Fuelling the fire

Nev Grieger

Written primarily as a resource to encourage and support new early childhood services directors, and principals in Lutheran schools.

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A project supported and endorsed by Lutheran Education Australia.

Dedicated to

All who have chosen to serve the people around them through Lutheran education, with encouragement for daring to take up the challenge of leading, or aspiring to lead, an educational community. May you be richly blessed for having the courage to have a go.

The team at Lutheran Education Australia who have seen the need to support new and aspiring educational leaders, particularly in the task of spiritual leadership, and have encouraged me in this project.

Lutheran Education AUSTRALIA

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FOREWORD

The Lutheran Church of Australia provides schools and early childhood services 'in order to make available to its members and to others in the community a formal education in which the gospel of Jesus Christ informs all learning and teaching, all human relationships, and all activities in the school. Thus through its schools and early childhood services the church deliberately and intentionally bears Christian witness to students, parents, teachers, friends and all who make up the world of the school.' (The LCA and its schools statement 2001.)

Leading in a Lutheran education community is therefore different to leading in other contexts. Spiritual leadership is essential but what does this mean and what does it look like in practice? Rather than try to define and codify spiritual leadership in the school context, this book takes an illustrative approach based on one person's extensive and intricate knowledge of many facets of Lutheran education in Australia.

Neville Grieger commenced his service in Lutheran schools in 1982 when he was appointed as a teacher at Immanuel College, Maroochydore Qld. After five years he moved to Faith Lutheran School in Tanunda SA, where he fulfilled the roles of Teacher, Year 12 Coordinator then Administration Director from 1987 to 1996. In 1997, Neville was appointed as Deputy Principal at Faith Lutheran School and he held that position for three years. In 2000, Neville accepted a position as Principal at Unity College, Murray Bridge SA. During his eight years there, he was instrumental in growing the college from around 500 students to close to 1000. Neville's passion for authentic Christ-centred education being the hallmark of Lutheran schooling drew him to

the appointment as the inaugural Spiritual Development Facilitator for the Lutheran Schools Association SA/NT/WA in 2007. He served in this role for six years before being appointed as the Assistant Director of Lutheran Education Vic, NSW & Tas. In 2016, Neville felt the call to once again serve within a school community and was appointed as Principal of Navigator College, Port Lincoln SA, where he served until the end of 2017.

Neville has a passion for spirituality and how this informs what it means to be an authentic Lutheran school or early childhood service. This book is not intended to be a guideline or instruction. Instead, the aim of this book is to be a provocation to reflection. You might agree with some sections and not with others. You might decide to adopt some of the practices in this book or be inspired to try something different. It might affirm your current practice. Whatever the outcomes, the time spent reading this book will be time spent thinking about an essential part of your role as a leader in Lutheran education.

Just as Malcolm Bartsch's books have become catalysts for dialogue about education and theology, we hope this book may spark a conversation about what it means to show spiritual leadership in Lutheran education.

Associate Professor Lisa Schmidt
Executive Director
Lutheran Education Australia

Chapter 1

Introduction

Fuelling the fire

'Never in Australia has there been a more challenging time to be a principal in a Lutheran school.' [1] The escalating difficulty lies in striving to ensure that our schools, kindergartens and early childhood services remain true to who we are as schools of the Lutheran Church of Australia, in an increasingly secular world. [2]

Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) is the peak body which through its regions, supports our school communities. LEA seeks to be proactive in helping schools build and maintain an authentically Lutheran culture. Dynamic and passionate spiritual leadership by the principal or director is critical. Through this resource, we aim to add some fuel to the spiritual fire to help facilitate the formation of our leaders. Hence the title, *'Fuelling the fire'.*

I have never really been a fan of the term formation, because to me it sounds a bit clinical and machine-like, almost as if there is some special little factory that we churn people through and they come out the other side and are pronounced done. It is instead, about a faith journey and ongoing spiritual growth, rather than any ticking of boxes that have some sort of religious flavour to them. In any case, it is not about *stuff that we do* to advance ourselves spiritually. For want of a better term though, I've decided to stick with formation but before proceeding, a digression...

It is important to be reminded that we do not do the forming. Any forming is the work of the Spirit. Martin Luther reminds us of this in his explanation to the third article of the Apostles' Creed.

> *'I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.'* [3]

How then can we support the ongoing formation of our leaders, if any progress is largely out of human hands? Let's remind ourselves of a broadly accepted understanding of what Luther referred to as the *means of grace,* or the mechanism through which we receive spiritual blessings: in short, word and sacraments. Central then to the formation of our leaders, has to be a regular wrestling with the word and a spiritual home base for sharing in God's holy meal. (It is hopefully not too unreasonable to assume that baptism is a *done deal*!)

Having said all that, it seems to me that there is still a human role to play in helping to facilitate the spiritual growth of our leaders. While it is certainly not we who **do** the preparing, with the Spirit directing, we nevertheless can assist with logistical arrangements to ensure that *the soil is prepared*. We know from our own gardening experience that if the soil is well-prepared, well-watered, well-fertilised, full of organic matter and has temperature conducive to growth, there will be enhanced levels of positive outcomes.

The aim of this resource, is to support and strongly encourage new, aspiring and existing leaders, to increase their passion for and commitment to, spiritual leadership, which weaves itself through the art of principalship.

Fuel is about to be added to the fire! But wait ...

The first two pages of the introduction have just started out in a rather standard and traditional fashion. I would like to encourage us to stop, reflect, rethink, look behind, under and beyond where we are at and the way we go about things at the moment.

The problem is that the underpinning mode of doing spiritual leadership is still largely built around a last century model of working from a doctrinal and religious base. What if we were to intensively research and critically analyse how well we are doing in relation to the spiritual aims of our schools? (A reminder to translate **schools** as being inclusive of early childhood services, kindergartens, stand-alone primary schools, R-12 schools and colleges, stand-alone secondary schools, boarding schools, large city schools, small rural schools, etc). How are we really doing?

Our schools have been furiously engaged in shaping contemporary teaching and learning methodologies. We hear of the agile learning initiative; many schools have jumped on board with the International Baccalaureate; we see a lot of resources being channelled into refurbishment of facilities into flexible 21st century learning spaces; nature play development, etc. Has the same amount of effort, energy, thinking, innovation and new programs been evident with regard to things spiritual? In theory things spiritual should be integrated across all dimensions of school life, but are they really? Are spirituality conversations common in the staff room and in our classrooms? Do our schools have a spiritual flavour and feel that is evident in practice and permeates through our daily operations?

What is the image that we would ideally want to have of a child / student graduating from a Lutheran school? How well have we managed to teach young people to be values-based informed decision makers, equipped to resist the powers and pressures of secular culture? Have we successfully embedded a strong sense of the need to look out for the station of others? Have we nourished the inner being of the young

people in our care (and our staff), such that they are fired up to continually reflect and grow deeper in their understanding of spirit and self? Where do we start with the young child who begins in the early childhood years, or with students and their families who transfer in *mid-stream* to a Lutheran school community from a totally non-religious / faith background? How do we nurture the spirit within?

Lutheran schools are at the spiritual cross-roads. We can continue straight ahead on the well beaten path, perpetuating the spiritual approaches of the past, or we can turn off and head down a new, largely uncharted track.

Right now, there is an exciting opportunity for leaders to help shape a new paradigm, a new vision for Lutheran schools as places that ooze spirituality; places where staff, students and families are encouraged to experience the spiritual mysteries, are gently led to get to know God, and experience Christianity in all its richness. (Replacing the old head knowledge model where the primary focus and methodology for communicating the Christian faith is by being told **about** God.) Perhaps what the world needs now is a spiritual revolution, another reformation, to shape an authentic spirituality for the 21st century ... and that is the challenge that confronts present and future Lutheran school leaders; to help, perhaps even lead the way in shaping a spirituality for the 21st century that resonates with young people and families. [4] If we get the approach right, it will in the end match our theology. Instead of starting with *saved by grace,* eventually the grace of a loving God that underpins our spirit will be revealed! Who dares to jump on board?

'Fuelling the fire' then, is an attempt to grow passionate spiritual leaders, to encourage a movement beyond and outside of the status quo. Perhaps *'Fuelling the fire'* is not the right title. What if the coals are only lukewarm and nothing happens apart from a few token puffs of smoke? Maybe it is about **lighting** a fire, a new fire, using different flammable material to that used in the past. In any case, may your fire be fuelled!

Chapter 2

Spirituality

Spirituality and spiritual ... interesting words, that have already been used freely throughout the introductory thoughts. Spirituality is a tricky word, a very slippery term, yet it is an essential term. It helps us to avoid falling into the trap of using more religious language.

David Tacey, in *'What is Religion for in destitute times?'* said this:

> *'I am convinced that this is the way forward for religion: a movement from creed and proposition to receptivity and listening. It is a move away from moralism to mysticism, away from religious instruction to the encouragement of spirituality... Recognising the potential sacredness of the modern experience of emptiness is perhaps the first step toward the genuine religious revival of our civilisation.'* [5]

The traditionalists would contend that we water down our mission and ministry efforts by using the term spirituality. But who said anything about mission and ministry at this point? That's putting the cart before the horse. *'A spirituality of the 21st century does not drop people in the deep end.'* [6] It seems to me that the term spirituality, is not seen as a heavy churchy or religious word and that there is a relatively high degree of comfortableness with it across a wide cross section of people. There are many forms of spirituality, some arguably quite sinister. But if we can tap into the positive threads amongst these to make connections, we can then draw people into a deeper Christian spirituality, at the centre of which our God is ultimately revealed. This is a God who is not absent, remote, or judgemental, but is dynamically present in us, with us and around us, as a God of abounding love. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Let's not jump in too quickly even with the God language.

Dr Lisa Miller in her book *'The Spiritual Child: The New Science on Parenting for Health and Lifelong Thriving'* says that spirituality is a natural, biologically-driven experience for children, and is the *'central organizing principle of inner life'* later in adolescence. Miller defines spirituality as a transcendent relationship with a higher power that is loving and guiding, be it God, nature, or a universal spirit – as opposed to religiosity, which is more of an adherence to a religious denomination or creed. When spiritual growth is supported, Miller says, children and teens thrive; conversely, the absence of spiritual support causes alarming suffering and is responsible for the rising rates of depression, substance abuse, and other maladies in young people.[7]

The eminent educator and theologian Rev Dr Norm Habel in his ground-breaking work *'Six challenges: six mysteries',* presented at ACLE, 2004 envisioned in Challenge Two, that:

> *'A 2020 Lutheran school would be spirit sensitive discerning the personal spirituality of students and listening to their inner search for meaning as the work of the Spirit.'* [8]

Now more than fifteen years later, how close are we to achieving that vision? I suspect that we still have a way to go!

Perhaps the advancements in thinking that have seen Indigenous and Christian spiritualities reconcile with each other, provide us with a model for how spirituality can provide a valuable foundation from which to grow into an understanding of the Christian faith.

Chapter 3

A spirituality for the 21st century

We need to step back for a bigger picture perspective of societal changes in the area of religious life in order to help us shape a spirituality for Lutheran schools in the 21st century. As David Tacey wrote more than ten years ago, the Western world generally has turned its back on the institutional church and is walking away from it in droves. [9] The problem is, that we in Lutheran schools are strongly connected to church and of course constituted by church. Like it or not, we are part of the institutional church that seemingly has lost its way in our society or perceived to be irrelevant.

There is an interesting twist which arises out of the historical Australian census figures. While on the one hand the figures confirm plummeting levels of church attendance and membership, they point simultaneously to a surging interest in spirituality. While by 2006 the attendance at worship figure for Australian people had dropped to around 7%, the number of people indicating that they have an openness to spirituality was well over 70%. (It is interesting to note that from 2011 the original question about attendance at a place of religious worship was omitted from the census papers!)

Perhaps David Tacey had it right when he suggested that 'Every day people are straying away from church and going back to God...' [9]

Mark Sayers writes around this issue rather eloquently in the introductory chapter of his book *'Disappearing church':*

> *'Therefore, the final checkmate of this secularist coup is*
> *accomplished not by a frontal assault on theology, but by a practical*

atheism that offers the fruit of shalom minus the tree of biblical faith that bore it...

What we are experiencing is not the eradication of God from the Western mind, but rather the enthroning of self as the greatest authority.' [10]

How and why has the church gone into decline in the Western world and certainly in Australian society? I find it a huge anomaly that apart from religion, we can look at every other discipline and academic pursuit – be it science, medicine, technology, engineering, education, economics, industry, finance, or sport and observe that there has been massive change, growth, development, new directions – call it what you like. Religion generally has not progressed in its thinking or its manifestation in society for 500 years. Ironically Jesus spent much of his ministry challenging the thinking of the religious leaders. The unveiling of the new covenant, the new deal, through his death and resurrection largely failed to change religious practice. Religion clubs (churches), with membership criteria, strict rules and regulations were set up right across the world. If Jesus was to return today for another ministry stint, he would probably be challenging the institutional church and the religious people just as furiously as he was 2000 years ago!

