Who is the spiritual leader of your school?

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Abstract: Fundamental to understanding the context of this study is awareness of Anglicanism's varied expression. The Anglican Church seeks the '*Via Media*' held together in a dynamic tension of debate. Anglican school principals lead faith formation in this context of diversity, which leads to the purpose of this study: to explore Australian Anglican school principals' perceptions of their role and capability as school leaders of faith formation within the Anglican Church's mission. The three questions guiding this study relate to the ways in which the principals understand their role, their capability for the role, and the ways in which the Anglican Church has equipped them to be faith formation leaders in their schools.

Underpinning this study is the assumption that nurturing the Christian faith in the Anglican tradition is a core task of Anglican schools. The literature reviewed indicates that principals of Catholic and Lutheran schools are considered to be faith formation leaders of their schools. As a consequence, this paper commences with the proposition that the principal of an Anglican school plays a key role in leading faith formation. Anglican school faith formation leadership has been explored in cultural and symbolic dimensions of leadership. This qualitative study has explored two purposively sampled Australian Anglican school principals' perceptions from an open research stance. The theoretical framework has valued the participants' context, using data gathering methods of interview, survey questionnaire, observation and documentary analysis. Areas for further study include the shared faith formation leadership roles of principals and school chaplains; the fostering of a culture of Anglican school research; the provision of professional mentoring for principals; the relationship of principals to the Anglican Church; and provision by the Anglican Church of guiding statements and training to equip principals for their faith leadership roles.

1 The Australian Anglican context of the question

1.1 Introduction: This paper is based on a study of a lightly researched topic. Consequently, the themes of enquiry are narrow, seeking to gain understanding of how the participating principals make meaning of their faith formation leadership of their schools. Questions about others who play roles in faith formation leadership, such as school chaplains, Diocesan bishops and Education Commissions, Chairs of school councils and council members, members of school staff and Religious education teachers and others, were not included. The literature examined indicates that the prime school faith formation leadership role is played by the principal. The Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane reported:

> The 1978 School's Report recommended the Diocese consider ways to make more funding available for the training of chaplains as well as acknowledging that schools and school staff were evangelists for the Anglican Church. It continues to be a strategic issue for our schools as these appointments are significant roles in supporting Heads in the leadership of faith communities (Anglican Diocese of Brisbane, 2008, p. 88).

The importance to Anglican schools of Anglican identity and Diocesan mission is noted in, "there is a need for a clearer vision of what it means to be an Anglican school in the Diocese of Brisbane" (Nicholson, 2007, p. 1), and, "Councils and Heads are charged with maintaining a direction and culture that respects the traditions and direction of each school while aligning with and furthering the Mission of the Diocese" (Nicholson, 2007, p. 23).

1.2   Anglican schools seeking Anglican identity: There are 153 Australian Anglican schools (AASN, 2009), 4,690 Anglican schools in the United Kingdom (Church of England, 2009), over 1,200 Anglican Schools in the USA (National Association of Episcopal Schools, 2009) and more Anglican schools in other countries. Fostering a distinctive Anglican identity is a current concern for American Episcopal schools and also for United Kingdom Anglican schools. The National Society has developed, "an assessment sheet that explores the sources of evidence that can be used to assess a school's Christian character" (National Society, 2001, p. 19). Also, "the General Synod of the Church of England has resolved that Church schools stand at the centre of the Church's mission to the nation" (National Society, 2001, p. v).

The Australian Anglican Church is challenged to define what an Anglican school is because of "the fragmentedness of Australian Anglican identity" (Reid, 2006, p.250), and there being no unifying national Anglican school system. Cole observes of Australian Anglican schools:

> At one end of the spectrum are relatively new schools, some of which have been founded with a desire to keep fees as low as possible. At the other end are extremely well-resourced high profile schools with long histories and much higher fees. Some are fiercely independent, while others nestle closely with a local Parish. The task of understanding what Anglican identity might mean in this context is further hampered by a lack of common expectations at many levels (2006, p. 335).

Anglican Mission is expressed as the 'Five Marks of Mission', which is a touchstone for Anglicans throughout the world (Aspinall, 2006b):

> The mission of the Church is the Mission of Christ to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom;
> To teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
> To respond to human need by loving service;
>
> To seek to transform the unjust structures of society, and
> To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

The first two Anglican Marks focus on faith formation. Principals of Anglican schools are leaders of Christian faith formation, in an Anglican context that lacks common expectations at many levels and unclear Anglican identity. This paper focuses on the role of Anglican school principals as faith formation leaders, in the light of the following question posed by the Australian Anglican Primate, Archbishop Aspinall, "How can we ensure that the mission of Anglican schools is aligned with the mission of the whole Church?" (Aspinall, 2008, p. 8).

1.3   The Australian Anglican Context: Complementing this diverse context of Anglican identity is a tradition of vigorous flexibility, allowing Anglicanism to hold together through its differences (Rayner, 2006). Stephenson captures the fluidity of Anglican identity:

> There is not now, and there never has been a distinctive Anglican theology. We have no Thomas Aquinas (sic) or Luther, no Calvin or Zwingli (Stevenson, 1988, pp. 174-175).

The Anglican Communion's ability to journey together is found in the *Via Media*, the middle way which involves holding one's position on any topic and also respecting alternative positions. It entails mutual acceptance of wide diversity of Biblical interpretations, cultural perspectives and Anglican expression, based on each Diocese's cultural context (Pobee, 1988). This provides challenges for Australian Anglicans:

Because power and its first cousin property, are held at the Diocesan level, the Diocese can easily tend in the Australian environment to become a self-referencing totality and thus to constitute an empirical reality which is often overwhelming and seriously corrosive of open conversation both within its own arena and in relation to the wider church (Kaye, 2006, p.20).

