuss and learn from each other.

- **Relationships**

Relationships were considered integral by all parties, but here again this was more as defined by the individual. Particularly this applied to school change and transformation. Within the emergent school culture of the last decade or so, school leaders are considered to need strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work together for the common good (Sergiovanni, 2000), rather than retreat to some personal preference that has little to do with theology or educational practice. School transformation is seen as having at its heart moral purpose as defined, and continually redefined, by the school community and its leaders. In a Lutheran school, this heart is not only a quality educational experience for students, but also the ministry and mission dimensions of the Church that necessarily flow through one of its agencies. These positions and perspectives are supported by Covey (1992), Fullan (2001), Hargreaves (1997), and Sergiovanni (1992, 1996, 2000).

Thus there was a focus on relationships and the importance of strong interpersonal abilities to operate within an atmosphere of differing understanding and opinion. Integral to many participant responses was the consequent ability to carry out the leadership role and discern what is theologically distinctive and non-negotiable and what is merely opinion about the best way to bring about change to educational culture and practice.

Principals described some of their school pastors as “unbending”, while some principals are seen by pastors as “dogmatic”, and “autocratic”. A principal complained that “personal preference begins to be disguised as doctrinal truth”. Another explained that “not all clergy are skilled with strong interpersonal skills”, and yet another, that pastors “should not play the political game in some sort of power play”. Perhaps one principal has it right when he commented that, “problems almost always arise when one of these gets in the way of our theology and/or professionalism”.

When speaking of the interpersonal domain one principal noted, “it would appear that in some settings there is a power struggle between principal and pastor,

where roles are blurred and the mission and vision is secondary to structure and power". Another commented that

time together in study, time together in worship, time together socially, and time together managing issues ... allows for a quality relationship to evolve where you learn the strengths and weaknesses of each other, you learn each other's view points and each other's vision. If we distinguish between our personal and preferred church views, then we keep focused on our purpose for being here.

When the leaders work together in this manner, the synergy was seen to facilitate school transformative processes as in the transitional leadership model (Starratt, 1999).

On the other hand, interpersonal ineptitude, outlined by many participants, was considered to blunt the leadership edge (Goleman, 1998). Strong mention was made by principals about some of the authoritarian approaches of their school pastors. This brought acrimony within the leadership team and particularly if there was no resolution through meaningful dialogue. The relationship uncertainty, though, was very evident when one principal claimed that,

the only time it gets awkward is juggling the tightrope between my roles and responsibilities and the way the pastor sees his role and responsibilities, and how those two converging lines clash, or meet, or work together.

The tension surrounding the inability to work interpersonally through these power issues was a sad fact of life in this Lutheran school.

The degree of cognitive tension that generally arose appeared to derive from a lack of perspective and appreciation of the official Lutheran Church documentation that defines the relationship. The inability to harmonise this within personal worldview impacted on the Lutheran school leadership relationship as seen in this study. This was not one-sided either, since principals, like the school pastors, threw up barriers around what they saw as their domain. Undoubtedly, this can be seen as an issue for resolution through mediated reflection and dialogue in appropriate circumstances. If this does not occur it is difficult to see the transitional leadership model (Starratt, 1999) reaching anywhere near its potential, leading to a subsequent impact on Lutheran school transformative processes. As Goleman (2002) and Mant (1997) remind us, interpersonal and intrapersonal competence to deal with the cognitive aspects of leadership is important for leadership success.

There also appeared to be a strong link to both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills in order to understand the nature of school transformation processes and individual school culture. From the responses of the participants, there was evidence to suggest that the manner of the leaders interpreting and enacting their respective roles contributed to harmonious relationships. Where the school leaders were prepared to dialogue and work together to reach a common understanding, a positive leadership environment appeared to exist where moral purpose was continually brought to the fore and examined in order to manage the changing educational context. On the other hand, where there was cognitive posturing and an inability to discuss the issue in the professional manner of a critical friend (Costa and Kallick, 1993), there appeared to be dysfunction and

organisational tension. In these circumstances, the school's mission seemed forgotten.

- **Alliances**

An effective alliance between the Lutheran school and congregation hinges on a common understanding of the purpose of running a school in the first place. Determining and redefining moral purpose, and maintaining this focus in the face of events and issues is brought about by good leadership and good communication (Covey, 1992; Sergiovanni 1992, 1996, 2000; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993).

There existed sufficient agreement by the participants to indicate the importance of cultural change in educational processes, including the area of school worship. It was the manner of the 'doing' that was contentious in school worship, as principals and school pastors attempted to 'make worship come alive and meaningful' and assist the process of faith formation. Further, moral purpose and educational vision in the school community was seen to depend to a large degree on a professional alliance being forged between the principal and school pastor. Naturally, in a Lutheran school, this moral purpose is informed by the church's theological distinctives.