I believe that a huge factor in the demise of Christianity is a problematic view of the image of God. Historically this was based on the world being pictured as flat, at the centre of creation and covered by a dome-shape sky, above which is heaven, where God lives. Particularly for people on the faith fringes, God is perceived as an old man with a long, flowing, grey beard, sitting up in some remote celestial control room, looking down on us, in constant judgement and ready to zap us if we step out of line. We perpetuate the notion that God is absent, remote and isolated, instead of with us, in us and around us as a 24/7 presence. These ideas are brought out strongly in the writing of the French Jesuit,Teilhard, who uses the beautiful spiritual imagery of the *divine milieu*.

'The French word milieu has no exact English equivalent, so the translators have simply kept the French word in the text wherever it occurs. Milieu encompasses our English words atmosphere and environment ... A milieu is as penetrating and omnipresent as the air we breathe; yet we mostly take it for granted. We simply forget about the atmosphere even though we are dependent on it at every moment...

Fish live in a milieu of water yet are unaware of its importance until they are taken out of it. For Teilhard the most important spiritual fact of our existence is that at every moment you and I are swimming in a divine sea. Fortunately we can't be taken out of it. At every moment we are inhaling and exhaling the divine life.' [11]

Unbeknown to most, there has been bubbling away for the past two or three decades, a proliferation of writers (e.g. Richard Rohr, Rob Bell), who have somewhat silently put the case for reshaping a spirituality for the 21st century. Unfortunately, main stream Christian churches generally have not responded to these voices and remain captive to the thinking of the 1500s.

In trying to shape a new way of thinking about the spiritual dimension of our Lutheran schools, I would like to acknowledge the work of Mike Leske, esteemed Lutheran educator and former colleague. Mike has significantly challenged and influenced my thinking. Mike writes:

'There is a question that confronts many of us as this century rolls on. Are our current practices of Christianity meeting the inner urges and needs of both adults and young people? Are our minds and hearts demanding a deeper experiential process that embraces our wholeness and spiritual authenticity?'

Mike's research in this area, has led him to conclude that we need to be conscious of and embrace the various ways spirituality is expressed,

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including through what he refers to as *'undefined spiritual experiences'* incorporating *'the free expression or experience of my inner spirit, my innate soul, my deep consciousness, reaching out to experience the creative spirit in others and in nature, especially the awe-inspiring wonders of life and creation that surround us.'* All of these experiences are to be integrated with *'intentional Christian spirituality, connecting with the spirit and spiritual consciousness of Jesus.'* [12]

Some of our Lutheran schools have historically made attempts to make Christian education more practical, more relevant, more engaging and spiritually based with varying degrees of success. Wellbeing, mindfulness and positive psychology programs for example, have been introduced to encourage deeper levels of reflection. It seems however, that many of these attempts have still arisen out of the religious / doctrinal / theological base that has progressively hijacked Christianity since the 1500s. In shifting to a more spiritual approach, do we also need to rethink the curriculum label of Christian Studies? It is not just about studying Christianity. Is there a better name for a whole-of-school spiritual education program where young people are progressively guided through a range of experiences and gently led to discover the mystery of their inner spirit and what Gerard Hughes refers to as the *'treasure within'?* [13]

Mark McCrindle's *'Faith and belief in Australia'* research report of 2017, certainly confirmed that people generally are happy to be seen as spiritual, but not willing to be identified as religious.

We can learn much too from the Ignatian spiritual approaches. The concept of *'finding God in all things',* coupled with the associated fostering of awareness and mindfulness, I believe are wonderful spiritual approaches with which to shape our future programs. [14]

We must however, be prepared to do battle. As an indicator of the type of resistance that we may come up against, I was once strongly

criticised for using the *'finding God in all things'* pillar of Ignatian spirituality as the focus for a staff retreat that I was facilitating. The criticism was on the grounds that it is incorrect theology to promote the idea that we can find God, when it is God who finds us. That may be good biblically based Lutheran theology, but it is not helpful to deny someone on the outer fringes of a spiritual journey an authentic spiritual experience. Through the running of around 60 spiritual retreats over a ten year period, I can confidently say that *'finding God in all things'* has helped many people to increase their awareness of a mystical presence both within themselves and through the world around them. I reiterate that if we foster a discovery of the innate and in-built spiritual presence, we will in due course make the God connection. At some point further along the journey it is almost inevitable that the discovery will be made that the hidden treasure of God has been in us all along. We simply have not been aware of his presence.

How can we progress into action now, to map out, oversee and implement a dynamic new spirituality program for our schools, that is a shared vision across our leadership team, whole staff, council, student body and families? Some great work is already being done by our Christian Studies leaders and teachers, but let us not lose sight of the fact that all school leaders have a responsibility here. Leaders across all curriculum areas need to understand and embrace this as well.

From an individual spiritual leader perspective, this requires every leader to first have an awareness of, or know (be immersed in; experience) spirituality at their own personal level. By the way, it is not a sufficient credential to just have a religious badge on display for having ticked the box to satisfy the in-theory requirement that a principal must be an active communicant member of the Lutheran Church of Australia. It may be helpful in the long term, but given that we are starting diametrically opposed to a religious / doctrinal / theological base, let's just put that aside at least for now.

Chapter 4

Where do we start?

If our schools are to be places that ooze spirituality, the logical starting point is in the back yards of our leaders. In order to be highly effective spiritual leaders, which includes facilitating the formation of our staff, it is critical that we attend to our own spiritual health. Just as we need to devote time to our physical wellbeing through exercise, healthy diet, rest and relaxation, regular health checks, etc, in the same way we need to attend to our spiritual wellbeing. We need to set up regular opportunities to be in touch with our inner spirit and indeed all other dimensions of our humanity – the physical, intellectual, social and emotional.

Some years ago, I borrowed a concept from the renowned work of Stephen Covey, who amongst other titles wrote the classic book *'The 7 habits of highly effective people'.* I'd like to suggest that the task of looking after our own back yard, can be informed by a combination of at least three of the Covey habits: *'Sharpen the saw', 'Be proactive',* and *'First things first'.* Covey talks about putting the BIG rocks in place. We need to do this in our private yearly calendar and daily/weekly diaries. By putting first things first and being proactive through allocating time and space for looking after our spiritual health, we will in the process, be sharpening the saw. We will be building for ourselves a sharpness of spiritual mind and thought, in readiness for the task of encouraging others in their faith journeys and thereby enhancing the prospects of building a strong corporate spirituality. [15]

It is not unreasonable to assume that Lutheran school principals have a head start and are already well along the track of a spiritual journey.

'Being a spiritual leader assumes that the principal is an active, confessing Christian. In particular in the Lutheran school, this means knowing whose we are (Christ's) and therefore who we are (redeemed children of God) and what we are called to be and to do (to be Christ to others). We have to realise that spirituality is not just some vague 'feel-good' emotion, but that it grows out of a strong sense of identity, of knowing who I am and what I stand for and believe. It means living the life of faith through the power of the Holy Spirit, with our head and our hand as well as our heart.' [16]

Therefore arguably when reflecting on what it means for a spiritual leader to look after their own back yard, we should be able to assume that a spiritual journey has been in progress for some time. At the heart of our spiritual growth (formation) as leaders, is a commitment to spending time reflecting on the word. This is one of the BIG rocks that must be put in place early, before there is no room to fit it in because all of the other *pebbles*, both in the daily life of the individual leader and in the broader school calendar.

Jesus reminds us of this in a very powerful way through his words and actions in the opening chapter of Mark's gospel:

'[35] *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*
[36] *Simon and his companions went to look for him,*
[37] *and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"*
[38] *Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages — so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."*
[39] *So he travelled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.'*

In the midst of extreme busyness, (check the preceding verses from verse 29), Jesus instead of trying to catch a bit of extra sleep, gets up extra early to take time out to pray. He makes spending time with God a priority. But the fascinating thing about this incident, is that he does not

say a word to his disciples about needing to find a quiet place to spend time with God. He simply models. He shows by example. As we will see later, that's a huge part of what spiritual leadership is about; the importance of modelling.

As leaders, we need to regularly immerse ourselves in God's word. To some extent we do this automatically through our own attendance at worship, but we are perhaps not very skilled at really listening to what God has to say to us through a particular passage or set of readings. We have developed the unfortunate habit of immediately moving on to a response or jumping into something else as soon as we finish a reading. We need to take time to listen to what God is saying to us and in particular, take time to consider the personal question: *What does this mean for me today as the leader of a Lutheran educational community?*

Accompanying a focus on word is regular participation in the Lord's Supper as a means of unleashing the power of the Spirit. I will deal with this in more detail in a later discussion on facilitating staff spiritual growth and building community.

Prayer is a spiritual discipline that is central to our personal spiritual wellbeing. Richard Foster gives an incredibly powerful image of the importance of prayer in this one short sentence ... *'Prayer catapults us onto the frontier of spiritual life'!* [17] By the simple act of starting out on a prayer, we are thrown right into the midst of Christian spirituality. Foster goes on to emphasise the importance of just getting started (on a prayer session) ... or to borrow a phrase from arguably one of the world's most successful marketing campaigns, *Prayer ... Just do it!*

Prayer does, however, have the potential to become a spiritual burden. If we are not careful we can build for ourselves a guilt complex of not doing our prayer job well. How many of us have ever experienced something like this?

... I recognise that I am not all that great in my prayer life … I want to quite intentionally try to be better at it … I set aside some time for prayer and away I go. Part way through this prayer time my mind has completely wandered, to a point of forgetting that I was meant to be praying ... even to a point of dozing off. I now feel completely reinforced in the view that YES I am lousy at this prayer stuff … my immediate guilt feelings have been further amplified.

If asked the question: *Prayer – where do we start?* How would we respond to that? What are some basic rules and guidelines to follow?

There may be some guidelines for prayer, but the best answer to the question/s above is: *RULE NUMBER ONE – there are no rules.* There are many dimensions of prayer of course, but one that can be really liberating is … prayer is listening.

'A man prayed and at first he thought that prayer was talking. But he became more and more quiet until in the end he realized that prayer is listening' [17]

A fabulous tool for the spiritual toolbox, is the Ignatian founded *'Prayer of Examen'* (a methodical scrutiny of the conscience). This method of praying is based on nearly five hundred years of Jesuit spiritual tradition and is a systematic method, a way to seek and find God in all things. Although it sounds a bit heavy and traditional, it is a surprisingly refreshing approach to spirituality that has stood the test of time and is very relevant to us in the 21st century. In particular it encourages us to reflect – to contemplate. In this prayer we try to find the movement of the Spirit in our daily lives as we reflect on our day. This prayer can be made anywhere: on the beach, in a car, at home, in the library.

'Fr. Dennis Hamm, SJ, a Scripture professor at Creighton University, calls the Daily Examen 'rummaging for God.' He likens it to 'going through a drawer full of stuff, feeling around, looking for something

that you are sure must be there.' That's an accurate description of what it 's like to pray the Daily Examen. We look back on the previous day, rummaging through the 'stuff, ' and finding God in it. We know He is there.' [18]

Richard Foster's thoughts on prayer being framed around the meanderings of the mind may also be helpful here.

'One of the greatest obstacles in prayer is the activity of our minds. ' [17]

The meanderings technique, without a doubt, would have to be one of the best pieces of advice on prayer that I have ever received. A feature of it is again, its contemplative nature, allowing our inner spirit to be more intentionally in touch with us.

Here is a little practical test to prove a point about the meanderings of the mind.Set aside thirty seconds. During that time close your eyes and try to have absolutely no thoughts in your mind. How did you go? Most of us fail dismally at this task. Invariably there are distractions and our mind wanders. Usually there are sounds to distract us and prompt thoughts through recognition of the sounds. Try as hard as we like, it is difficult to shut the mind down.

The great thing about the meanderings technique is that it gives us a licence to wander – to use the meanderings of the mind to actually be the power source of our prayer! There are several books and articles around, with the common theme of *101 ways to pray.* Please understand that *meanderings of the mind* is just one of those ways. I have included a complete step by step summary of the *meanderings of the mind* prayer technique as appendix A.

