Vive Spiritu Fidei
Live by the Spirit of Faith

La Salle Academy Publications

Number 11

Catholic School Leadership Revisited

Dr Christopher M Branson
Professor Br David Hall FMS
Dr Paul Kidson
Associate Professor
William Sultmann AM

July 2022

ACU

LA SALLE ACADEMY

Contents

Foreword

Data from *The Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey* has been consistent over the past decade; the job of leading a school is getting harder and there is an increasing concern about the vitality of school principals. This seems to be particularly so for principals of faith-based schools who face the increasing accountabilities and pressures that confront every principal, as well as attending to mounting concerns about mission integrity, or more particularly, mission drift. The recent document from the Congregation for Catholic Education in the Holy See, *The Identity of the Catholic School in a Culture of Dialogue*, is one attempt to guide discernment about the identity of the Catholic school in an increasingly plural context. Catholic identity is a contested issue and many school leaders find themselves under increasing pressure as they attempt to attend to this concern, along with secular accountabilities.

There is a danger that Catholic school leaders fall into viewing their role as having dual responsibilities - mission and learning - with both dimensions under increasing scrutiny from church and government authorities respectively. In an attempt to ameliorate this tension some have attempted to explain this as the dual moral purpose of Catholic education, each of equal importance, each requiring attention and resources. While never intended, the dual moral purpose narrative has all too often found expression in parallel activity; Catholic identity on one hand, and leading learning on the other.

In this edition of La Salle Publications the La Salle team have sought to define Catholic school leadership as having a single purpose – to bring about the kingdom of God in the world through the task of education. The authors were inspired by the challenge Pope Francis issued when he launched the Global Compact for Education (2020) where he called for school leaders who had *"the courage to generate processes that consciously work to overcome the existing fragmentation and the conflicts that we all bring with us. [They] need the courage to renew the fabric of relationships for the sake of a humanity capable of speaking the language of fraternity. The value of our educational practices will be measured not simply by the results of standardised tests, but by the ability to affect the heart of society and to help give birth to a new culture."*

Ultimately, this article seeks to unify the contemporary ecclesial and secular theoretical understandings of leadership to clarify and consolidate the important role of the Catholic school principal.

I commend it to you as a unique contribution to the dialogue about what Catholic educational leadership should be in a time of confusion and transition, and hope that it generates discussion in your school communities on this important challenge facing our Catholic school leaders.

Fr Anthony Casamento csma
Vice President

Introduction

While the capacity of today's Catholic school leaders to maintain the Catholic identity of their schools is of serious concern worldwide, a review of literature from the past 30 years clearly indicates that this is not a recent quandary. For example, Dwyer (1986) and Heft (1991) both highlighted the additional responsibility of Catholic school leaders above and beyond that of other school principals due to the need to specifically attend to the faith development of the children in their school. A view later echoed by Wallace (1998) when arguing that:

"If Catholic schools are to continue to be distinguished by their strong faith communities and not become private schools characterised as schools of academic excellence and a religious memory, attention must be given to faith leadership and how it is being developed in school leadership." (p. 47)

This view of the importance of acknowledging the unique responsibilities of the Catholic school principal was further developed by Ciriello (1998a, 1998b, 1998c) in a series of works sponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association describing the identity of a Catholic school through a tripartite leadership model in which the principal functions as a spiritual, educational and managerial leader in an integrated way. According to Ciricello, when all three of these Catholic leadership functions are present, and Catholic values permeate the organisational climate, the school fulfils its catechetical mission.

Subsequently, Grace (2002) described this fulfilment of the catechetical mission as the Catholic school achieving its "mission integrity" and added that this occurs when the school complies with the description formally articulated by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1977) in its *The Catholic School* publication. Grace argued that this document describes what "may be regarded as the foundation charter and modern mission statement for Catholic schools everywhere" (p.428). Indeed, Grace further argued that "the intention of

the 1977 Catholic School document was to express conceptions of the authentic and distinctive Catholic education mission to which all systems of Catholic schooling ought to aspire" (p.429). Importantly, Grace distinguished four regulative principles from this document that he believed constituted the mission integrity of a Catholic school: Education in Faith, Preferential Option for the Poor, Education as Solidarity and Community, and Education and the Common Good. By inference, Grace's view was that, if the Catholic school leader wished to ensure that their school is maintaining its Catholic identity, then the school leader had to be closely attending to these four principles.