Australian Anglican challenges are resolved only with patience and time because authority is "not imposed by organs of governance from above" (Rayner, 2006, p.44).

Diverse expressions of Anglicanism are held in cohesion by Scripture, Reason and Tradition serving as 'checks and balances, to restrict and revitalize each other' (Avis, 1988, p. 415). The salient points of Anglican tradition, contained in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, are adherence to Scriptures, Creeds, Dominical Sacraments and Episcopal leadership, although their interpretation and application varies widely. These various guideposts offer some bonds of unity, however Holloway says of Anglicanism:

People who like a well-chiselled definition in doctrine and ethics will find us irritating, because we have a debilitating weakness for seeing the other side of the question (Holloway, 1984, p. 5).

While the moderate reasonableness of Anglicanism can end up as "the bland leading the bland" (Holloway, 1984, p. 4), or alternatively as 'seriously corrosive of open conversation' according to Kaye, another perception of the *Via Media* is that it gives Anglicanism a capacity to tolerate internal divisions because of respect for expressions of faith and order from widely differing views and practices: It is "a distinctive tradition, but it is a tradition not bound by traditionalism, and hence it is able to reinvent itself, as the women's ordination issue has demonstrated" (Cowdell, 2006, p. 195).

Aspinall at the commissioning of an Anglican school principal stated:

We can do no better than to keep in mind the reading we have heard today from the letter to the Church at Philippi. Would that it had gone on for one more verse, for that verse sums up the whole task of Christian leadership. 'Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus' (Phil. 2.5) (Aspinall, 2006a, p. 1).

This raises questions about how Anglican school principals living with the same mind as Jesus Christ in faith formation leadership might function amidst lack of clear Anglican identity, set against a wider Anglican *Via Media* context of fluid debate.

1.4   The Context of Australian Anglican schools: Presenting each diocesan bishop's opinions and their diocesan educational context is beyond this brief paper, material mainly being drawn from the Diocese of Brisbane. This reflects the Australian Primate's immediate policies, which contribute significantly to understanding the context for this study. Echoing the international diversity of the Anglican Church, in the Diocese of Brisbane, twenty Anglican schools operate under five different governance models. The Diocesan Financial Services report for 2006 showed that of the total $40,563,000 in loans approved in that year, $33,509,000 was for the twenty schools (Anglican Diocese of Brisbane, 2007). Of the 381 pages of the 2009 Diocesan Year Book, 117 pages are reports by schools and the Schools' Commission (Anglican Diocese of Brisbane, 2009), demonstrating the variety and significance of these schools in the Diocese of Brisbane, reflecting a similar variance and importance of Anglican schools for other Australian Dioceses.

The role of Anglican schools, in common with other educational institutions, is the provision of academic excellence, cultural and sporting development and the holistic nurture of the students. A feature of Anglican schools especially valued by their dioceses is their mission of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and teaching, baptising and nurturing people (Aspinall, 2006b). This demonstrates a high value afforded Australian Anglican schools as a context within which leadership in faith formation is also highly regarded.

1.5   Contextual issues about Australian Anglican school faith formation leadership: In light of Anglican schools as places of Anglican mission, Aspinall notes that "the work of Christian and spiritual formation in our schools has struggled somewhat for a rationale and an effective methodology" (2004, p. 5). He further mentions that "there isn't necessarily a strong sense in our schools of what it means to be an Anglican community" (2004, p. 6). In contrast to principals of Catholic and Lutheran schools who are provided with role statements for faith leadership (Lutheran Education Australia, 2001; Queensland Catholic Education Commission, 2006), principals of Anglican schools have a lack of guidance in faith formation leadership.

Coupling Anglicanism's deficiency of role definition for Anglican school principals and the diversity inherent in the *Via Media*, an issue emerges concerning the guidance and capability of Anglican school principals to lead faith formation in their schools. Retired Bishop Alfred Holland writes, "I always found the problem was to find good Anglicans who were at the same time good teachers and leaders. This has been on the Church's agenda ever since I arrived in Australia – nearly fifty-two years ago" (A. Holland, personal communication, March 1, 2006). A key issue impacting the relationship between the Brisbane Diocese and its schools is, "the articulation (or lack thereof) by the Diocese of the role of schools within the broader mission of the Diocese" (Nicholson, 2007, p. 5), and, "there continues to be no formal policy for leadership in Anglican schools" (Sly, 2008, p. 7). .

Fundamental to any role is the expectations for successful performance of that role. In light of the diversity of the Australian Anglican Church and its schools, is the question: How do Australian Anglican school principals understand their role as faith formation leaders?

Extensive literature guides Catholic school principals, ranging from global statements (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977) to regional (Queensland Catholic Education Commission, 2006) and archdiocesan initiatives (Gowdie, 2006), as with Lutheran principals. This leads to the second specific research question: How do Australian Anglican principals feel capable and equipped to be faith formation leaders in their schools?

Both the Catholic and Lutheran Churches have fostered scholarly research to inform school principals and others involved in the educative process (Albinger, 2005; Duignan, 2005). This offers enhanced understanding for principals exercising religious leadership. A third specific research question is: How does the Anglican Church equip Australian Anglican school principals to be faith formation leaders in their schools? These questions arise not only from the Australian Anglican context, but also from the literature reviewed for this paper.