Prayer is an ongoing living conversation with God. We cannot underestimate the power of prayer in our own lives and in the broader context of our school communities. The challenge is for us to establish and maintain prayer as a spiritual discipline in our lives. The spiritual

giant, Martin Luther, reminds us of how difficult that can be through this confession of his inadequacy:

'I sit here like a fool and hardened in leisure, pray little, do not sigh for the church of God, yet burn in a big fire of my untamed body. In short I should be ardent in spirit, but I am ardent in the flesh, in lust, in laziness, leisure,and sleepiness. …Already eight days have passed in which I have written nothing, in which I have not prayed or studied.' [19]**.**

We will leave it at that for the moment in terms of some essentials for attending to our spiritual growth. Other matters will arise as we escalate to the next level – that of taking up the challenge of facilitating the spiritual formation of our staff, through gently opening doors and encouraging them in their journey.

Chapter 5

Moving to the next level

Spiritual leadership lacks integrity if as leaders we fail to model positive attitudes towards, and engagement with, things spiritual. Only once we have our own back yard in order (or at least attended to on a regular basis), can we then authentically move to the next level of supporting the spiritual growth and development of our **staff.**

A critical word of warning here. Even though we may perhaps rightfully regard ourselves as being quite advanced in our spiritual thinking, we cannot expect others around us to jump in at the same depth. We must not assume biblical or theological knowledge and in fact we will have to check ourselves and remind ourselves not to fall into the trap of starting there. We cannot afford to use language or make any references that make people feel that they are on the outer or are not the real deal. We must keep reminding ourselves that we cannot throw people in at the spiritual deep end. We need to allow time, everyone at their own pace, to experience the wonders of wallowing around in the spiritual shallows, allowing the mysteries of our inner self to emerge naturally.

In using the term staff above in the opening paragraph, this needs to be read as EVERY SINGLE PERSON who is included on the school / kindergarten / early childhood service payroll. Building the corporate spiritual culture of a school community is not just about teaching staff members. That is flawed thinking.

To highlight this point further one of the defining statements of Lutheran education in Australia is that … *'the gospel informs all activities of a Lutheran school.'* [20] A gospel passage with an interesting twist that informs us about, and provides a wonderful analogy for, the building of a school culture, is the story of *'Jesus calms the storm'.* A surprise element emerges when we step back to take a bigger picture look at the

context surrounding the situation. What were Jesus and his disciples doing? Where were they heading? In effect, they were rowing across to the other side of the lake into *uncharted* territory to spread the good news! Hey–isn't that us in Lutheran schools? In order to engage effectively in that mission, we ideally need EVERY staff member to be *in the boat* and part of the team of rowers. The reality in our current context of increasingly diverse school communities, is that some staff either do not want to be in the boat on that mission, or if they are physically on board, they may not be in the least bit interested in contributing to the mission. We have a huge role to play in helping to prepare crew members for the mission boat, especially given that some of our staff may not know the first thing about *rowing* or are otherwise very unfit for the task.

While the facilitation of the first stage of staff formation (accreditation) may be perceived primarily as a management task, it is perhaps the first opportunity that a principal has to demonstrate authentic leadership. Since this often occurs as part of the induction process for new staff, it is possible to use such sessions to genuinely *connect* with staff and begin exploring spiritual connections. The delivery of the first stage of *Connect* is a task of the local school community so here lies a great opportunity to show spiritual leadership. [21] As leaders, a priority task is to plan and implement a program for the timely and meaningful delivery of the required sessions. The availability of release time and budgetary provisions to enable staff to undertake the necessary externally delivered sessions, are wonderful encouragements for ensuring that accreditation is viewed as an important part of our culture, rather than as a matter of compliance. It is also an opportunity to provide a taste of things spiritual, particularly for those who may be *on the fringes*.

But let's be careful. What we are talking about above, is only the **accreditation** component of formation. It is simply the beginning of an ongoing journey. We must not fall into the trap of thinking that once we

have successfully completed *Connect* and *Equip* for our staff, that the job is done. As spiritual leaders, we have the responsibility of planning and implementing an ongoing spiritual nurture and growth program for ALL staff. Only then can we have some confidence that the spiritual culture of the school community as a whole will be at least maintained and ideally enhanced.

The recent introduction of an ongoing requirement to retain accreditation provides ongoing opportunity to keep opening spiritual doors. [21] Since there is nothing specifically prescribed for what the ongoing accreditation requirement looks like, there is a wonderful opportunity here for leaders to take up the challenge of shaping this into something that moves away from the *tick box* mentality – (having to do stuff to keep our accreditation). Instead we can build practices into our culture that will fuel a natural yearning to grow in depth and breadth of our spiritual understanding.

It would be great to have regular forums for discussion on how we can shape staff spirituality sessions to not only grow staff in their Christian spiritually, but also to figure out how the whole school spiritual curriculum experience can be shaped and delivered so that it meets young people where they are at, and in a way that fires them up to further explore the mysteries of spirituality.

Although student curriculum content and delivery are separate issues to staff formation, they deserve a critical flag of attention to be raised for urgent follow-up. The inquiry pedagogy being championed by the education leaders in relation to Christian Studies and as featured in *Equip* training is fantastic. But at the heart of there being any real prospect for changing our spiritual effectiveness as Lutheran schools, is the challenge to fully transition to a new paradigm of what underpins content, from a religious to a spiritual base.

Chapter 6

Building community

I believe very strongly that the central pillar and vehicle both for helping people with their personal spiritual journey and shaping a strong overall corporate spiritual culture in a school, is community. I want to therefore focus on the concept of building community; the building of Christian community, which is more than how we might be together at a sports or social club. Christian community is a gathering of people built around Jesus at its centre. In using the term community going forward, it needs to be assumed that I am referring to Christian community.

It is through community that people are able to experience first hand the love of Jesus in action. Formation is a natural and ongoing process when people are immersed in community – but I hesitate over what I have just written. When talking formation, it is hard to avoid using language which makes it sound too process based. Let's just say that in community, we provide a fertile field in which the Spirit is furiously at work, growing people in their relationship with God.

What are the hallmarks of community?

This is dangerous territory, because as soon as one starts to list features of community, it has the potential to be viewed as a checklist, almost as an audit. That is definitely not the intention here. As mentioned, our aim is to provide a resource that can assist new, aspiring and current principals with the task of ensuring that we remain true to who we are as schools of the Lutheran Church of Australia. Please view this rather as a self-help tool for school improvement in the domain of spiritual leadership.

The staffroom is the engine room of a school community. The staff engine must be regularly serviced and maintained, finely-tuned and

well lubricated (now that leaves some scope for Lutheran interpretation!) Within a short space of time after walking into a school staffroom, it is possible to make a reasonably accurate summary of how things are generally ticking right across the school community. Again a reminder that we are not talking about any little old club here … we are talking about the staffroom as the centre of authentic Christian community, where we would anticipate observing staff celebrating together, sharing joys and sorrows, caring for each other, as well as the staffroom being a base for broader care initiatives outside of the immediate staff boundaries. Community is not built in isolation.

You may be aware of the story line of the *'Parable of the rich fool.'* There is a phrase in there about *'tearing down our barns and building bigger ones*.' [22] If ever there was a barn that we should tear down in a school and build a bigger one … perhaps it is the staffroom! There may be self-indulgence arguments from parents and council members about that ... if so we can strongly rebut that criticism by expounding the message of the importance of the staffroom as engine room and in building a strong Christian community and authentic Lutheran school environment.

Some schools for whatever reason have allowed auxiliary engine rooms to start up. Small faculty or sub-groups of staff gather and are set up with kitchen facilities, which means staff in these areas rarely gather in the main staff facility. In very large and complex organisations there may be a case to consider exceptions to that rule, but exceptions should be only granted with provisos that are grounded in Covey's win-win thinking. Sometimes auxiliary engines like to think they have the power to take over. We want to avoid that.

The embedding into a school culture of a daily gathering of all sectors of staff is arguably the most significant task of spiritual leadership in a Lutheran school. Schools that do not gather daily as an entire staff, probably do not know what they are missing out on. Sadly recent Enterprise Agreement negotiations have placed the daily

gathering under pressure in some contexts. For the sake of the ongoing authenticity of our Lutheran schools and the strength of the staff community within, this is ground that must be defended at all cost! We may even have to look at strategies for *reclaiming some marshland*. It is possible to dismiss the implementation or maintenance of a daily gathering as being too hard, not appropriate or even impossible. Taking that view reflects either a misunderstanding of spiritual leadership or a soft approach to it!

Central to the daily gathering should be a time of spiritual reflection, where people share their (spiritual) story. While we would not want to be too prescriptive for the format of spiritual reflections at the staff gathering, there should be encouragement to incorporate the word in some way, thereby ensuring that the Spirit will be at work. I believe that all staff should be rostered on to lead or at least co-lead the staff community in this time of spiritual reflection. But this is where we need to be careful. As mentioned in the previous chapter, not all staff will be ready to step into the boat and if / when they do, they may not be equipped for *rowing*. A good way to deal with the sensitivity that some staff may feel intimidated or uncomfortable leading a devotion, is to roster people in small groups or buddy groups. It is possible to team people up in an appropriate way, such that someone on the fringes can be gently brought along by carefully selected persons who would be very sensitive to and understanding of the situation. The expectation to participate in staff devotion time can be discussed with new staff at the interview before appointment. (Calling it a devotion may be a bit formal … perhaps we can come up with a better name. I know of one school that affectionately refers to this time as *Morning Muster*!)

It is recommended that *nuts and bolts* daily trivia should not be allowed to dominate this special community time. Only in emergency situations where last minute changes of plans have occurred, should this type of information giving be part of the daily gathering. Any announcements should focus on being a caring community… who has

had a baby, whose mum is in hospital, a family that is in crisis, a celebration announcement of an engagement or an anniversary or a tip-off that someone amongst us is struggling and needs our prayers, etc.

I would also like to commend the lost art of singing as a community building activity. It seems that singing is rapidly becoming counter-cultural at least in the community context, yet paradoxically this is not the case with individual performance – where highly rating shows like *The Voice, Australian Idol, Masked singer* and *X-factor* have highlighted the remarkable nature of the human voice. Can I suggest that singing as a staff community remains a task to place on the spiritual leadership challenge list? One of my greatest experiences of the power of singing was being part of a school community where the entire staff engaged in the huge challenge of learning and singing the '*Hallelujah Chorus*' in four-part harmony for the closing service at the end of that year ... powerful stuff in binding the staff team together while also making a statement to the broader school community.

The task of spiritual leadership as it relates to building Christian community is ongoing. Generally our Lutheran schools are good at *doing community*, but as with all dimensions of leading and managing a school community, we can always do well to come back and critically ask ourselves the questions ... *How can we improve on what we are already doing? Are there some things that we need to change in order to do things better?*

Holy Communion revisited
in the corporate (staff community) context

When discussing the personal formation of our leaders in chapter 4, the image of allowing God to regularly *sharpen our saw* was outlined. Regular celebration of the Lord's Supper was identified as a vital element in looking after our own (individual) backyard. In a similar way this can be translated into the whole (corporate) staff setting. The

regular celebration of Holy Communion as a whole staff sadly is not entrenched in the culture of all of our schools. To this I say ... If not … why not?

To highlight this point further let's take a closer look at the '*Road to Emmaus*' passage. I rate this story as one of the most profound, reassuring and liberating pieces of Scripture for informing us about building community, as we go about our work in Lutheran schools in these days of the 21st century. Through the '*Road to Emmaus*', we have a rare opportunity to peer in through the very special post resurrection window. Here we have Jesus speaking to us with *runs on the board*. This is not just Jesus the amazing prophet and good bloke, this is the Jesus who is the Christ, Jesus the risen Lord, Jesus the Messiah, Jesus now revealed to us completely as God from the other side of the cross!

On the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)
' [13] *Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.* [14] *They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.* [15] *As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them;* [16] *but they were kept from recognizing him.* [17] *He asked them, 'What are you discussing together as you walk along? 'They stood still, their faces downcast.* [18] *One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, 'Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?'* [19] *'What things?' he asked. 'About Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied.' He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.* [20] *The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him;* [21] *but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.* [22] *In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning* [23] *but didn't find his body. They came*

and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. [24] *Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.' * [25] *He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken!* [26] *Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?'* [27] *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*

[28] *As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther.* [29] *But they urged him strongly, 'Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them.*

[30] *When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.* [31] *Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.* [32] *They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?'* [33] *They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together* [34] *and saying, 'It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.'* [35] *Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.'*

How much is this a reminder of us, madly racing down the road of life, oblivious to the fact that God is right there with us on the journey? What is it that opens the eyes of the travellers? It is only through the breaking of bread at the evening meal that their eyes were opened. Let's not underestimate the mysterious power and strength that is available to us through his holy meal.