However, despite the description of these four Catholic school leadership principles, concern about the capacity of Catholic school leaders to maintain the Catholic identity of their schools persisted. In 2005, Earl added a rejoinder to the discussion about the Catholic school principal's capacity by adding that "spiritual leadership is central to the identity of the Catholic school" (p. 514). Also, based upon the outcomes of their Australian research, Belmonte and Cranston (2009) argued that "as architects of Catholic school culture and identity, principals identified their prime roles as determining the quality of religious and academic purposes of their schools and building faith communities among members of their schools" (p. 301). Fincham (2010) supported this assertion but added the explicit practical expectation of the Catholic school principal that they "set a personal example of their faith" (p. 65). Furthermore, Rieckhoff (2014) maintained that "the scope of the role of faith leader continues to expand at a challenging time for the Roman Catholic Church, with declining Mass attendance, families not practicing their faith, yet sending their children to a Catholic school, and other examples of disconnectedness with parish life" (p.31).

The cumulative influence of this unfolding concern is that, to be effective, 21st century Catholic school

principals are expected to have the confidence and capacity to seamlessly blend both the secular and the ecclesial responsibilities, to faultlessly attend to the myriad of educational leader roles, expectations and accountabilities, as well as the complexities incumbent within their faith leadership roles, expectations and accountabilities. It's a task recognised as becoming progressively more challenging (Glackin & Lydon, 2018; Gleeson, 2015; Manning, 2018) in an educational environment more influenced by the hegemony of scientific-technical reason and market-driven neo-liberal values than gospel values, religious identity, and faith formation. Moreover, this secularising influence is being compounded by the diminishing religious convictions, commitments and experiences of the school's Catholic parents and students rendering the principal's faith leadership opinions and activities as significantly counter-cultural, if not contestable. Thus, given these additional expectations, the assessment provided by Boyle, Haller and Hunt (2016) that "in Catholic and other faith-based schools, the challenge of finding qualified principals is compounded by the simultaneous responsibility of the principal as spiritual leader and as educational instructional and managerial leader" (p. 293), remains true to this day.

Although there is much more of such literature available, the purpose here is simply three-fold. First, to show that concerns about the capacity of Catholic school leaders to maintain the Catholic identity of their schools has a relatively long history. Essentially, it is not a new problem for Catholic schooling. Secondly, this discussion supports the impression that, despite the quality of the research and resultant guidance throughout these past 30 years, the issue appears to have become far more prevalent and serious. Thirdly, to support the argument that if the issue is becoming progressively worse then, perhaps, it is not the Catholic school leadership practice that is at fault but, rather, the problem might well lie with the theory upon which the expectations and practices are founded. Hence, the

purpose of this article is to reconstruct a new theory to guide not only the views about what should be expected of Catholic school principals but also about what Catholic school leadership practices will readily meet these expectations.

The foundation for this reconstruction is, as proposed by Grace (2002), the 1977 Congregation for Catholic Education document, *The Catholic School*. In particular, its emphasis upon the creation of the kingdom of God being the core mission of the Church and, hence, each of its ministries, including that of Catholic education and schooling. From this foundation, this article proceeds to describe what creating the kingdom of God implies for leadership in today's Catholic schools thereby incorporating a discussion associated with other key responsibilities inclusive of spiritual leadership, faith leadership and evangelisation. The article concludes by not only explicitly aligning this understanding of Catholic school leadership with contemporary leadership theory but also, with the concept of 'synodality', which is now being regularly promoted by Pope Francis, in his quest to emphasise the aspirations of Vatican II, as an essential feature of the 21st century Catholic Church. Ultimately, this article seeks to unify the contemporary ecclesial and secular theoretical understandings of leadership to clarify and consolidate the important role of the Catholic school principal.

CHURCH MISSION AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR EDUCATION

The first section of *The Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977) document describes the "Salvific Mission of the Catholic Church" as being, "In the fulness of time, in His mysterious plan of love, God the Father sent His only Son to begin the Kingdom of God on earth and bring about the spiritual rebirth of mankind. To continue His work of salvation, Jesus Christ founded the Church as a visible organism, living by the power of the Spirit." (5)

In the ensuing paragraphs, the document goes on to explain how the Church "uses other means … in achieving and promoting the development of the human person" (8). Then, in the very next paragraph, the document states "The Catholic school forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in

the faith" (9). It is in these few opening paragraphs that the mission of Catholic education is explicitly established. Here, it is stated that the Catholic school is one of the numerous means by which the Church strives to achieve its salvific mission of continuing Jesus' work of salvation by striving to create the kingdom of God on earth. Simply, the mission of a Catholic school is in total accord with the mission of the Catholic Church – to help establish the kingdom of God on earth.