2 A review of the literature

2.1   Church-Sponsored Schools as Sites for Formation in Faith Tradition and Community: Faith can be understood as an objective body of orthodox knowledge providing fundamental certainty circumscribed by doctrine (Cowdell, 2009). Alternatively it can a subjective process of making meaning by reasoning, making moral judgements, relating to reliable authority, forming a coherent world-view, and finally understanding and relating to

symbols (Fowler, 1981). Faith expression is influenced by the individual's cultural context (Groome, 1991) and by age and maturity (Hansen, 1999). Groome explains faith as both subjective and objective, a dynamic interaction of cognitive belief, a trusting relationship with God and the community of faith, and behavioural obedience to God's will. Educating people for this living faith "is an ontological enterprise that is to inform, form and transform people in heads, hearts and life-styles: it is to engage nothing less than the marrow bone" (Groome, 1991, p. 21). The challenge for Christian schools is how to form people in this living faith.

Church schools can assist students make meaning of life by offering engaging experiences of tradition as a part of faith formative processes; "in this way, faith schools can have a role in creating positive identities that express living religious and cultural traditions" (Johnson, 2003, p. 470). Tradition enables a sense of belonging through engaging community encounters with a living revelation of a community's particular faith expression (Cole, 2006; Groome 1998), helping school members discover deeper meanings beyond mere self-interest and alienation resulting from globalism and post modernism (Duignan, 2003).

Groome writes that the post-modern view of tradition in faith,

> robs even the present of its 'realness', seeing nothing as stable and 'present' but everything as ad hoc and virtual. Whatever emerges is particular to each social age and context, and is soon superseded by another 'virtual reality' with nothing remaining to be called a tradition. There is a counter-voice to both modernism and post-modernism as it were, which appreciates their insights but refuses their bias against tradition, insisting it can be reclaimed in reflective and life-giving ways (1998, pp. 217-218).

Eaude (2007) argues that the post-modern world is characterised by uncertainty and confusion, in which people lack sustained affiliation to anything, let alone to a belief system. He contends that schools are places in which children make meaning of their lives in ways lacking in the broader individualistic consumer culture. Additionally, faith development in faith communities facilitates discovery of one's place and meaning by belonging and participating in a social context (Cowdell, 2009). Faith formation of students in tradition, community and meaning-making in Church-sponsored schools is the distinctive reason for those schools' existence, (Astley, 2002; Groome, 1998)

2.2 The Principal's Role in Faith Formation in Church-Sponsored Schools: A sample of Church of England, Catholic and Lutheran literature concur that church school principals are expected to live their faith in daily life, to demonstrate a strong Christian commitment (Albinger, 2005; Dorman & D'Arbon, 2003; National Society, 2004), and to encourage others to grow in faith (Albinger, 2005; Groome, 1998). Gowdie writes that the literature:

> consistently indicates that if leaders do not see spiritual formation as central to effective ministry in Catholic education, in overall staff development and in their own leadership, then it is highly unlikely that staff will develop this perspective (Gowdie, 2006, p. 25).

Bolman and Deal (2002) note that successful school leaders vigorously demonstrate what they value, authentically living what they believe and believing what they live. Behaviour of school principals is significantly driven by their personal values, which, if not personally explored and understood, overrides values that might be desired by employers, further affirming the need for authenticity in Christian school leadership (Branson, 2004). For the spiritual and personal formation of leadership within Catholic Education, there is "an absolute commitment to and conviction about the centrality of spiritual formation for true and strong Christian leadership" (Queensland Catholic Education Commission, 2006, p. 19).

2.3 Recent Developments in Educational Leadership: A plethora of contemporary leadership models all "move away from the notion of the single, heroic leader and advocate a culture of shared leadership" (Spry, 2004, p. 9). Shriberg, Shriberg and Lloyd assert:

> In every context, a flood of information makes it impossible for one person to go solo. We need each other's eyes, ears and insights to better gauge the situation and the necessary actions for exerting leadership (2002, p.11).

Contemporary leadership may be seen as a shared and collaborative experience in which school principals sustain their own and others' capacity to work in various areas of responsibility by inviting, sharing and enabling others within the school.

The specific context of each Church school is different from all other Church schools (Slattery, 1998), resulting in differing practices of leadership, involving, "a multidimensional integration of theory, process and practice. What is successful in one situation may not be useful in another" (Shriberg, Shriberg & Lloyd 2002, p. 10). Principals enable school members to make meaning in ways suited to the context in which the school exists (Spry, 2006) providing the opportunities to encounter the Gospel values such as compassion, forgiveness, repentance, justice and faithfulness, summed up in Matthew 22:37:

> He said to him, 'you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind'. This is the Greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' (NRSV Bible, 1989).

Over time, Christ's teachings and life have been expressed in Scripture, Sacraments and traditions, maintained and developed in shared values and beliefs represented in Creeds, Baptism, Eucharist and other liturgies. These have grounded people in local, Diocesan and broader Christian communities. Church school principals facilitate contextually appropriate engagement with these practices and teachings in faith formation. Davies & Davies (2005) describe this leadership capacity as 'contextual wisdom'. The history and contemporary experiences of a school need to be understood by the leader, placing their unique school in its wider community and the educational world. Features of contextual wisdom are:

- Understanding and developing culture;
- Sharing values and beliefs
- Developing networks, and
- Understanding the external environment (Davies & Davies, 2005, pp. 25-26),

which contribute to the faith dimension of Christian school culture. Each Christian school has its own context calling for the contextual wisdom of the principal.