There were areas of dissonance inferred by the participants in relation to building and maintaining moral purpose. The curriculum theme of the study highlighted specific dimensions: vision, staff responsibility, and community. One school pastor commented, "there is no room for mediocrity in any school". In the various school organisation scenarios posed, discussion brought out various perspectives. These were: conflict, collaboration and teams, transformation, and vision. Alliance building through linking all sections of the Lutheran school community was considered important in the creation of new vision and purpose (Stacey, 1992). Emphasis was given by the participants to school transformation through organisational change, where consultative and collaborative settings are employed to generate common understandings resulting in moral purpose for the school and its community (Sergiovanni, 1996).

In this scenario of collaboration, the school community leaders, as indicated from their responses, were seen by the researcher as needing to come together through a capacity to reflect and learn together, in order to generate a shared vision for school transformation (Senge, 1990). This suggests that Lutheran school leaders, while still being accountable for certain mandated transactive processes, need to reflect on the various 'elements' making up their community. In this way they can take them all along on an important transformative journey, albeit one that is likely to change direction from time to time.

Participants considered that interpersonal and communication skills were important for the team building process. While keeping a Gospel perspective firmly anchored within the world of the Lutheran school, there were nevertheless some postmodern notions considered that need to be taken into account within the alliance building scenario. Amongst these were the many social justice issues (Lovatt & Smith, 1995) that help build community.

Individual abuse of power should be restrained and that the values of the community be promoted, provided they are in accord with the vision and mission of the school (Bartsch, 2001). The underpinnings of Lutheran confessional theology are then continually defined and refined within the collective understanding of the community and in the process strong bonds and alliances can be forged. The findings suggest that the alliance between the school pastor and the principal is vitally important to the clear understanding of the mission and ministry of the parish and its school. If cognitive disharmony is openly displayed then effective moral purpose cannot exist. In such circumstances, both the parish and its school will suffer through a diminished sense of community and the consequent loss of clear vision.

Summary

Critical differences in worldview appear when comparing the 'reactions' of principals and school pastors to 'learning community' scenarios, through their interview responses and to the document study. When confronted by these scenarios, respondents' attempts to examine these in the light of their worldview and various personal experiences help unravel individual perspective.

In the context of the Lutheran school, role and authority is a big issue. The manner in which the theological and education domains are integrated by the individuals in the study is critical to the manner in which they interact with their school communities. It is here that considerable tension appears to exist. This is clearly evident in relation to school worship.

In the opinion of the researcher, how principals view school pastors' interpersonal skills is important. There is a belief that the pastor's interpersonal skills impact dramatically on the life of the school and its mission outreach to community. All principals and school pastors regard relationships and communication to be important. In addition, the researcher believes that the evidence suggests the degree of individual cognitive/affective harmony in the leadership relationship has impact on school transformative processes and outcomes.

The creation of alliances is important in establishing a learning community involving school and parish. A blurring of the responsibilities of principal and school pastor within the totality of this learning community is seemingly still a reality. This is due to cognitive misunderstanding, despite Lutheran Church attempts to define this relationship. Defining alone, without action and strategies, never solves any realised tension. In this study, there is evidence of the 'them' and 'us' syndrome, the 'keep off my patch' mentality, rather than working together to utilise strengths and abilities. An important outcome is the degree to which cognitive understandings are compromised for relational harmony. This issue seems to revolve around an appreciation not so much of what the 'essence', or church doctrine is, but of the way the school community maintains its Lutheran distinctiveness.

Concluding Remarks

The Lutheran Church defines the role of school pastor differently from his role in a congregation (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2002). On the other hand, Lutheran principals have a delegated authority from their school councils to be responsible for the complete oversight of the school's direction (including spiritual direction),

the observance of policies, and the assignment of tasks and duties of staff. The current research indicates that, while the Lutheran Church can be descriptive in a normative manner about these roles, tension points arise when these roles are translated into the world of the principal and the school pastor. It is here that different worldview perspectives are played out and the interaction often results in disagreement about particular dimensions of school life.

A critical area of concern is the blurring of responsibility which occurs over school worship. This is because it is the principal's responsibility to ensure worship happens, but it is the pastor who is charged with organizing and leading it. His rights in regards to the word and sacrament ministry in the school must be upheld. Yet concern arises when the teachers and staff feel that the pastor is leading worship which is not age appropriate for a student congregation. Additionally, if the pastor interferes in the school Christian Studies curriculum, behaviour management, classroom pastoral, or educational issues, significant dissonance can result when principals and teachers are made to feel theologically incompetent, or non Lutheran, by the school pastor's approach and attitude to the issue in question.

The Lutheran ideal is that the gospel will inform all learning. When tension arises it tends to overshadow school change dynamics and limits the potential for transformation of the school community. Research participants, both principals and pastors, identified the following areas of concern: school purpose, worship, roles and authority, vocation and relational skills, and the building of the moral purpose alliance. When the splendid vision of the church is compromised by pedantic point scoring on moot points concerning these major issues of concern, rather than simply maintaining Christian and Lutheran distinctives, there is a clarion call for action. The researcher considers it essential that the recommendations are taken up through church and school leaders being galvanised into action. Not to do so will result in the schools falling short of this noble ideal.

References

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