So what are some implications of this passage for us today? In this story, there is a sense in which we are being introduced to the concept of the ongoing incarnation – the mysterious right now presence of God

with us, in us and around us. God is with us every step of the way, even though for much of the time we may be totally oblivious to his presence.

But the really profound and liberating implication for us in Lutheran schools these days, I think comes out of verses 30 and 31. Is this the first celebration of Holy Communion after Jesus introduced the sacrament at the Last Supper? As mentioned briefly earlier, it was only when God came to them through the breaking of bread that their eyes were opened and they were capable of knowing him. So too for us to recognise God, for our staff to spiritually grow, his Spirit needs to be at work in us. (The Spirit at work through word and sacraments – we need to keep that in mind as a fundamental underpinning dimension of our spiritual leadership.)

This story is a catalyst for us to be led into the exciting challenge of defining and shaping what is really a new paradigm for church. I'm suggesting that this reading liberates and encourages us to celebrate his holy meal together in small groups and certainly in our staff groups within our school communities. This is not to discourage or replace existing opportunities for staff to commune in another setting outside of the school, but rather to open up new doors to those who (for whatever reason) do not have, or take, that opportunity ... and let's not be judgmental about what those reasons may be.

Many of our schools celebrate Holy Communion together as a staff group. A reasonable estimate is that this probably occurs on average perhaps twice per year, but rarely more than once per term. There is a strong argument to suggest that there should be an option to engage in this celebration at least 2 or 3 times per term and maybe as often as weekly. Why wouldn't we allow God to strengthen us through his Holy Spirit on a very regular basis? In the past we would perhaps have said – well we have access to Holy Communion in our congregation. The reality is that times have changed. We can lament the fact that less people do have a regular worshipping home base outside of the school

and continue to try to encourage these people to come along to worship on the weekend or we can help reshape the traditional way we think about church, by expanding the boundaries of church beyond the church building to include the school staffroom, the school yard and car park and even into the community at large. When God comes to us through the bread and wine he sharpens our saw. Why wouldn't we want to have our eyes continually (re)opened to his presence?

It is however important to be aware of the potential minefield surrounding the celebration of Holy Communion. The issue that can be extremely damaging, is the matter of who can receive communion. The Lutheran Church of Australia has historically held the view that only baptised and confirmed members can receive communion. This policy has caused a lot of ill feeling and has been damaging for the spiritual growth and nurture of many staff of our Lutheran schools. I have observed damaging effects first hand. Fortunately in most contexts, a liberal view on this matter is being taken by most Lutheran pastors associated with Lutheran school communities. It is critical that the matter of participation in the Lord's Supper is sensitively managed, so that non-members of the LCA – (in the 21st century, this is the majority of staff at probably every Lutheran education site in this country) – are not made to feel like modern day Samaritans. Did Jesus intend there to be strict rules and regulations about who can participate? [23] As a matter of interest, the 2018 LEA statistical report indicated that of the total 3411 teaching staff in Lutheran schools, 31% were *'Lutheran',* another 56% *'other Christians'* and 13% '*other'.*

Formation – more than accreditation!
This was briefly signaled in the previous chapter. So what is the *more*? Much of what has been discussed above, in terms of formation, is incidental, unplanned, informal, spirit-at-work formation, that just happens when people are immersed in Christian community, – labelled by Mike Leske in Chapter 3 as the '*undefined spiritual experiences*'. [12] There are however some more intentional things that can be done to

prepare the fields of our staff. The informal agenda for formation should be supplemented by regular spiritual development sessions. While I understand the pressures of Enterprise Agreements time for planning, reporting and other teaching and learning essentials, a critical dimension of spiritual leadership is to ensure that a program is in place within the school for the ongoing spiritual nurture and growth of staff. This is another one of the BIG rocks of a staff calendar. Dedicated sessions to explore spiritual matters must be locked in. Such sessions should also include non-teaching staff. Strong and unwavering spiritual leadership is required to ensure that such practice is deeply embedded in the school culture. We strongly encourage the use of *Growing deep* as a resource document to inform the shaping of spiritual development sessions. The *Connect* padlets also provide many excellent resources that are accessible via the LEA website. [24]

At the beginning of the chapter I raised the question of hallmarks, with an expressed hesitancy to produce a list. I reluctantly have decided to include a list below. I have put this list together based on input from colleagues and experiences gathered from Lutheran schools around Australia. As already mentioned, we encourage it to be used as a tool for the enhancement of spiritual culture. This is a list collated collectively and cumulatively from practices and hallmarks from around the country but also incorporating spiritual language. It would not be anticipated that all of these hallmarks of an authentic Lutheran school are necessarily exhibited in a single community. Nevertheless, it is a list of ideas provided as a resource for school leaders.

LEADERSHIP
The principal is an active, upfront spiritual leader
All staff are expected to lead staff and / or student devotions
All staff are seen as spiritual leaders
Principal and school / congregation pastor work in partnership
Student leaders are also spiritual leaders
Key governance personnel and parents are spiritual leaders

STAFF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Regular opportunity for staff to have spiritual conversations

Regular opportunities for spiritual experiences

Regular scheduling of whole staff worship

Regular whole staff exploration of the word

Regular spiritual development sessions

Whole staff spiritual retreat as part of the culture

Whole staff weekly prayer time

Regular celebration of Holy Communion

Accreditation of staff is a high priority task within the school

Accreditation is commenced as part of staff induction

Spirituality focus and conversations underpin accreditation sessions

A team of staff work together to help deliver *Connect*

Release time offered to staff to complete accreditation

All staff have a good understanding of our Lutheran heritage

Accreditation record keeping is diligently attended to

Accreditation is viewed as only the beginning of formation

BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

A vibrant and dynamic staff engine room (staff room)

ALL staff gather together daily (teaching and non-teaching)

Staff sing together as a regular community building activity

Staff community care and support system/s in place

Voluntary prayer group in place

The school engages with the local congregation/s

Local congregation pastors are involved with the school community

CHRISTIANITY ON DISPLAY AND IN ACTION

Christian spirituality oozes through the organisation

Spiritual maturity leads to an understanding of grace

Staff model a passion for spirituality

A strong commitment to service and the wellbeing of others

Study of things spiritual is a high priority in the curriculum

Spiritual development is resourced abundantly

CHRISTIANITY ON DISPLAY AND IN ACTION (cont)

Visual representation reflecting centrality of the gospel

The gospel is evident in action in daily operations

Spiritual words, names, symbols, logos, language, icons evident

SPIRITUAL DIRECTIONS

There is a whole school philosophy and approach to spirituality

Students are actively involved in shaping worship

There is a strong spiritual dimension to home class operations

The school has a spiritual life team or committee

School council has a spiritual development sub-committee

School council has spirituality strategic objectives

Spiritual dimensions are subject to regular strategic review

Local workplace agreement refers to spiritual expectations

Staff employed with a specific spiritual development role

Spiritual curriculum with a spiritual rather than religious base

Spiritual leadership involves calling the tune on spiritual matters. A mentor friend once pointed out to me that there is a corollary that accompanies this statement, arrived at by a subtle rearrangement of the words: Strong spiritual leaders are prepared to call a spiritual tune on all matters!

Chapter 7

Worship

The oversight, organisation and implementation of a worship program, sits clearly amongst the task list of spiritual leadership.

Our approach to worship in Lutheran schools has in the main grown out of the worship experiences that we have had as school leaders. Many of us would be supporters of and attenders at contemporary Lutheran worship, but what some view as contemporary may be considered as traditional for others. The reality is that most of the so called contemporary worship in our churches is in fact quite traditional. A working definition of contemporary for the purposes of this discussion is: to be marked by characteristics of the present period. Contemporary worship should therefore be addressing secular culture, embracing all forms of new technologies and media platforms and attentive to the *'i'* world in which we find ourselves. How well does current contemporary worship reflect these attributes?

But we are again getting ahead of ourselves. The chapter title and opening sentences have already raised a red flag to warn us not to fall into the trap of old-school thinking. What is required here is a spirituality lens that filters out religious language. That immediately requires that we scrutinise the use of the term worship. This description from the Christian Studies Curriculum Framework reminds us of how God speaks to us in worship:

'A key aspect of Christian worship is our response to God's words and actions. We recognise and acknowledge that God serves us, and we show by our words and actions that we believe that God is worthy of praise, honour, loving obedience and willing service.' [25]

The problem is that the term worship does not make sense in an environment where most people do not really know God. Yet we operate in community, and gather together as a group which has at least a nucleus of God's people at its core. It is our challenge to mould (and even label) our regular gathering as a whole community in a way that fosters spiritual thinking and plants the seeds of spiritual growth. We need to be careful not to drop people in the deep end of a *worship* experience using language, rituals and practices that we have transplanted from a conventional Christian worship service setting. The challenge is, how can we use *the world* to communicate, connect, engage, with young people, yet hint that worship takes us into another world, leaving the old one outside?

With that preamble and before proceeding into a detailed discussion about worship, I want to reiterate the status, central significance and high level of importance that the regular corporate *worship* event holds in defining the school. It should be the hub of community building. Strong positive additions to the shape and spirit of community rely on a buzzing time when the whole community comes together in celebration. On the other hand, community can be damaged when this time of corporate gathering together generates negative attitudes both in students and staff. I suspect that all is not as well as we might think or hope that it is in this dimension of school life, in which case for the sake of maintaining integrity and striving for authenticity, leading and managing this dimension of school life has to be amongst the highest of priorities.

I do wonder about the **label.** As already explained, *worship* is problematic, *chapel* aligns more with a building than with what is happening, while *devotion* is not a religiously neutral name that the masses will embrace. I have wondered about using an invented name that is a bit catchy and has youth appeal – perhaps something like *Triple S* (Shaping the School Spirit) or setting up some other workable

acronym. I think it is worth discussing at decision making levels, the label that we give to *worship* within the community, then plan a launch to promote and embrace its use.

So what should our *Triple* S or similarly named *worship* time look like? (I will continue to periodically drop in the *Triple* S term to keep our minds sharply tuned to our post-Christian context.)

It is important to acknowledge the huge progress that has been made in reshaping the nature of the corporate school worship this century. There has been a significant move towards far greater student involvement and away from leader-centric practice. The broader problem to be aware of as we examine this issue more closely, is how to change our practice to effectively shape a Christian worship experience for a post-Christian world.

Perhaps we can take our first lesson from Jesus' ministry. He was trying to change the past thinking and ingrained practice of the Jewish people. While the metaphor of new and old wine skins does not mean much to us today, Eugene Peterson's Message translation *'you don't put your wine in cracked bottles' (Matt 9:16-17)* gives us a great imagery to shape our thoughts around *worship*, perhaps something like – *we should not use practices that are no longer suitable to use for our situation.* In the changing world of religion and spirituality, ongoing review of the core business task of communicating the good news of Jesus to our community, should remain locked in as a high priority. What follows is a series of ideas for school communities to consider when reviewing and refining worship practice.

Label has already been mentioned, but along with that is language generally. It is important to avoid using religious or churchy language in *Triple* S sessions. The word will always be an essential element of authentic worship, but instead of announcing that the Bible reading for today is … perhaps we could say something like this in casual

conversation (obviously without using the exact same wording each week) ... *'A dude called Jesus, who ended up making* a *big name for himself, once told this story to the people following him around* …' We should encourage the telling of stories of real-life experiences in everyday language that allow spiritual imagery and experiences to naturally emerge as fuel for the spiritual fire hidden away within each individual.

Team design is a key characteristic for spiritual community gatherings. Where possible it is great to have a team of people who shape the *worship* experience each week. This team should be fluid and dynamic, avoiding locking in a set group of people for an extended time, but continually rolling over and engaging different voices. In order that things don't get off track it is important that the school has in place a clear underpinning philosophy for *Triple S* sessions to avoid lapsing back into old habits. Structure should be organic not linear. Avoid a worship service mentality that has a fixed design template of, for example – invocation (not terminology we should be using anyway), song, reading/s, message, song, prayers, blessing, closing song. Dare to do things differently in order to keep people guessing, create wonderment and expect the unexpected, but at the same time, be sensitive to the need to respect the traditions of the past.

We live in a multi-media mega world. Failure to embrace a wide range of technologies means that we fail to connect with the people in our communities with a suitable level of signal strength! We cannot ignore the infographic hunger of our Gen Z and Gen Alpha students.

Music is magic. High quality musicianship, lyrics, rhythms, vocals and harmonies can produce a response of awe and wonder and has the potential to provide strong spiritual experiences, that happen without warning and without being planned. That is why I believe very strongly that schools should invest heavily in developing a strong music program, both instrumentally and vocally. Where possible we should

strive for live music, not only providing service opportunities but nurturing the God-given talents of community members.