2.4 Cultural leadership of church-sponsored schools: Awareness of connectivity between a school's context and culture is important as, "schooling occurs within a cultural framework and educators ignore the contextual realities of their schools at their own peril" (Dorman & D'Arbon, 2003, p. 36). School culture is the shared ideas, beliefs, standards, values and attitudes that students, parents, teachers, and a school community have inherited, hold, reinforce and pass on by social interaction and action (Deal, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2007). Eaude asserts, "values we live, the qualities we deem worthwhile, the environment we create and the expectations we have matter more than the content of the curriculum" (2007, p. 3).

The principal's capacity to create and amplify meaning in the school is enhanced by valuing what the community respects and values. Principals,

implicitly communicate key values and inculcate them via day-to-day actions. The parallels between successful managers and school leaders are compelling in terms of creating an overall school environment in which the spiritual development and transmission of a faith tradition can flourish (Johnson & Castelli, 2000, p. 79).

The principal marinates staff and students in culture (Deal, 1999), reinforcing and encouraging school members to strengthen the culture in their own lives and in the lives of others.

School culture can merely be, 'the way things operate around here' (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy & Wirt, 2004, p.135), however cultural leadership also looks to the future, changing the existing culture, "through actions, conversations, decisions and public pronouncements" (Deal, 1999, p. 55). Culture is a set of norms that provide meaning for school members, "a compass to steer people in a common direction" (Sergiovanni, 2007, p. 11).

Whether change 'fits' with an Anglican school's culture is tested against the Anglican five marks of mission, the schools' mission statement and other documents, overseen by the principal, school board and bishop. Aspinall states that "the mission of the school should be seen as part of and contributing to the wider overall mission of the church" (2003, p. 17). Knowing a school's mission is a component of cultural leadership:

> In study after study where the culture did not support and encourage reform, that improvement did not occur. In contrast, improvements were likely in schools where positive professional culture had norms, values and beliefs that reinforced a strong educational mission (Deal, 1999, p. 5).

To successfully lead meaning-making in faith formation, principals must know, sustain and develop school culture within the school's context and mission.

2.5 Symbolic leadership of church sponsored schools: The tangible observable expressions of school culture include,

> mission statements, curriculum, school histories, yearbooks and magazines. They would include major physical representations of the school such as its buildings and grounds, its artefacts, crests, mottoes and the school uniform. The tangible elements would also include the behavioural manifestations of the school's culture (Scott, 1998, pp. 7-8).

Symbolic leadership emanates from cultural leadership, valuing and expressing the tangible symbols of intangible community culture, offering understanding of the culture. "Culture does not exist separately from people in interaction. People hold culture in their heads, but we cannot really know what is in their heads. All we can see or know are representations or symbols" (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy & Wirt, 2004, p.134).

The dynamics of school leadership (Sergiovanni, 2007, pp.7-16) are expressed as five forces:
- Technical forces: derived from effective management skills;
- Human forces: harnessed and developed from available social and interpersonal resources;
- Educational forces: derived from diagnosing and developing curriculum, staff and programmes;
- Symbolic forces: By integrating and enhancing meaning of everyday experiences, the symbolic leader elucidates meaning and cultural significance of symbols in a school; and
- Cultural forces: The cultural leader enunciates and engages in school mission, explains and maintains values and traditions, develops, and communicates meaningful symbols and rewards those who reflect school culture.

Sergiovanni presents the first two forces as basic school management, whereas the remaining three are contextual and unique to each school. The first three are fundamental for competent schooling, the last two are essential to excellence in schooling. Any Church school, by its mission, should treat faith formation as a focus of excellence.

Deal (2005) presents two metaphors; leader as 'politician' and leader as 'poet'. Political principalship recognises the processes of power and conflict, making pragmatic decisions. These decisions are made within the value-laden context of the school, attending to the rich symbols portraying the values and culture of the school, titled the poetic frame. People

> create symbols and symbolic activity to give life meaning. Woven together these create a unique culture that bonds individuals in a common quest and provides unified direction, faith and hope. All human groups and organizations assemble over time a culture built around key symbolic elements: (Deal, 2005, p. 115).

In schools where symbols have lost their meaning or are ignored, fracturing eventuates and individuals experience loss of meaning. Deal offers seven principles for symbolic leadership:

- Revisit and renew historical roots.
- Use symbols that convey cultural values and beliefs;
- Recognise heroes and heroines as symbols representing school values;
- Convene and encourage rituals. Bond people together and to key values by rituals,
- Celebrate key events. Gather to celebrate core cultural values;
- Speak in picture words. Use metaphors to communicate deeper culture issues; and
- Find and tell stories that maintain and foster the culture (Deal, 2005, pp. 116-118).

Deal exhorts leaders to passionately seek and develop "sacred symbols" (2005, p.120), in order to keep schools alive and growing, resonating with Duignan's assertion:

> Through symbolic leadership activities the leader helps create a purpose which is embodied in the vision of the school. Through living out the vision the leader breathes a sense of purpose and excitement into the routines of daily life in the school. People in the school, teachers, parents and students, are challenged by this vision with the expectation that they will become committed to it (1998, p.211).

2.6 Cultural and symbolic leadership of Anglican schools: Christian faith development is intrinsic to a church school's mission. Amongst the ways that faith is expressed are physical experiences of Scripture, liturgy, Sacraments and traditions, all of which contribute to the store of the faith culture's symbols. The Anglican Church of Australia is contextually rich in the use of symbols expressing culture which need to be understood if they are to be meaningfully used in personal life. An interpretive booklet about the Eucharist observes:

> These small signs and gestures are part of the sacramental nature of the Anglican Church. The life of faith involves our whole self: the material body and the spirit. We use visible, tangible things: candles, the cross, the altar, bodily gestures, to remind us of spiritual realities (Ministry Education Commission, 2006, p. 2).