Moreover, this document calls upon the Church and, thus, Catholic schools to ensure the accomplishment of this salvific mission is adapted "to the changing conditions and emerging needs of mankind" (8). Importantly, this specific expectation mandates the need for a contemporary understanding of not only what is implied by the phrase, "the kingdom of God on earth", but also how its development is possible. The development of the kingdom of God must be based on current needs and understandings rather than past beliefs and practices. Also, given the focus of this article, the most important responsibility for the Catholic school principal is in understanding what Jesus taught about the kingdom of God and then to be fully committed to proclaiming, creating and portraying it by personally embodying Jesus, the one whom we wish to make known and loved.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD RE-VISITED

Notably, the Gospels include the term "kingdom of God" over 140 times and so the concept is foundational to the Gospel message (O'Murchu 2010). Indeed, the evangelist records the first words spoken by Jesus as "the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14). However, because Jesus expressed his understanding of the kingdom of God in metaphorical terms and through story, the intended meaning has been the source of much inquiry. For example, Matthew (Chapter 13) presents seven parables illustrative of a kingdom view of how social and cultural processes might be understood. The kingdom of God was said to be like the sower who scattered seed on differing places of growth, the influence of the weeds on that which is sown, the growth of the mustard seed, the yeast that influences development, the treasure and the pearl that are worth striving for, and the net which

draws both the good and worthless fish. Images arguably meant more to those in Jesus' time than those living in later generations. Thus, as Wenell (2017) explains, this extensive discussion and debate amongst biblical scholars throughout the ages as to what Jesus actually meant by the kingdom of God has witnessed the promotion of various interpretations rather than a singular understanding of what constituted the kingdom of God.

Hence, the "kingdom of God" has been understood in terms of the *place* (heaven) where God rules, or the role (reign) of God over creation, or the *power* (authority) of God to be able to influence all of creation (Branson et al., 2018). More recently though, the meaning is being viewed more in terms of a *sacred space* in the here-and-now, and the way of life for all who choose to follow Jesus, rather than as something specific to God (Bevans, 2009; Drane, 1986; Gleeson, 2016; Malan, 2014; Joubert, 2013; Wennel, 2017). Further, the kingdom is relational. Jesus used the criterion of quality relationships as a yardstick for measuring the prevalence of the kingdom (O'Murchu, 1995). Rohr (1996) argues that when a social order allows and encourages, and even mandates, good connection between people and creation, people and events, people and people, people and God, then you have a truly sacred culture: the kingdom of God. It would not be a world without pain or mystery but simply a world where we would be in good contact with all things, where we would be connected and in communion.

"It is all about union and communion, it seems, which means that it is also about forgiveness, letting go, service and lives of patience and simplicity. Who can doubt that this is the substance of Jesus' teaching? He makes right relationships desirable, possible and the philosopher's stone by which everything else is to be weighed and judged… In the reign of God, the very motive for rivalry, greed and violence has been destroyed" (Rohr, 1996:9).

Moreover, Rohr (1996) contends that the kingdom is already among us and Jesus is its herald. It is Jesus who reminds us that the kingdom of God is found in the ordinariness of our lives and in the familiar activities we engage in daily. Seeing our ordinary lives as a "sacred space" is an invitation by Jesus to all people to experience a fuller humanity, a humanity that is found through the kingdom of God (Bevans

2009). It "aims at transforming human relationships; it grows gradually as people slowly learn to love, forgive and serve one another.... The kingdom is the concern of everyone: individuals, society, and the world" (John Paul ll, 1990 ♯ 14–15). Jesus desired the kingdom proclamation to be an ongoing outreach to all people "in every nation, in every culture, in every time period" (Bevans, 2009–10). It is in this way that a commitment to Jesus' kingdom perspective regards all people as the new people of God committed to reaching out to others, especially the marginalised, and welcoming diversity (O'Murchu, 1995).