The arts in general ought to feature strongly. Unfortunately the Lutheran church has grown up with a largely verbal / linguistic dominated approach to communicating the Christian faith. Our teams should consider incorporating all dimensions of the arts through song, dance, art and sculpture, poetry and story, in order to weave a smorgasbord of potential spiritual threads into the *worship* tapestry. Remember we should aim to avoid creating sessions for spectators, seeking to engage people and move them around at appropriate times rather than sitting people in rows, the same rows, all the time, every time.

It is worth pausing to reflect on the role of **stillness** in spirituality. Stillness, silence and solitude are all heavily counter-cultural. We therefore face a difficult slippery slope in weaving aspects of this into our spiritual culture. Many years ago, way back last century in fact, I worked in a school community where we scheduled a regular weekly quiet time for the whole school community. Everyone, all sectors of staff, all students and classes went into a period of silence for 15 minutes. Over time, the practice was watered down, slowly eroded away and was eventually abandoned. What was needed was strong spiritual leadership, a locking of the practice into the permanent culture of the place and new people continually inducted to hear the story. I think it is still very well worthwhile considering as a component of modern-day spirituality. When surrounded by stillness, and with the aid of a work of art, a poem, a word or theme to focus on, such time can be of exceptional (spiritual) value. It was clearly good enough for Jesus, as I have already outlined in the solitary space passage in Chapter 4. Stillness could for example be locked in as one part of the school's foundational spiritual aims: *to appreciate the value of silence*.

As Mike Leske reflected, '… *any form of stillness and reflection built into the practices of* a *school or home are foundational for spiritual growth. '* [12]

Associated with the above point is the concept of **sacred space.** There is no doubt that for some, including myself, that there have been times when just walking into a church building or cathedral has evoked a strong spiritual feeling. While we must pay attention to the physical setup and visual imagery of our *Triple* S spaces, we must not lose sight of the fact that a sacred space for evoking spiritual experiences is also likely to be found outdoors, on a beach watching the sun dip into the ocean, in a gorge or at the base of a magnificent waterfall, in a rain forest or on a mountain top, or numerous other special places in the world around us.

Prayer is a delicate matter and has often been misunderstood, yet it is a critical part of spiritual life. Richard Foster's description quoted earlier, of prayer catapulting us onto the frontier of spiritual life is a great one. My experience of prayer in Lutheran school worship over four decades, has been that it has been dominated by us asking for stuff, where religion has taught us to go on bended knee with prayer requests to some almighty power broker sitting on his throne of judgment somewhere up there in the sky. (To be fair, a reasonable spread of prayers of thanks have been woven into our prayer practice.) It seems that there has been minimal focus on contemplative prayer; prayer as listening, with young people being encouraged to discern, listen for and respond to the Spirit. I mentioned the Ignatian *'Prayer of Examen '* as a great spiritual tool for leaders, but equally, something like the *'Kids Examen'* is a wonderful way of introducing a more reflective dimension of prayer. [18]

It is common place these days to have classes engaged in planning and leading a whole school *worship* time. Often this will include students writing their own prayers, which typically will be dominated by the usual asking for stuff. Granted, much of the asking relates to seeking care and support for those around us or for many and varied people less

fortunate than ourselves. It is the language associated with such requests that I find problematic, in particular phrases like *'Please be with ... '* perpetuating the idea that God is absent from duty unless we think to make a request for him to come in with his all powerful wand to fix up a situation. It is good practice to encourage faith in action. I once saw a Jesus sculpture that had arms, hands, legs, feet, ears, eyes and mouth completely missing. There was an accompanying inscription declaring that we are his arms, hands, legs, feet, ears, eyes and mouth! When we pray a prayer we should be ready to be personally nudged into action to be Christ to those around us. Often we hear about the three Hs of Christian service: head, heart and hands. I like to add a fourth one; hoof. The challenge to us to get mobile to go out, to not just restrict us to service within arm's length. (*God being with* through us!)

With our commitment to avoiding as much as possible any foreign religious language, this may even call into question how we use the Lord's prayer. There have been countless translations of this sacred prayer over a two thousand year period, but even our so-called modern version uses language that is difficult to comprehend for people without any faith background. Some contemporary writers have seriously questioned its use and relevance to us under the new covenant. We frequently use terminology in worship along the lines of … *and now let's pray the prayer that Jesus taught us.*

'But how do we understand His words, given that neither Paul nor Peter nor John – nor any other apostle – advocates asking for forgiveness as a daily routine for believers? The answer lies in the context of this prayer, its content, and its intended audience.'

'... The Lord's prayer is an old covenant prayer taught to the Jews before once-for-all forgiveness was established.' [26]

There is an additional problem with the Lord's prayer in that it feeds the notion of a remote, absent and judgemental God. For your further reflection, I have included as appendix B, a para-phrased new covenant version of the Lord's prayer which through revised wording, addresses the anomalies mentioned above. [27] While not every one will agree with the above perspective on the Lord's prayer, the key point still remains that we need to take extreme care with employing religious language in a largely secular context.

A key consideration for shaping our *Triple S* sessions, is to focus on the importance of being **in the neighbourhood**. It is not wise for example to mirror something that has been established and implemented in another context. Transplants of programs rarely succeed. They require organic development for the local environment embracing the local people and culture. We need to create spiritual experiences for our community, relevant to our often unique context, making them deeply experiential and engaging.

It is also worth considering our target *audience*. Increasingly, school *worship* experiences are also required to serve the needs of our families (and a growing proportion of staff), many of whom have made the school their spiritual home. We need to respond accordingly.

Chapter 8

Not forgetting the body that birthed us

We have been tip-toeing around the issue of church for several chapters. While I concede that this is something of a digression, it is important that we take a closer look. One of the challenges of spiritual leadership in Lutheran schools is finding positive and proactive ways to manage the school-church relationship, possibly better described in most contexts as the school-congregation partnership. Most of our schools have a direct connection to a local Lutheran congregation (or association of congregations). We need to avoid the trap of thinking it is not worth the effort to strive for a close school-church (congregation) partnership. Working with *the body that birthed us,* the church (LCA), is not optional but obligatory. Every Lutheran education community in this country is constitutionally bound to the Lutheran Church of Australia. It is out of this long-standing, binding connection, that LEA policies and resource materials in relation to staff accreditation and Christian Studies have been developed. Although our parent body shows signs of ailing, our connection to it is not going to change any time soon. To reiterate, we are schools of the church. That comes with a range of obligations and expectations but also opportunities.

At the heart of our moving forward is for all parties to free up their understanding of what is meant by church. If we retain the flawed view that church is a gathering of people in a special building usually in rows of long seats called pews, almost universally at a set time on a Sunday morning, then we are doomed.

Our schools provide a safe and secure spiritual home for many staff, students and parents. This must be viewed as a valid expression of church and as such, if we accept that our schools are part of the church

(LCA) then we are already thriving. Our numbers have steadily grown for decades. We have attendance rates well over 90% of *membership* five times a week, for forty weeks a year. Now that's a thriving church!

Mark Greenthaner makes a very powerful point about schools as church, in outlining a fictional dinner conversation:

'Oh, you're a pastor? Where at?'
   'Eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

'I don't really know that area. So, how big is your ministry there?'
   'Currently, I guess, we have a little over two thousand people
   who worship with us each week—'

'Two thousand! I didn't know Melbourne had that many Lutherans!'
   'Well, to be fair, most of the people who worship with us
   are not traditionally Lutheran. In fact, most have had no
   significant on-going connection with any Christian church.
   Technically, I guess we mainly minister to non-Christians.'

'And you get two thousand worshippers on a Sunday?!'
   'Oh no! Most of our worship is during the week when it's
   easiest for them to take part ... We really try and support
   our young people as they get to know God's love, as their
   faith develops, and in all the other day-to-day things young
   people have to wrestle with in growing up … We have
   about two hundred staff, and we are really blessed with
   large facilities developed to be able to offer all of this
   ministry.' [28]

Working to build strong partnership between school and church at the local level is one thing, but to effect sweeping change in image, the rebuilding of reputation of the Christian church as a whole and the resurgence of relevance of the church are different matters. Wouldn't it

be fantastic if the Lutheran church was the one to lead the way, by genuinely embracing the threads of spirituality across society and helping to build a brave new spiritual world? To be honest, that vision for our church to lead itself through that metamorphosis seems a little distant, given that it has been unable to progress through even the modest of liberal steps to invite women to be pastors. Perhaps God has other pathways in mind (using the vehicle of Lutheran schools?) to move us forward as a church.

It is encouraging on the one hand that there has been synodical recognition of the principal as spiritual leader in schools. If we assume then, that Lutheran schools are a valid expression of church, and factoring in a steadily increasing number of female principals, it could be argued that we are moving towards having significant female spiritual leadership in the church. On a dampening note, it is frustrating that both at district and national synod levels, all principals of our schools are not universally granted full delegate status. (Not exactly a vote of confidence in the arm of the church that holds the church's future in its hands!) Despite the conservative and overly cautious nature of our church, we must remain positive and proactive in our efforts as school leaders, because we are not going to be able to have a redeal on the hand that we have been dealt. We simply have to play smart with the cards that we have got.

Paradoxically over the past 150 years, there has been a major about face. From our Australian beginnings, Lutheran schools grew up under the wings of the mother-hen church and were totally reliant on it. But the young chickens have grown up and flown the coop. The church is struggling with the *fully-grown adult, free-range chooks*, that are now vibrant, dynamic and highly autonomous organisations. Just as we cannot desert our ageing parents, we cannot abandon our parent body the church. The church in fact needs us right now. It needs us to help redefine it and reshape it.

There is no doubt that the institutional church as we have known it is in serious decline right across the Western world. Yet we can be sure that church will survive, since Jesus said it would, but it is unlikely that it will thrive in the form that we have known it in the past. Lutheran schools have a role to play in moving the church from survival to *thrival.* [29]

(It is indeed very heartening to hear Bishop John Henderson publicly declare that Lutheran schools are very much considered as expressions of the church in action, indicating that the door is wide open to progress the shaping of the way forward together.) [30]

So how are we playing the cards that we have been dealt? In case we have not realised it, we as schools hold all the aces!
- Large numbers and extraordinarily high weekly attendance
- A strong family and intergenerational base
- Strong community group and sub-group culture
- Extended opportunities to explore spirituality together

While we may have digressed, the focus for shaping ongoing partnership with the body that birthed us returns clearly to the principal as spiritual leader. For the sake of our own integrity as leaders this task requires us to be proactive and to ensure that it is consistently given attention. We must not be passive. We need to continue having conversations to encourage a re-imaging of church. In fact the word church itself for reasons as discussed earlier is probably not going to be helpful. We need to promote ourselves as communities that seek for individuals to grow in spiritual awareness and understanding. Over time we would ultimately aim to gently reveal the underlying presence of our loving God.

Chapter 9

Spiritual leadership summary

Leading a Lutheran school is a two-pronged task. Principals are required to be experts at both educational and spiritual leadership. As Barry Kahl wrote some years ago:

> *'Lutheran schools can never sacrifice their spiritual centredness for the sake of education or they would no longer be schools of the church. Nor can Lutheran schools forsake their educational purposes in the interests of spirituality, or they would forfeit the right to be schools. It is indeed a tension that needs to be held in balance.'* [31]

That same tension still exists decades later, but while historically it has been a healthy tension, due to our emerging increasingly secular context, it has become a heightened tension. The task of spiritual leadership now has proportionately increased demands and complexities. For the sake of both our personal and corporate integrity we must be prepared to devote energy and resources to the task. It is critical that we do more than maintain past practice, for that has largely failed us. We must embrace and give momentum to moving the spiritual dimension of our schools into a new era (while at the same time bringing along the body that birthed us).

A separatist view of the two prongs of leadership is not healthy. Ideally we need to integrate the two strands of leadership, the educational and the spiritual, into one seamless entity, just as the two strands of DNA are intricately woven together. We can expect the spiritual road ahead to be long, winding and bumpy, but it is a road we must take. The journey does however have its exciting prospects. Let's fuel our fires with the daring challenge that we have an opportunity and a role to play in reshaping the spiritual thinking and wellbeing of our world.

PART 2

Reflections on principalship

...a practical and anecdotal exploration of how spiritual leadership intricately weaves itself throughout the principal role.