Anglican school principals as cultural and symbolic leaders understand and use contextually appropriate Anglican faith symbols to gather and unite schools shaped by mission. They share and strengthen culture, and make Christian meaning of the world by daily and authentically modelling Christian faith in all aspects of the life of the school.

2.7 Anglican school principals forming faith: The Brisbane Anglican Schools Ethos Statement shows awareness of impediments to promoting Anglican faith and practice, asking,

> whether it is appropriate to celebrate Holy Communion for staff and students when a significant number of those present are not Anglicans or baptised and communicant members of other faiths. In this matter, the Eucharist becomes not the bringing together of God's people, but the way of defining the difference between members of the school family (Anglican Schools Commission, 1996, p. 5).

A vision statement prepared for the Diocese of Brisbane Anglican schools offers, "a framework for discussion and review" (Anglican Schools Commission, 2009, p. 1). It shares with the Nicholson Report (2007), a desire to answer, "How can we ensure that the mission of Anglican schools is aligned with the mission of the whole Church?" (Aspinall, 2008, p. 8).

Aspinall encourages "the School's Office to develop new initiatives in assisting staff in schools to understand and own and value the Anglican ethos" (2004, p.13) because, a lack of strong Anglican culture in these schools potentially educates people to live in society without "equipping them to work for its transformation towards the reign of God" (Aspinall, 2003, p. 6). He notes that civic and corporate pressures can result in values drift and a death of schools as agencies of Church mission. Aspinall encourages school staff to be "explicitly drawing on the Christian faith, as it is received by the Anglican Church" (2003, p. 16). Anglican school principals have responsibility for cultural and symbolic leadership, if Anglican values are to be presented to school communities.

There is wide divergence of Anglican identity in Anglican schools as places of faith formation. This may range "from a whole-hearted embracing of them to an embarrassed peripheralisation of them" (Cole, 2006, p. 337). The West Australian Schools Commission expects "staff modelling of the Christian ethos; this is to be achieved through the appointment of staff who are excellent teachers and committed Anglicans" (Cole, 2006, p. 340). The Diocese of Melbourne requires "the Head be a member of a Church in Communion with the Anglican Church in Australia" (Cole, 2006, p. 343). In the Diocese of Sydney, principals and members of boards are to be practising Christians who have signed a statement of personal faith (Anglican Education Commission Diocese of Sydney, 2008).

Bednell (2006) posits that Anglican principals' religious leadership is expressed by personal faith, religious attitudes and ability to negotiate the relationship between their school and the Church. Spiritual leadership is usually shared with an ordained chaplain who is accountable both to the diocesan bishop and to the principal, needing an agreement as to how,

> that leadership will be incorporated in the overall leadership of the principal and other decision-makers in the school. This is not an easy task, given that there is no single model for the exercise of ordained ministry in Anglican schools (Cole, 2006, p.344).

The literature indicates the importance of Anglican school principals as faith formation leaders of their schools, in a context of diversity and unclear identity. This leads to a question as to how Australian Anglican school principals understand their role of faith formation leadership within the mission of the Anglican Church. A second question enquires, how do Australian Anglican principals feel capable and equipped to be faith formation leaders in their schools?

Looking beyond Australia, from 2006 the Episcopal Church has run short courses of one to three days for 'Aspiring Heads' and 'Newly Appointed Heads', addressing leadership issues including the Anglican identity of Episcopal schools (National Association of Episcopal Schools, 2009). This reflects the Episcopal Church's policy wherein "the head of school is the primary ambassador of, and advocate for Episcopal identity and, as spiritual leader of the school, shares this ministry" (N.A.E.S., 2005, p. 3). No research concerning faith formation leadership by Episcopal school principals which would inform this study has been located.

Church of England principals' roles includes non-delegatable responsibility for the Anglican character of the school. It is expected that, "in practice, the senior members of staff and particularly the Head have thought out their role as leaders in the school in the context and example of Jesus. Practical Christian leadership is shown in a thousand small decisions and examples everyday" (Weaver, 2001, p. 13). *The Way Ahead*, a report on Church of England schools in the United Kingdom, affirms the formative role of the principal, emphasising leadership by personal example (Dearing, 2001). Guidelines for selecting, appointing and developing staff in Anglican schools in England reinforce Christian commitment as prerequisite for Anglican school leadership (National Society, 2004).

Many Church of England schools prior to the 1970s had "no expectation that the head-teacher and teaching staff should be practising Anglicans (or even practising Christians)" (Johnson, 2003, p. 474). By contrast, *The Way Ahead* aims at seamless integration of schools into the Church's mission of bringing people to faith, with the principal playing a central role (Johnson, 2003). Johnson found that Church of England principals were ambivalent about faith, with faith leadership being "dependent on the personal and professional stance of the individual head-teacher" (2002, p. 217). Some principals avoided using the name 'Jesus' at school assemblies in acknowledgement of multicultural sensitivity, contrasting with:

> There was no such neutrality expressed by the RC headteachers. The (Catholic) school was to be regarded as much a part of the Roman Catholic church as the local parish. It was part of the partnership of staff, children, parents and the local parishes…all of the RC heads spoke openly of faith development in a taken-for-granted way through all the structures of the school. This was in contrast to some of the CE (Church of England) headteachers, who had been somewhat diffident about it (Johnson, 2002, p.214).

