

# THE PASTOR IN THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL AS SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

## ***A. The Story So Far***

### **1. In the beginning (*Refer Slide 2*)**

- In our predecessor churches there were a number of parish day schools and five secondary schools
- The parish schools were principally staffed by teachers under call of the Church and were on Church salaries.
- The pastor and the congregations were closely intertwined with the School and vice versa
- Our colleges either had full-time chaplains or Pastors as Principals

Teachers in our Colleges were largely practicing members of the Church and a goodly number were under call of the Church and on Church Salaries

### **2. The purpose of the Lutheran School (*Refer Slide 3*)**

- Nurture the children in the faith and equip them for faithful membership of the Church (Primary Schools)
- Prepare the youth of the Church for service as Pastors, Teachers and Lay-workers or for service to God through their vocations in the world. (Colleges)

### **3. From Nurture to Mission (*Refer Slide 4*)**

With the expansion of Lutheran Schools from the 70's onwards a number of significant changes begin to occur:

- Student populations, especially in the secondary schools, changed from largely Lutheran and other Christian to a majority of other Christian and unchurched
- Staff were recruited and appointed (not called) from other churches and from the non-churched
- Pastors called to serve in Schools full-time were required to be qualified as teachers and thus be registered
- Preparation for service in the Church was no longer a primary focus

### **4. The School Church / The Church School (*Refer Slide 5*)**

The Hahndorf Principals (1995) named some new realities:

- Schools and congregations/Church were mostly not closely intertwined with each other
- The nurture model in schools with a largely unchurched population was irrelevant for the majority of students
- Schools were now working largely on the Mission frontier
- Lutheran identity was at best blurred:
  - Few Principals had done graduate studies in Lutheran Education

- The supply of Lutheran trained staff was quite inadequate to meet the demand
- While staff were required to commit to a “Lutheran Ethos” few understood their role as a Teacher of the Church

## ***B. Major Re-direction***

### **5. Post Hahndorf**

An LCA/Schools Task Force was established which resulted in a number of significant outcomes: (***Refer Slide 6***)

- Schools in Mission Seminars
- Statements of the Church in regard to Schools were reworked or new ones developed and then adopted by the Church:
  - The LCA and Its Schools*
  - The Pastor in the Lutheran School*
  - Pastor/Principal Relationship*
  - The Teacher in the Lutheran School*
  - Worship in the Lutheran School*
- The College of Presidents and the Directors of Lutheran Schools/Education both National and State began to work co-operatively and COPs made a number of important decisions: (***Refer Slide 7***)
  - Gave approval for the celebration of the Sacraments in the School under the supervision/approval of the District President
  - Acknowledged and worked with the important distinction of the Two Kingdoms
  - Urged that the nomenclature for pastors working in a Lutheran School be changed from Chaplain to Pastor
  - Dropped the formula that related Pastor numbers in School to student numbers. Instead COPs began to work with the concept of “the World of the School”. This concept saw the School as a mission field and the mission field included all staff and their families and the extended family of students.
  - Approved the calling of pastors into schools **on the proviso** a) that the mission potential of the school could be demonstrated b) that the school had a clear and authentic strategy for mission and c) that the pastor’s role was **principally** that of **pastor**.
- LEA and the Seminary (now Australian Lutheran College) began to work co-operatively in the delivery of programs for Schools: ITEP, Masters Program
- LEA became highly active in developing and delivering The Life Curriculum, TOPS, Millennium Principals Program (***Refer Slide 8***)

## ***C. Sharpening the focus.***

### **6. The Missing Links (*Refer Slide 9*)**

- While LEA and Schools have worked hard in the professional development of Staff in their vocation as teachers or as servant educational leaders we have

**forgotten to form them in the faith so that they can model the faith.** To put it another way much of the professional development in the area of vocation has been cerebral. The PD has done little to help the teacher live their faith through their vocation. In particular, we have lost an understanding of teacher as being a “special service in the church”, an “office that should be regarded by Church and congregations with honour”. In the LCA’s Doctrinal Statements and Theological opinions there are important statements on Auxiliary Offices and in particular “The Status of Teacher in the Church”. Among other things this statement says:

*Teachers who devote their lives to this auxiliary office and who faithfully perform the tasks of their office should be regarded by Church and congregations with honour and treated with the same concern as is shown the bearers of the office of the public ministry.*

This statement is clearly talking about teachers who see their vocation as a calling of God to serve in and through the Schools of the Church. While it is recognized that meeting the staffing demands will necessitate the employment of staff who do not see their vocation as being committed to the Lutheran system, it is nonetheless vital that we recapture this focus and equip, honour and respect those who respond to the call to be a *Teacher in and of the Church*.

- While the function of teaching in a school is critical, we have undervalued the importance of model. The faith is often first *caught* before it is taught. If there is no faith to model then that void will be modelled. Of great importance here is the reality that teachers through their significant contact time with students are modelling something – the stresses of teaching, their personal lives, their faith void OR, in, with and under the stresses of teaching and their personal lives, the CONFIDENCE of THEIR FAITH.
- While the number of Pastors serving full-time in Lutheran Schools has significantly increased we have, in too many instances, **changed their primary vocation from pastor to teacher or youth worker**. Evidence of this reality can be seen in a number of pastors who have changed their vocation from pastor to Principal or Head of a section of the school.

## 7. The Pastor as Spiritual Director (*Refer Slide 10*)

The Presidents in saying that Pastors should be NAMED Pastors and in saying that the Sacraments may be celebrated in the School and in saying that Pastors may be called into schools if there is a clear mission strategy have said that a PASTOR MUST BE A PASTOR in the School. What does this mean?

- Seeing the ‘world of the school’ as his mission task, responsibility and opportunity and at the same time ensure that the appropriate distinction is maintained between the School as educational task and the School as opportunity for the gospel
- Presence, loitering with intent, trust building, pain-sharing
- Focusing on the pastoral care and equipping of Principal, teachers and support staff in their faith formation for their vocation of educational leader, teacher, bursar, secretary etc
- Responsibility for the worship life of the School in consultation with the Principal and especially the appropriate provision of sacramental worship in the life of the school

- Engage in a ministry of prayer for the world of the school and the individuals in it
- Provide Bible Studies
- Provide a theological perspective on issues in the school, particularly in the process of decision-making
- Assist in the delivery of special courses e.g. TOPS, Pastoral People
- Assist in mentoring of Staff especially those engaged in study through ALC
- Hearing confessions
- Visit the sick, the dieing and the grieving

In saying all of this, I am strongly suggesting that the primary focus of the Pastor as Spiritual Director is on the teaching staff and the support staff to the end that they may fulfil their Christian vocations in their inter-action with each other and with students. (*Refer Slide 11*)

In saying that, I am not saying that the Pastor as Spiritual Director will not have an inter-action with students. This inter-action is ancillary and not primary. He will fulfil this role by (*Refer Slide 12*)

- being available to assist the teacher in the class room on request
- inter-acting with students in the preparation of chapel devotions
- spiritual care of students referred to him by staff
- facilitating student prayer and bible study groups
- leading chapel worship regularly
- general engagement with the life of school especially in extra-curricular activity

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