Introduction

The original intention with this resource, was that it would be primarily about spiritual leadership. As the project unfolded, quite early on, I had the nagging push to include some thoughts on the overall art of principalship to encompass some of the broader dimensions of the principal role ... not that I felt like I had all the answers (far from it). The idea of having two parts then emerged. As the part two sections took shape, the connection to spiritual leadership continued to be strong in much of the writing. It was as a result of a conversation with Executive Director Lisa, that we decided that the whole resource should be as much as possible, about spiritual leadership. We did opt to retain the two sections, with part one highlighting the visibly obvious important aspects of spiritual leadership, then allowing part two to identify less evident examples of spiritual leadership as they emerge in daily operations, and for it to become a reflection of the spiritual dimension of principalship in practice, with a few key more general leadership threads thrown in. Part two reinforces the fact that spiritual leadership is woven through the whole of the principal role. Just like accreditation, it is not a *tick box* thing whereby we get our spiritual leadership done, then get on with the rest of the role. It is instead a multi-faceted role all bundled into a single package with the gospel at the centre, shining through and informing all that we do as leaders.

As I look back on my working career, I have often lamented that everything is upside down. If only I had the benefit of my experiences, hindsight and accumulated wisdom much earlier in my working life.
I regard it as an honour and a privilege to have had the opportunity to go back into the principal role in a Lutheran school for the last two years of my full-time working career, after having worked in administrative roles in our regional offices for nine years. In hindsight, there would still be some things that I would be more consciously aware of and pay greater attention to if I had the opportunity to do it again. Leadership is like that. The more one gets to step back from it, reflect on the craft and refine one's practice, the more effective one becomes in the role.

I loved the principal role. While it is a massive responsibility, it is nevertheless an incredible privilege to be able to lead a school community. There would be very few occupations in society where an individual can have such a profound influence over so many people over an extended period of time. Although it is hard to know where to begin in documenting the *craft*, I have decided to start with an idea that I developed for the LEVNT state conference of the 2015 LDP cohort: *'The top ten tasks to target',* or at least a slightly revised version of that. [32]

The top ten tasks to target
1. Model
2. Ensure the safety of every member of the community
3. Build community
4. Build relationships (and teams)
5. Build and grow spiritual culture
6. Empower people
7. Develop and implement a shared vision
8. Ensure corporate viability
9. Drive educational excellence (and school improvement)
10. Think

This is in no way intended to be an exhaustive list on principalship, neither is it a priority list. Even though some of these tasks superficially would appear to be in the secular realm of leadership, (if I can put it that way), I want to demonstrate how spiritual leadership continues to strongly weave itself through this list of leadership challenges. While I do not intend to delve into all of these in detail, there are several for which I would like to make extended comment.

Although this has been primarily written for principals (and of course directors), it potentially can be applied to all leaders. For those with more experience in leading an educational community, hopefully it may still serve as a mechanism for conducting a self-check, or will perhaps

provide some little snippet that will help further sharpen our effectiveness as authentic Lutheran school leaders. For those just starting out, or aspiring to the role, it is hoped that the thoughts that follow will help you in mastering the *art of principalship!* (Mastering is probably the wrong word, for in reality if we think we have it mastered, it's probably time to give it away. Claiming to have mastered the "game" would be denying the fact that we can always find ways to improve how we operate as leaders.) This then, is a further anecdotal look at spiritual leadership in action.

The importance of modelling

I witnessed powerful modelling by a principal during my role as Spiritual Development Facilitator for the Lutheran schools in SA, NT and WA. I was conducting an accreditation workshop (then known as Pathways), with a group of new staff. It was a busy time of year. There were some massive planning and development tasks demanding the attention of the principal. Despite the workload pressures, the principal committed to spending every minute of every session of the whole day with her group of new staff. She did not need to do the training, but she made it a priority to be with these new staff, join in the discussions, give the benefit of her insights and send a strong message that this was important. This was modelling at its best.

One of the most consistently high-ranking personal qualities identified as being strongly present in outstanding school leaders is integrity. Integrity, closely linked to modelling, has been defined as *the commitment to doing the right thing even when no-one is looking*. Leaders who model integrity will build trust amongst the followers. All staff who are employed to work in school communities are cast into leadership whether they seek it or not. Young children especially and students of all ages, notice what we adults do. They subconsciously form views and habits arising out of our positive role modelling, but they also notice when we send negative messages by doing something different to what we say we do.

Here is an example from an everyday situation in a school context that was used to reinforce this point with staff. At the entrance to the school was a two-way road, which morphed into a one-way street at peak traffic flow times. The sign at the entrance clearly stated: *NO ENTRY SCHOOL DAYS 8 am – 9 am and 3 pm – 4 pm*. Anyone who chose to drive through the NO ENTRY sign after 8 am was being a negative role model to our community.

Ensuring the safety of all

If we had to prioritise the top ten tasks, perhaps this one would be put at the top. It is a task that is easy to ignore, destine to the too hard basket, or assign it to the *important but not urgent list.* All I will say is this ... if ever as a leader you are cast into a situation where the wellbeing of someone in your school community is seriously affected, remembering that as principal you are ultimately the responsible officer ... that is not a pleasant space to be in. If something goes seriously wrong for one of the students under your care, the impact is much wider. For every student in a school community, the multiplying effect of people who rely on the leader for their safety and wellbeing extends to at least five times that number when staff and extended family connections are added in. Make safety a top priority. This extends to understanding that feeling safe is critical for effective learning. Ensure that there is a robust and fail safe system for policy management, including regular review and detailed audits of compliance requirements. While to some extent responsibility for safety in the school can be delegated, it nevertheless does not change the fact that the leader is ultimately responsible. It is important to ensure that staff are fully aware of obligations in regard to safety, are aware of compliance requirements and understand the implications of failing to provide a safe environment.

Jesus in his ministry continually lifted up the marginalised in Jewish society–the poor, the disease afflicted, Samaritans and tax collectors, the gentiles in general, women, widows, etc. In school communities the marginalised students are highly vulnerable and often the first to be bullied or feel threatened in their safety and wellbeing. While ensuring safety is a high priority task in all work places and organisations, not just schools, the gospel certainly calls us to action to ensure the safety of all.

Everything revolves around community
The task of building community specifically from a spiritual perspective has been extensively unpacked in part 1, but as I was writing, it became clear that there is much more to building community that is to be integrated into the process. Several of the top ten tasks will be incorporated under this discussion, including the empowerment of people, which ultimately aids the **building of relationships and teams.**

A strong, supportive and close-knit school community is an essential prerequisite for a highly functional and successful school. From a staff perspective, I would like to reiterate the critical (in my view not negotiable) matter of the daily gathering. It is difficult to build community without the opportunity to regularly meet together in a forum where it is possible to celebrate and share joys and sorrows. One of the absolutely essential ingredients of strong and successful community building is regular high-quality communication. The more this can be done face to face, the greater the feeling of shared ownership and togetherness that emerges. The daily gathering is the perfect forum.

Quite early in my Lutheran school career an esteemed senior colleague introduced the idea of *helping your team mates look good.* There are several little mottos and catch phrases that I subsequently embedded into my leadership practice, which I can trace back to this concept.

I'll give a few examples: *Give credit where credit is due.* Sometimes situations arise where you are at a meeting or engaged in a conversation, when a positive comment is made about something that has happened recently or relating to a new initiative, essentially commending you as leader. You know however, that it was not really your idea and you were certainly not the driving force behind its successful implementation. While human nature secretly pushes us to grab the credit and accumulate brownie points for ourselves, the gospel informed, powerful thing to do, is to respond by saying something like:

> *... well the inspiration and impetus for that actually came from Sarah, our teaching and learning coordinator. I'll make sure I pass on your comments to her.*

This equally works in reverse. The reality is that not all feedback that we receive is positive and rosy! In our conversations with parents or at a council meeting, concerns may be passed on. Sometimes these comments might be in reference to a very specific decision or communication, or even targeting an individual. It is easy to deflect criticism but much more difficult to share and even fully wear the blame. It might be that you need to say something like ... *well actually, I have to take responsibility for that. I am sorry that this has caused concern for you* ... *I'd like to suggest that we aim to make a time for us to get together to talk about it further.* Staff need to know that they will be publicly and privately backed. Being prepared to share and even wear the blame, also helps staff to build trust levels in their leader.

This raises the importance of a related situation, where we sometimes have people pass on positive feedback about a staff team member. It is critical to pass on such feedback directly to the person involved. Often this can be a great conversation starter for the next time you see that person in the staff room or even when just walking across the yard … *a parent was singing your praises last night* … which is a great opener for relaying the anecdote, making the other person feel valued and putting a spring in their step for the rest of the day.

Some situations at your discretion, require public affirmation. The daily gathering makes it possible to relate these little anecdotes in a timely manner while the incidents are still fresh. It might for example be on the morning after parent-teacher interviews the night before, (aside from acknowledging the extra efforts of staff), to remember to say … *great job Michelle, providing the meal for us last night'*…

Affirm publicly … *confront privately* … is a catch-cry that I liked to use as part of staff induction and community building sessions. I would try to regularly browse through the staff list to check who I had not been in contact with recently; *Is there someone on the list that I can affirm ?*

Catch people doing the right thing is a silly little saying really but it does highlight the importance of looking for opportunities to affirm people, by letting them know, often in the front of their peers, that their contributions have been appreciated. It also reminds us not to be obsessed with the reverse of pulling people into line when they are not meeting expectations. Positive reinforcement works wonders, rather than breeding a law-based, police-state mentality. For example in the perpetual battle that schools have in keeping the grounds tidy, the following acknowledgement could have been made at a staff gathering:
. .. *good job working on the rubbish folks ... I have to tell you about something that made my day yesterday .. . I saw Chris walking down the path towards the senior school and over in the middle of the lawn was a pile of rubbish that someone had left there at the end of lunch. He quietly went across started picking it up .. . and a couple of year 12s then came across and voluntarily joined in to help finish the job* …
That's also the power of modelling in practice.

It is where constructive criticism or even blatant negative critical comments are received that the second part of the above comes into play – *confront privately* – reminding us not to fall into the trap of making public comments about individuals or groups, that can in any way be taken as a personal attack. Sensitive issues must be talked

through. As leaders we must develop confidence in our ability to have the difficult conversation in a timely manner. This unfolds another recommended leadership motto: … *beware the dreaded email.* I learned the hard way, having made the mistake of trying to articulate my concern in an email. The problem with electronic communication is that the body language and the inflections and emotions contained within the tone of voice are all missing. What I was trying to say was completely misinterpreted and taken out of context, which resulted in quite a hurtful situation. So we should never outline sensitive issues in an email. We must have the guts instead to invite the person in to talk to them face to face – and do not put it off! We must however, make sure that we give ourselves generous time to prepare for the difficult conversation.

The language that we use and embed in our community is critical. A practice that I liked to use every year as part of staff induction and also regularly revisit with the whole staff, was to run a little exercise to remind ourselves about words that we use in our everyday language.

The exercise goes something like this: I would firstly ask people to assemble themselves in small groups. I have used this in small staff settings too, where the small group might be the whole staff! Then ask the question ... *In the context of building community, what single word is the most divisive word in the English language?* Unless people have been previously prompted in this thinking, rarely do they come up with the word THEY. As soon as we use the word *they,* it sets people or groups apart. Why shouldn't they be WE? (after all **we** are all in this together). It is very easy for example, in an R-12 school, to refer to the secondary or junior school section as they. The leadership group or management can often be the *they* in a school community.

What we are talking about now is really the shaping of **culture.** Culture can be informally defined as … the way we do things around here. The shaping of our culture should be informed by the gospel and the study of the gospel (theology).

Jesus strongly reinforced inclusivity – daring to engage with many people on the margins, for example, with the Samaritan woman at the well, the lepers, the thief on the cross – highlighting in practice the equality of all people regardless of their background or context. We need to reflect this gospel message in our daily practice. Sadly I encountered situations in our schools where this was a battle, when for example, there was a push to welcome more Indigenous students and families, and provide an opportunity to really make a difference in their lives. It was not uncommon to encounter resistance and even racist resentment from the middle class white anglo-saxon families, who saw these Indigenous students and families as a disruption and possible threat to the learning opportunities for their own children.

One of the things that I was keen to do when I had the opportunity to take up the principal role again was to ensure that what happened in practice in the school setting matched the rhetoric of what we say we are about as Lutheran schools or that the gospel was genuinely informing our practice. In fact I was keen to ensure that it also worked the other way – that our practice was a living witness to the gospel. I had found throughout my time away from the front line and particularly in working with a number of beginning and early career principals, that I became very reflective about the *art of principalship,* very analytical and keenly mindful of the finer points, many of which I realised I had not been consciously aware of previously.