In Johnson's papers (2000, 2002, 2003) many Anglican school principals express lack of Anglican identity and indifference about spiritual leadership. This contrasts with the clarity of understanding of the expectations for the same roles performed by Catholic principals.

Ten Church of England principals interviewed by Street (2007) were unable to differentiate between Christian values and values espoused by any good school. *The Way Ahead* encourages employment of Christian teachers and principals for the development of Christian values and an Anglican ethos in schools. However "a fundamental aspect of the head-teachers' understanding of what constitutes distinctiveness in an Anglican school is not addressed in the report in a systematic and structured fashion" (2007, p.143). Similarly, the meaning of spirituality left principals confused because the Anglican Church does not provide, "a clearly articulated and philosophical rationale" (2007, p. 145), for faith formation within the school, in contrast with clarity of Catholic direction. Street concluded:

> there appears to be no systematic planned programme addressing the nature of Anglican school leadership [which] means that the notion of church schools being at the centre of

the Church's mission to the nation remains in the realm of rhetoric rather than reality. In summary, the Church's new-found enthusiasm for its schools appears not to be matched by a coherent and consistent consideration of the role and function of the Anglican Church school or the ministry of school leadership (Street, 2007, p. 147).

The U.K. experience seems to lack the necessary Church support for Anglican school principals to be cultural and symbolic leaders of faith formation leaders in their schools.

For Church of England principals to undertake training for faith formation leadership is a fresh expectation by the Church, seen as another set of professional standards and competencies for principal. Luckcock supports Street's (2007) argument that faith formation leadership training for Church of England principals is warranted, stating that it could be viewed as:

> a means by which church school leaders can articulate their philosophy of education confidently, in a way that encourages reflection about their spiritual values and beliefs, appreciate and strengthen their identity as ministers of the church, and (re)awaken their calling to serve the education of the young as a sacred vocation (Luckcock, 2006, p. 272).

This gives rise to the third research question for this study: <u>How does the Anglican Church equip Australian Anglican school principals to be faith formation leaders in their schools?</u>

Cultural and symbolic leadership of Anglican schools is 'the normative glue' that holds the school together (Street, 2007, p. 142). Street argues that Anglicanism's openness and lack of systematic guidance has contributed to principals experiencing vagueness about their role and purpose in faith formation. This study has explored whether the perceived gap between the rhetoric and the reality in U. K. Anglican schools, is also discernible in Australian Anglican schools. To inform this exploration, Australian Catholic and Lutheran literature has been canvassed.

2.8 Catholic and Lutheran faith formation leadership: Extensive Catholic and Lutheran school leadership literature has informed this study because much of the literature reviewed on symbolic and cultural leadership of Anglican schools has contrasted Anglican school leadership with Catholic schools leadership (Anglican Schools Commission, 1996; Aspinall, 2003, 2004: Cole, 2006; Johnson, 2002, 2003). Cultural and symbolic expressions of faith contribute to the context in which all three denominations operate faith-based schools.

The Catholic and Lutheran churches have research grounded in their specific contexts, such as the reshaped role of Catholic school principals following the demise of religious principals replaced by lay principals (Hansen, 1999) and an analysis of Lutheran principals' decision making within the Lutheran theological frame of the '*Two Kingdoms*' (Albinger, 2005). Both Churches have researched statements of dimensions of, and capabilities for, leadership in their schools (ACU National Leadership Flagship, 2005; Lutheran Education Australia, 2001), plus other supporting documents that guide and support the leadership of schools by principals. The following extract from a Lutheran document, similar to the Australian Catholic document exemplifies the guidance given to Lutheran and Catholic principals.

Capabilities for leadership and dimensions of leadership for Lutheran schools in Australia, lists six capabilities for school leadership: theological, personal, relational, professional, managerial and strategic, including a list of indicators. The Theological Capability is:

Theology expresses itself in a life of worship and service. Theological capability involves witnessing to Christian faith in the Lutheran tradition. It requires an understanding of Scripture and Lutheran theology to underpin leadership action.

The following indicators are listed for the Theological Capability:

- Is committed to a personal faith journey
- Serves as a witness to the gospel
- Engages in ongoing spiritual and theological development
- Clarifies and applies the school's mission
- Integrates faith and life

Five dimensions of leadership are also listed in this document: spiritual, authenticity, educative, organisational and community. The Spiritual leadership dimension is described:

Spiritual leadership focuses on living a Lutheran understanding of God's mission for the world with the intention of influencing and enriching the lives of students, staff and other members of the school community. This dimension of leadership provides educational opportunities for members of the school community to encounter a Lutheran worldview, to experience its gifts and to enhance life decisions in response to it. Guided by such a mission, leaders develop a community of life and worship. (ACU National Leadership Flagship, 2005, pp. 2-5)

These guiding documents highlight the Anglican lack of definition of role dimensions, capabilities and expectations for Anglican school principals. This has particular significance because of the general lack of definition and identity inherent in Anglicanism by comparison to the more defined systematic theological positions of Catholicism and Lutheranism.

From the review of the literature, the following four propositions emerged as significant for exploring the faith formation leadership role of Anglican school principals:

- An Anglican school's mission is nurturing faith as a process of meaning making by reflective and active engagement of individuals in the school community;

- The school principal plays a key role in leading faith formation of school members, leading with personal authenticity of Christian witness;

- Two dominant dimensions of Anglican school principalship in faith formation are cultural and symbolic leadership, which require the principal to understand Anglican culture and symbolic meaning and to portray them in daily life, and

- The Catholic and Lutheran Churches have provided statements of dimensions of leadership and capabilities for leadership of their schools, which in conjunction with detailed supporting documents, guide school principals in the performance of their duties. There is a lacuna of similar documents for Anglican school principals, who might or might not appreciate such guiding statements.