It is easy to miss even the smallest of things in our traditional practice that can fly under the radar as contradicting the gospel. One such minor, perhaps pedantic example is the staff photo. Jesus made it very clear to his *staff exec members* James and John, that there was no way that they were entitled to reserved places of importance alongside of him. In well over 30 school staff photos that I have been a part of during my career, in every one of those photos, the principal sat centre front, with other persons, usually in decreasing order of authority and seniority taking up the immediate positions to the left and right. I decided that a

different approach was needed and arranged for all of the non-teaching staff to be seated up front first, purely on the basis of the order that the photographer required for balance of heights. When I learned that someone thought that this was also an inequality, the following year we made it a completely random mix of teaching and non-teaching staff, ignoring any seniority or perceived status through position, or role. I am sure that in school households around the community some people would have asked about the seating arrangement – *Is that the principal?* (pointing to the person centre-front holding the sign) … which would have been an opportunity to point out that every single human being is created equal and highly valued. No one person is more important than another – just a small way in which the gospel informs our practice.

Reserved car parking spaces for persons in authority is another small example of us getting it wrong. The only spaces that should have priority, upfront, prime position, are those reserved for the use of visitors to our school. Why shouldn't the principal, director, or business manager find a car parking space along with everyone else? Does it matter if we as leaders have to walk a bit further and in any case only as far as everyone else?

The importance of *other* is the final thread of thinking to highlight as a critical dimension to building community. Looking out for others, or simply the term *hospitality* is another of the pillars of Ignatian spirituality. In a school setting, the daily gathering allows us to regularly acknowledge and welcome others. Lutheran schools across Australia have built up a strong reputation for being caring communities. It is however something that we should not take for granted. It is good to regularly examine how we are doing in the caring stakes. As part of the ongoing school improvement process, we should ask … *are there things that we can do better?*

The design of the admin building of our school in relation to the rest of the buildings and infrastructure, was such that it was quite common for

staff to use the main front reception area as a thoroughfare. We worked hard on locking into our culture the mentality that if there were any visitors present in that area, that we must acknowledge them, and connect with them if they were not obviously being attended to. This clearly made an impact. On numerous occasions people who had visited the school later commented about the hospitality shown and the friendly, welcoming nature of our staff. Small things matter. To make them stick and become an embedded part of culture, they have to be continually revisited and reinforced in the same way that we repeatedly need to remind ourselves about language. I made a point of briefing reception staff about people who were scheduled to visit our school; to make sure they could recognise them when they arrived and would be able to give them a special personal greeting by name. As one who made hundreds of school visits across all states, I found it annoying when for a scheduled visit, the receptionist would ask … *and what was your last name again? or where did you say you were from?*

Legend has it that an ageing Jesuit was too ill to lead his congregation in worship. He decided to send along a prepared message to be read out. It consisted of one word … *other.* While there may not be substance in this anecdote, the point is nevertheless made about the importance of looking out for others. These days, we should exercise caution in using the term *others,* since it can be interpreted in a similar way to what was discussed when talking about the language of *we* and *they.* We want to avoid using *others* in the sense that it can potentially be translated as persons or groups of people that are different or alien to ourselves.

Empowerment and shared vision
Someone once asked me what I felt was the most important aspect of my work as a principal, to which I replied, *the empowerment of people.* I want to link this task to that of developing a shared vision. It is not uncommon in any workplace to have the rank and file staff grizzle about the management, usually around issues like not knowing what is going on, not having input into decision making, perceived lack of action, etc.

Staff need to feel that they have genuine opportunity to have input and are listened to. I would make sure that school improvement sessions were intentionally named and locked into the meeting calendar. Beware contrived consultation, (where the leader or leadership seeks input but then proceeds to do their own thing anyway), which in many respects is just as bad as no consultation at all. It is important to develop a process that clearly indicates to staff that their voice has been heard. This involves regular reporting back to update progress.

In school improvement sessions, I like to use a series of open ended questions in regular school improvement consultation forums. For example:

How can we improve our existing services to the community?
Are there some things that you would like to see changed?
What new initiatives would you like to see explored?
What things need to be most urgently attended to?

and overall, the question: **i t a b w 2 d t ?**
                     (is there a better way to do this?)

There are a few key phrases that I think summarise this whole area of establishing a strong culture of empowerment and the shaping of a shared vision:

'The biggest risk is to take no risk at all'.

'The biggest mistake that an organisation can make is to assume that what has served them well yesterday, will continue to serve them well today and into the future'.

'Don't get stuck in the rut of past practice'.

'There can be no improvement without change'.

Staff need to feel that they have a licence to go for it, to try new things, to take risks. They need to be reassured that it is OK if something fails. The main thing to remember is that we have given ourselves a chance to improve if we have tried something new, but we will eventually remain stuck in that rut of past practice if we just keep on doing things the same way.

All of this when soundly implemented, leads to what I have tagged with the acronym O.O.O. *Organic Organisational Ownership*. Ownership from the ground up. When the rank and file staff feel that they are able to contribute to the shaping of the future directions of the organisation, they are happy staff who will naturally want to willingly serve and contribute in all sorts of ways. Leaders must be quick to acknowledge such willing selflessness.

Similar guidelines apply to hearing the voice of parents. One of my most valued mementos of my working career, is a letter written to me by a parent at the time of my retirement. It is special to me because it indicates that so much of the art of principalship that I tried to put into practice as a leader, had obviously been noticed by a perceptive parent:

> *'...rather than relying on your own individual vision, you intentionally initiated a process that involved genuine listening … open-mindedly receiving input … allowed the vision to continue to be shaped and strongly supported across the school community.*
>
> *… thank you for sharing your experience and insight, for acting with integrity and respect, for your spiritual direction and modelling of a life filled with God's love, for leading our school with wisdom and authenticity, for encouraging excellence in all areas and for intentionally engaging deeply, not only with the staff and students that you care for daily, but also with their families and the wider community.'*

Ensure corporate viability

This is a massive topic and I can only hope to cover some of the essential elements as I see them. The reality for independent schools, is that we live or die by the number of *bums on seats*. One of the great concerns of our Lutheran system, is that the vast majority of new principals come into the role having had very little training or experience in the area of marketing and promoting a school. Despite this, principals are expected to be experts, often arriving on the job with high expectation that they will come in and wave some sort of magic wand to get the school back on track with healthy enrolments.

In taking up the challenge of marketing a school, we first need to be clear on how we would answer the following two searching questions:

> *What sort of school are we?*
> *What sort of school do we want to be ?*

Lutheran Education Australia in partnership with its regions, has a critical role to play in ensuring that our schools reflect in practice what it means to be a school of the Lutheran Church of Australia. In *'Seeking authenticity',* I systematically summarised what it means to be an authentic Lutheran school, which *Growing deep* has developed in further detail. Rather than extensively referring to that material, I'd like to present an overview of the tensions, potential traps and pitfalls and key underlying issues associated with the business of promoting our schools. [33]

As schools of the church, it is important that our brand and culture match our theology, which comes back once again to the basic principle of ensuring that the gospel informs the nature of our schools in practice.

A real trap for our schools in the competitive independent school sector, particularly escalated in the big capital cities, is the pressure to simply become an elite private school, where the Christian focus as a central

part of daily operations is lost and remains only as a token facade. A few of our schools have been forced to head in the elite school direction by the market place that they have been drawn into as a result of the changing socio-economic nature of their catchment areas. Being a high-fee independent school in itself is not the issue, it is about the brand management that goes with it. The necessity of having to have magnificent facilities to be competitive in the top-end corner of the market, makes it hard to avoid appearances that a theology of glory prevails. Perhaps analogous to Jesus making repeated references to the difficulty for the rich man to get into heaven, high-end schools need to work much harder to remain authentically Lutheran, in order for an underpinning theology of the cross to win out over the pressures to yield to a theology of glory.

A few years ago, many of Australia's highly populated urban areas were in the grip of a major drought, resulting in quite severe water restrictions being put in place. I liken the task of marketing a faith-based school in today's environment as being similar to the task of trying to sell sprinklers to the home gardener in the midst of those water restrictions. The market had evaporated! Anecdotally, it seems that there has been a fast declining interest in families seeking out an independent school education primarily for religious or faith reasons.

I became acutely aware of this shift when I came back into the principal role. It was directly expressed to me by a parent that they were withdrawing their children from the school because of the overly religious nature of our environment. Despite debating this at length with them, I was unable to turn around that decision.

So how do we market ourselves? Do we ease off on promoting the value of a Christian education? Do we play down the compulsory nature of Christian Studies and participation in Christian worship?

I feel that we need to have the flexibility to vary the spiel that is given to prospective families. It is usually possible to gauge where people are at by gently enquiring about their background and how they feel about coming into a Christian community. The best chance that we have in making a difference in the lives of any *fringe* families is to get them into the school and allow us to show them Jesus through our daily actions. With the Spirit at work anything is then possible.

In light of the spirituality discussions in part 1, I believe that we need to steer away from marketing ourselves as religious schools. Overtly setting out to impart a head knowledge package of the Christian religion has declining market appeal. On the other hand, if we can convince families of the need to explore the inner mysteries of human existence through a spirituality lens, we have the potential to tap into society's surging interest in spirituality, as we seek to provide a genuinely holistic education experience. This incorporates building awareness of the station of others, particularly those less fortunate than ourselves and fostering an automatic response to want to care for them. We can mount a very strong case for the flawed nature of an education that ignores the spiritual dimension of human life.

Having said all that, it is important to remember that we cannot *sell out* on who we are as schools of the church. We cannot be deceitful to prospective families. We need to stand boldly on our platform of striving to be a Christian community. We can give a commitment that we offer the opportunity to explore the spiritual dimension of human existence, while being quite open about encouraging young people to grow into a deeper understanding of Christian spirituality.

The whole philosophical matter of how to market the spiritual component of who we are as authentic Lutheran schools aside, as leaders, we need to be highly intentional and strategic about marketing. When working with schools, I like to encourage them to think in terms of intergenerational viability – that is, we are not just planning strategies

for the immediate future or even the next five or ten years, but rather we are aiming to make decisions that will secure the viability of our schools for the next generation, when our current students are themselves the parents in our school community.

Within the marketing task, broadly speaking I believe we should be striving to promote our schools as … *schools for the people.* (Schools for all people from all walks of life.) That fits our theology. While I concede that some of our schools have been dragged into the elite private school market place, it is generally not a space that we should be actively seeking to enter. Part of the whole leadership expectation of a Lutheran school principal, is to ensure authenticity of our system; to ensure that the gospel and our theology are reflected through our daily operations. If we feel that is not the case, then it is a call to action. We are required as part of our oath of installation to stand up and be counted. Even if something is regarded as being *the way that we do things around here* (our working definition of culture), even if it may be regarded as being set into the concrete of school tradition, if it is not informed and supported by the gospel, then we have an obligation as spiritual leaders, to do something about it.

Anything that gives a hint of being elitist in the way that we conduct ourselves, should be brought under scrutiny. Humility is a key word. For the sake of integrity, the message that we send to our community must be consistent with our rhetoric about who we are as schools of the Lutheran church. Paul's words to the Philippians (Chpt 2) provide us with a great template, a creed even, upon which to model our daily operations:

[1] *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,* [2] *then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.* [3] *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.*

Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, [4] *not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.* [5] *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus*

In our community celebrations including things like student graduations, the challenge is to take the focus away from ourselves and ensure that all glory is given to God. Well-designed *worship* settings are the perfect gospel-informed forums for acknowledging the gifts, talents and achievements of students and staff while enabling the Spirit to gently waft through and go about its work.

Steering away from elitism does not equate to a watering down of standards. Striving for excellence in all things can be achieved in the context of genuinely aiming to serve the broader cross section of people in our community, with particular attention given to supporting the marginalised. (That's why it is important to make available assistance packages for families from lower socio-economic levels to enable them to access a Lutheran school education.) Let us remember also, as stated in the Lutheran education vision for learners … '*All learners are valued for who they are and whose they are.*'

In the end, with marketing, it is critical that we first get our product right. With that in place, word of mouth will be our most powerful marketing strategy and our schools will automatically market themselves.

Getting the product right demands that as leaders we also **drive educational excellence**. This is generally an area of high expertise for new and aspiring leaders, given that many come into the principalship on the back of their outstanding track record as educators. I think also, there is high chance of there being other team members in the school who can assist in driving educational excellence, which makes this an area in which most beginning principals would naturally lead with confidence. Hence this leadership thread will not be the subject of further expansion or commentary as part of this resource.