Anglicanism's fluidity of identity necessitates a pathless journey in which Australian Anglican school principals, charged with forming faith in their school communities, need to know the terrain of theology, liturgy and history in order to understand Anglican culture and symbolism in leading others. The literature has shown that Anglican school principals work with less clear role definitions in the area of faith formation than do Catholic and Lutheran principals.

If Anglican school principals are not suitably equipped to create their own path, in keeping with Anglican *Via Media* practice and culture, and are also left without clear definitions of role as faith formation leaders, then, like the English Church of England principals of Street's study (2007), they may be unable to distinguish between general social norms and Anglican values. They risk losing their way, experiencing values drift and lack of Anglican identity with consequent impact on their school communities.

3 Conclusions and recommendations from the research

3.1 The first three conclusions and recommendations are gathered under the theme of **principals of Australian Anglican schools leading faith formation and living the Anglican faith in their schools:** The diversity between Anglican schools is expressed by various forms of governance, ownership, religious expression and understanding of, and commitment to the mission of the Anglican Church. This is evident in the contrasting attitudes, perceptions and *modus operandii* of the two participant principals in the study. The varied expressions of Anglicanism in schools, might possibly exhibit some clusters of shared characteristics, such as: being founded recently, or having long histories; geographical clustering; being closely affiliated with a local parish or some other identifying feature(s). For a principal to lead a school in a manner that reflects its Anglican identity, personal authentic acceptance of the school's Anglican identity is of paramount importance. It is necessary that the principal feel a 'comfortable fit' with their school's expression of Anglicanism. This conclusion gives rise to **Recommendation One:** That study be undertaken to establish if identity specific groupings of Australian Anglican schools might be discerned, thereby assisting prospective principals to assess whether a school's Anglican culture and her/his personal Anglican culture fit comfortably together so as to ensure authentic faith formation leadership in daily life.

In order for Anglican principals to lead faith formation by authentically living the Anglican faith, they require sufficient awareness of Anglican diversity to be cognisant of their position in the Anglican spectrum of schools. Valuing an awareness of Anglican culture was an important issue for principals as faith formation leaders in this study. The diversity of Anglicanism may be an issue that aspiring principals of Anglican schools are not sufficiently aware of, particularly if their experience of Anglicanism has been limited. The Anglican Church has an opportunity to provide aspiring school principals with prerequisite training in awareness of Anglican issues necessary for comfortable mission leadership while simultaneously furthering a sense of Anglican school unity as principal aspirants undertake professional training together. This leads to **Recommendation Two:** That Anglican Church-funded pre-service training be provided for aspiring principals of Anglican schools to support authentic living of the Anglican faith, by developing awareness of and comfort with Anglican school culture and the unity and mission of the Anglican Church.

The participants frequently use the term 'comfort' as a descriptor of their experience of being the principal and faith formation leader of an Anglican school. Participants reveal a sense of comfort that includes 'feeling at home', and 'fitting into the Anglican culture', intellectually and spiritually. Additionally, they demonstrate a willingness to endure criticism in pro-actively affirming the Anglican culture in their schools. The study suggests that in the absence of Anglican Church documents defining faith formation leadership dimensions and expectations, Anglican principals need to have some sense of comfort. However, comfort can potentially have negative connotations, for example, a principal may influence the school to suit his/her personal spirituality, belief (Johnson, 2002), and personal comfort that may be

non-aligned with Anglican mission. The importance of comfort in this context is that it appears to be an informal means by which Anglican principals engage in ways that they negotiate with their school, the diocesan bishop and other representations of the Anglican Church beyond the school (Bednall, 2006). To more fully understand Anglican school faith formation leadership by principals, the meaning given by them to 'comfort' in this context and any importance that it may have, offers a valuable field of study. This leads to **Recommendation Three:** <u>That further research be undertaken to explore the meaning of 'comfort' as it is understood by Anglican school principals in the role of faith formation leaders, when used to describe their relationship with their school and the Anglican Church context in which their school is situated.</u>

3.2   A second group of three conclusions and recommendations have the theme **Principals of Australian Anglican schools sharing faith formation leadership in their schools:** The sharing of faith formation leadership by Anglican school principals with the school chaplain has been a significant issue in this study. Anglican school principals share leadership with specialists in the whole life of the school whilst retaining responsibility across the range of academic, administrative and extra-curricular dimensions in their schools. In faith formation leadership there is a need for authentic living of the Anglican faith that cannot be given as a responsibility to the chaplain or another person.   If the principal is to avoid being a dependent partner to an ordained chaplain in sharing faith formation leadership, then the principal should have a theological foundation in Anglicanism that enables an informed partnership as a shared leader of this key mission expression of Anglicanism. This requires more than awareness of Anglican diversity, as in the second recommendation. There needs to be grounding for principals in Anglican theology, liturgy, ethics and general matters so that they are conversant with contemporary contextual Anglican practice. This leads to **Recommendation Four:** <u>That principals of Anglican schools receive adequate training in contemporary Anglican theology, Scripture, ethics and general matters to enable them to share faith formation leadership as an informed partner with the teaching role of the bishop.</u>