Thinking: the essential ingredient of innovation

This may seem an odd task to include in the top ten list. It is one that I added to the list after reading the book *'Innovation is a state of mind'.* [34] One of the traps of leadership is to allow ourselves to become too heavily engrossed in management, rather than ensuring that we dedicate a significant proportion of time to leading. In management we look to make sure things get done, while leadership is making sure that we are doing the right things. Effective leadership requires high quality critical and creative thinking. A great danger of the digital world, says James O'Loghlin, is that … *'we let technology rob us of thinking time'.* [34] It would have to be high on the list of every leader to want their school to enjoy a reputation for being innovative. Thinking is the first and most critical ingredient of innovation. The human mind is capable of amazing things if we give it the opportunity to do its work. We must assign thinking time. It is perhaps like the spiritual discipline of contemplative practice used in the *'Prayer of Examen'* as described earlier. [18]

Every single person therefore, is capable of innovation. Tapping into the creative thinking of the entire staff team makes the possibility of creative thoughts and ideas turning into innovative practice more likely.

We encouraged innovation by launching the concept of ... *'I've had a thought!'* This was a systematic approach to harvesting the creative ideas of all sectors of staff and then ensuring that the ideas were acknowledged and incorporated into our school improvement process. Out of that we also developed the notion of *signature*, which links back into marketing. Staff were challenged to identify what they thought was their *signature*. *What is it that you bring to this school community that makes parents want their children to be in your class?* (A revised wording for *signature* was used to encourage staff in non-teaching roles to also contribute their creative ideas.) The encouragement to identify a *signature*, required thinking time and self-reflection. All of these things were significant in helping to build the O.O.O as referenced earlier.

Miscellaneous threads

As mentioned in the introduction to part 2, the list of tasks to target was never intended to be an exhaustive list. Outside of the top ten tasks, there are a few important leadership threads that I will just mention in passing, that I think need to be placed on the radar at least to raise awareness.

The whole area of **governance** is something that LEA and the regions have been working on for many years. There are two aspects to this: the principal needs to be aware of the procedures and protocols for governance and councils too need to understand their roles and responsibilities. There are some good resources now available, but in the end, once the principal is fully up to speed on governance matters, there is a key role to play in helping to develop the council. It is suggested that the relationship with the council chair needs to be fostered, but like a good teacher–student relationship, professional distance should be maintained.

As leaders, ensuring that **support** mechanisms are in place for ourselves is a critical to-do task. Usually this will be put in place as part of the induction process. If it has not been attended to, then it should be raised for action. There is a lot of wisdom in having an independent person from outside of the school who can serve as a trusted confidante. The role of partner / spouse is critical, although there may be differing opinions on this point. It can be challenging if a spouse is also part of the staff community. The degree to which this can be successful depends very much on the personality of the spouse and the role in which they are employed. My experience has been that I needed to be able to unload some of the burdens of the workplace at home. For me, the support of my wife behind the scenes was critical in being able to cope with the principal role. It was very much a joint ministry.

Key involvement in **staff recruitment** is something to hang on to at all costs. There is a growing trend especially in large schools, to hand this

responsibility over to a human resources person. While I understand the need to have support in managing the ever increasing documentation and compliance demands of staffing, the principal must remain a major influencer and decision maker in staff selection. The whole fabric of the school community, its culture, authenticity and spiritual direction is at stake. Choosing the right staff is an important hidden thread of spiritual leadership!

Ultimately there is only one model of leadership that aligns with our theology. Traditional leadership typically involves the accumulation and exercise of power at the top of a pyramid. **Servant leadership** shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps everyone develop and perform as highly as possible. The servant leader sits at the bottom of the inverted pyramid. The flagship document of Lutheran education, *Growing deep,* repeatedly refers to service in the expanded descriptions of the leadership capabilities and vocational practices. [24]

The top ten traps
For another way of looking at it, this inverted self-check (in the form of a list of things to avoid), may be helpful as a basis for periodic reflection on the *art of principalship*. Most of the things mentioned in the *top ten traps* below have been variously inversely implied during the course of previous discussions:

1. **Loss of Christian focus**. We need to stay true to who we are as schools of the Lutheran Church of Australia.

2. **Sticking with the status quo**. Staying in the rut of past practice is a sure recipe for the eventual decline of a school. Dare to take risks.

3. **Small stuff blindness**. Don't turn a blind eye to the little things, because that is the resulting standard that is set.

4. **Thinking that we are better than others**. We can be proud of our standards, but it is a fatal mistake to think that we have all the answers.

5. **Thinking we have the best (only) view**. Recognise that somewhere, sometime in some place there will be someone who has a different and more attractive view than we do.

6. **Contrived collaboration and solo vision**. These are possibly worse than no collaboration at all. Going through the motions of hearing the voice and then doing our own thing breeds resentment and discontent.

7. **Complacency**. Failure to market when things are going well. Waiting lists and full classes can evaporate very quickly. Always continue to promote the school.

8. **Failure to delegate and build teams**. Avoid trying to do it all ourselves. That is a sure recipe for burnout and ultimate decline of a school. Use other staff around us to maximise the leadership strengths of the team.

9. **Avoiding the tough call**. Having the difficult conversation is an important skill to master. Do not delay having such conversations or making a tough decision. Ensure that we do not have rules for some and rules for others.

10. **Being a double agent**. Avoid the temptation to collect brownie points for ourselves. Look to give credit to others where possible and share the blame too when things go wrong.

I will leave you with three key words of leadership...

AUTHENTICITY
INTEGRITY
HUMILITY

... and a blessing

'Wherever we go,
even if we are travelling alone,
we are travelling in a crowd,
for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are with us. '

APPENDIX A

Meanderings of the mind

1   We intentionally acknowledge that we are in God's presence. This can be done quite formally if you wish, even by using the invocation; I begin this time of prayer / meditation / conversation with God – In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Alternatively if you prefer, it can be quite informal – Hey God here I am – ready to listen to what you have to say to me; to have a conversation with you.

2   At that point we do nothing further. We sit and wait. We actually allow the mind to wander.

3   After a period of time, we eventually will come back into conscious reality, recognising that we are in this time of prayer. We recollect where our mind wandered to, then construct a very short prayer to pay attention to the subject matter of our meandering. Verbalise to God exactly what we have been thinking.

4   Then we sit and wait again, effectively repeating the exercise. Invariably the big things on our mind, often worrying things, will come up as we meander. We systematically deal with those things with successive short prayer petitions. Sometimes the same things will come up again. We might then pray something like … *Hey Lord this is obviously a big thing … I really need your help with this and unload it on you and ask that you help me navigate through the problem …*

5   Eventually it is possible that we will run out of steam, even nod off – not a good thing if using the prayer technique while driving! Just let it happen, wander off, allow yourself to be miles away. You don't have to have any guilt feelings about wandering. Systematically hand things over to God as they come back into your conscious realm of the prayer context. It is OK to have negative feelings and even be angry with God – tell it as it is. There is no point pretending in prayer before God, who knows us better than we do ourselves anyway! Have fun meandering with God!

APPENDIX B

New covenant prayer

Dear God … it's great that you are not just in heaven, but are here with us, in us and around us.

When we think of you and what you have done for us we just say WOW! We ask that you would help us to hold your name in high regard.

We thank you that you decided to come to us in a special way through Jesus.

Help us to want to do things in a way that you would want us to, in all parts of our life.

We pray that you would continue to provide for us the things that we need and we thank you that we have plenty.

We are amazed that you have already forgiven us for all of our short-comings, no questions asked. Help us to show that same forgiveness to people around us who may have wronged us.

Keep us from getting off-track with our lives and protect us from being drawn into negative, divisive and destructive situations.

You are an amazing God. Your power is awesome and it's great that you are here with us right now and for all time.

YAY!   *N. Grieger, 2012*

END NOTES

1. From this point forward when using the term Lutheran school, this should be assumed to encompass all of our educational communities of learning, including kindergartens and early childhood services.

2. *'REUTHER ORATION: (Spiritual) Leadership in challenging times: Moving on from a flat-earth spirituality'* Neville Grieger. Delivered at National Lutheran Principals Conference, Hobart; 2018

3. *'Luther's Small Catechism'*. see URL https://catechism.cph.org/en/creed.html

4. *'Seeking authentic spirituality'* Nev Grieger: Blurb Inc; 2012

5. *'What is Religion For? Drawing out the Sacred in Secular Times', Reimagining God and Mission'.* David Tacey: ATF Press, Adelaide; 2006

6. *'Seeking authentic spirituality'.* Nev Grieger: Blurb Inc; 2012

7. *'The Spiritual Child: The New Science on Parenting for Health and Lifelong Thriving'.* Dr. Lisa Miller: St Martins Press; 2016

8. *'Six challenges: six mysteries'.* Norman Habel: Openbook Print; 2005. Presented at the Australian Conference for Lutheran Education (ACLE); 2004

END NOTES (Cont.)

9.   *'The spiritual revolution'.* David Tacey: Harper-Collins; 2003

10.   *'Disappearing church'.* Mark Sayers: Moody Publishers; 2016

11.   *'Teilhard de Chardin – The Divine Milieu explained'*. Louis M. Savary: Paulist Press; 2007

12.   *'A Wind/Breeze/Breath Through All Creation'.* Michael L. Leske: Unpublished; 2017

13.   *'God of surprises'*. Gerard Hughes: Darton Longman and Todd; 1985, 1996, 2008

14.   *'Finding God in all things: A Companion to the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius'*. William A. Barry, S.J.: Ave Maria Press; Ninth printing 2008

15.   *'The 7 habits of highly effective people'*. Stephen R Covey: Free Press;1989

16.   *'The Principal as Spiritual Leader: developing and leading faith communities'.* Malcolm Bartsch: Paper delivered at National Lutheran Principals Conference 2007.

17.   *'Celebration of discipline'*. Richard Foster: HarperCollins; 1998

18.   *'The prayer of Examen'*. www. ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/

19.   *'Luther's Works: American Edition'*. Jaroslav
       Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, eds. : Philadelphia:
       Fortress Press; 1955-1975

20.   *'The LCA and its schools'*. Lutheran Church of Australia policy
       statement. Adopted by LCA General Synod, October 2006

21.   Details of the staff formation modules can be accessed
       from the LEA website. See the link below.
       https://www. lutheran.edu.au/school-professionals-2/accreditation/

22.   See Luke 12:18 from the *'Parable of the Rich Fool'*.

23.   *'Doctrinal statements and theological opinions, Volume 1E'*.
       Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations.
       Adopted by LCA General Synod, 1981 Convention.

24.   http://growingdeep.lutheran.edu.au/

25.   *'Christian Studies Curriculum Framework*'. Lutheran Education
       Australia: Openbook Howden; 2015

26.   *'The naked gospel'*. Andrew Farley: Zondervan; 2009

27.   See appendix B *'New covenant prayer'*. Nev Grieger;
       Unpublished: 2012

28.   *'Ministry in Lutheran schools — real ministry?'* Rev Mark
       Greenthaner: Paper delivered at National school pastors
       and chaplains conference, Brisbane; 2011

END NOTES (Cont.)

29.   I realise that thrival is not a recognised English word. It is a word that I have made up to describe the movement of an organisation from a situation where it is struggling for survival, into a state of operation where it is thriving!

30.   These precise words have been variously used by Bishop John Henderson in addresses to gatherings of Lutheran educators, regionally and nationally in the past five years.

31.   *'Lutheran education Update'*. Barry Kahl: October 2000

32.   *'The top ten tasks to target'*. Nev Grieger: Unpublished; 2015

33.   *'Seeking authenticity'*. Nev Grieger: Blurb inc; 2012

34.   *'Innovation is a state of mind'*. James O'Loghlin: John Wiley & Sons Australia Ltd; 2016

Acknowledgements

Glossary

LCA: Lutheran Church of Australia

LEA: Lutheran Education Australia

LESNW: Lutheran Education South Australia, Northern Territory, Western Australia

LEVNT: Lutheran Education Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania

LEQ: Lutheran Education Queensland

LDP: Leadership Development Program

Fuelling the fire

In *Fuelling the fire*, Nev Grieger builds on his previous writing about Lutheran education in Australia. He explores the essence of spirituality in the twenty first century and urges a fresh approach — one that sits outside the box of traditional thinking and resonates with today's school communities. He encourages school leaders to see their spiritual leadership role as foundational and intrinsic in all they do as leaders. He challenges leaders to develop a culture that sees all staff influencing and supporting the spiritual life of the school community.

Nev's wide experience in leading Lutheran education enables him to provide practical and insightful advice. This book is a 'must read' for leaders in Lutheran education as well as those aspiring to leadership roles. Use it as a tool for a self-check for spiritual leadership or simply soak in its inspiration.

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