Cole (2006) observes that an Australian Anglican school chaplain is answerable to both the school principal and the diocesan bishop and needs to be incorporated into the leadership of the principal and the structure of the school in a manner that suits the school. There are no models or guidelines for how this is implemented. It is possible that this relationship is an aspect of the 'comfort' that the principal experiences in faith formation leadership of an Anglican school, developing uniquely in each school and dependent on the principal and chaplain without any guiding criteria. Considering the importance of Anglican principals' faith formation leadership as an expression of the mission of the Anglican Church, it is an area in which study could be undertaken to assist the furtherance of the mission of Anglican schools and the Church. This leads to **Recommendation Five:** <u>That an exploratory study be undertaken to understand the shared faith formation leadership of Anglican school principals with their school chaplains as it contributes to the mission of the Anglican Church, with a view to developing guidelines for strengthening these roles and this relationship.</u>

There are many persons other than chaplains in Anglican schools, not mentioned in this study, whose impact on the life of an Anglican school may contribute to faith formation and its leadership. Chairs and members of school boards, school staff and senior staff in leadership roles, bishops, diocesan schools officers, local clergy, past students and others might share leadership roles with the school principal. As an unresearched area, there exist questions of current practice and potential opportunities for sharing of faith formation leadership by

Anglican school principals. This leads to **Recommendation Six:** <u>That the practice of and potential opportunities for principals to share their role of faith formation leadership of Anglican schools be further investigated.</u>

3.3   Conclusions and recommendations seven to eleven are grouped in the theme of **Principals of Australian Anglican schools being enabled by the Anglican Church to be faith formation leaders of Anglican mission in their schools:** This study has noted the value that principals place upon having a peer mentor. Both participants affirm the worth of informal and incidental experiences of being mentored in their professional development, with particular reference to being formed as faith formation leaders. This study demonstrates that peer mentors have provided encouragement, personal example and role modelling for Anglican principals in their formative years. Lutheran Education Australia has implemented principal mentoring programmes since 2000 and might offer valuable insights for the establishment of mentoring for Australian Anglican principals as faith formation leaders. This leads to **Recommendation Seven:** <u>That the Australian Anglican Church select and train suitable people to be peer mentors for aspiring and early career principals to support them in their development as faith formation leaders and in other dimensions of school leadership; and that a formal peer mentoring programme for principals of Anglican schools be established and maintained by the Australian Anglican Church.</u>

Literature revealed abundant research studies and scholarly publications pertaining to leadership of Catholic schools. The insights gained and the debates fostered have enriched Catholic education practice, leadership and teacher preparation by providing academically qualified expertise to support and foster Catholic education culture Through research studies and the dissemination of literature in scholarly journals, Catholic school principals, academics and others give voice to their experiences, pose questions and share insights. There is also a culture of research and scholarly writing in Australian Lutheran education. Considering the lack of clarity and familiarity about aspects of Anglicanism expressed by the participants in this study, the development of a supportive climate for Australian Anglican educational research and scholarly publication may be of benefit to faith formation leadership and Anglican education generally. The Anglican Diocese of Sydney has begun to encourage research and publication for this purpose (Anglican Education Commission Diocese of Sydney, 2008). From this follows **Recommendation Eight**: <u>That the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia foster and support research which benefits Anglican schools in furthering Anglican mission.</u>

and **Recommendation Nine:** <u>That the Anglican Church regularly publish a journal of peer-reviewed scholarly literature concerning Australian Anglican education.</u>

This conclusion addresses the challenge of leading an Anglican school in a culture of diversity, while striving to maintain unity through the dynamic process of the 'Via Media'. Whereas the more centralist Australian Catholic and Lutheran Churches provide documents detailing the capabilities required for faith formation leadership by principals of their schools, the Anglican Church has not done so. The study reveals that both participants acknowledge this lack of defined expectation and direction, but are divided as to whether they wish such direction to be provided by the Anglican Church for their guidance. This leads to **Recommendation Ten:** <u>That exploratory research be undertaken to determine whether principals of Australian Anglican schools would welcome an Anglican Church statement of capabilities required of Anglican school principals in the role of faith formation leader of an Anglican school, and the nature of such guidance if requested.</u>

As an expression of Christianity that eschews definition and centralist governance, Anglicanism and Anglican schools are unable to work with overly precise definition. To ensure that Anglican principals lead faith formation within the Anglican mission, values espoused by principals should be aligned with Anglican culture. This ensures that the comfort experienced, in the absence of clear directives, facilitates creative school mission in partnership with diocesan mission. This avoids localised mission that reflects values that may have drifted from Anglican origins, perhaps representing general independent school values. Anglicanism is a faith expression in which the compliance documents for school principals developed by the Catholic and Lutheran Churches would probably not be welcomed. Leading in the defined parameters of Catholic and Lutheran faith is possible for principals working within guidance provided by documents and central authority that has been in place for generations. To lead an Anglican school requires navigation through a path that is not defined by systematic theology, but is shaped by context and diversity. This offers less certainty and greater challenge to retain identity and negotiate relationships, achievable only if leadership is aware of and equipped to understand Anglican culture.

Anglican principals leading faith formation in their schools may benefit from training in order to negotiate the options inherent in Anglican diversity. This training cannot be so precise that it offends whoever takes a differing stance somewhere else in the Anglican spectrum. Neither can it be so broad in seeking to accommodate diversity that it lacks identity. Anglican principals may benefit from being equipped to understand Anglicanism's distinct character of contextual diversity and the processes of choice, debate and respect, without which Anglicanism would not hold together. This leads to **Recommendation Eleven:** That the Anglican Church develop a core statement of Anglican belief and practice for the guidance of Anglican school principals leading faith formation in their schools. This statement could be presented in conjunction with a Diploma in Anglican School Leadership (incorporating Recommendations Two and Four), and aspiring principals be supported to undertake this to equip them as leaders in Anglican mission.

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