When the kingdom of God is understood in this way it is not about 'churchiness', rather it has everything to do with our daily lives. In fact, as we listen to Jesus' images and stories it appears that it is the world of house, field, job and marriage where we are converted to right relationship. The secular becomes the place where we encounter the true sacred (Rohr, 1996). Hence, the kingdom of God is not solely contained within the Church. All persons of good will, in their goodness, are members of the kingdom. "From East and West people will come, from North and South, for the feast in the Kingdom of God. Yes, and some who are first will be last" (Luke 13: 28–29). The kingdom vision of Jesus is within and without the individual and is here but not fully. It calls for a response to the challenge of Jesus and seeks to be installed in the culture of the personal and organisational lives of people. This understanding of the kingdom announced by Jesus represents a state of human affairs where God reigns in the everyday, where the long-awaited presence of God is made known each day and a time when the power of God continually breaks through into human life (Sultmann & McLaughlin, 2000). It involves a movement from an old to a new conversion of mind and heart towards enlivening Christ's life and message in the way we choose to live daily in relationship to all around us.

Arguably, the words of Fr Richard McBrien (1980) captures the fullness of this understanding of a significant part of Jesus' call for all his followers to be helping to create the kingdom of God.

"We can define the Kingdom of God as the *redemptive presence of God*. This redemptive (or saving) presence of God can be found in everyday personal experiences. Whenever people love one another, forgive one another, bear one another's burdens, work to build up a just and peaceful community – wherever people are of humble heart, open to their Creator and serving their neighbour – God's redemptive and liberating presence is being manifested. God's Kingdom and loving rule is in operation there."

ENLIVENING THE KINGDOM: THE NEW EVANGELISATION

A core responsibility of a Catholic school, given its mandated role to actively support the Church's mission, is evangelisation – bringing the message of Jesus Christ to the world (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). The Church teaches that "Catholic schools are at once places of evangelisation, of complete formation, of inculturation, of apprenticeship in a lively dialogue" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998, par 11). Indeed, the perceived importance of this core responsibility is captured in the Church's current emphasis on the need for a 'new evangelisation'. This new evangelisation is described as finding new ways to bring the Gospel message to those who are disconnected from their faith, particularly those who believe it has no meaning for them (Sultmann & Brown, 2014). New evangelisation calls for a renewing of people's understanding of the Catholic faith, its application to today's world and how a Catholic worldview is counter cultural to the secular worldview (Pope Francis, 2013). By inference, a commitment to a new evangelisation responsibility incorporates describing and modelling a life devoted to enlivening the kingdom of God. Creating an experience of the kingdom of God in everyday life, as Jesus did, is the fundamental purpose or mission of the Church (Kasper, 2015). New evangelisation is about actively embracing the Catholic mission, as urged by Jesus to all who seek God, by accepting responsibility for describing and modeling how to live, proclaim and spread the kingdom of God (Bevans, 2009; Brown, 2016; D'Orsa, and D'Orsa, 2008).

What this can entail for a person wishing to pursue this kingdom perspective is identified by the Evangelist (Mtt. 5:3–5:12) as those who are gentle, sorrowful, merciful, hunger for justice, peace-making and are pure in heart. As Sultmann and McLaughlin (2000) attest, a commitment to enlivening the kingdom of God is evidenced by the son who returns home and is welcomed, illustrated in the feeding of the hungry, the clothing of the naked, the visitation of the sick and the release of those in bondage. It is a place where mercy and justice prevail, and which incorporates concepts of wholeness, prosperity, physical health, inclusion and security. It is a kingdom which departs from the expectations of the society of the time, a place where a new value system is based on the active and saving love of the Father– the one who sees all as children within the family of mankind. The kingdom of Jesus is therefore a state of existence where people are reconciled to one another and the Father. A state where people value and are supported through service, collaboration, responsibility, reciprocation, and reconciliation.

Moreover, to help in this endeavour, it is suggested that there are four key practical outcomes from this understanding of the kingdom of God. First, *the kingdom is here and now*: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mat 6:9–10). Jesus believed that all who follow him must continue to build the kingdom of God through word and action (Cook, 1998; Groome, 2014). Second, *the kingdom is about people and their importance to God*: "For the Kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). Through his own way of living the kingdom of God, Jesus hoped to demonstrate how people could live peaceful lives, experience a loving God and live in a just society simply by developing the right relationships with others (Fitzmeyer, 1990; Schroeder, 2008). Third, *the kingdom requires a change in attitude*: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15). For Jesus, helping to create the kingdom of God requires a conversion of one's life so that it is directed towards the other (Harrington, 1999), which brings liberation from oppression, powerlessness and uncertainty (Nolan, 2010). Finally, *the kingdom prioritises inclusion*: "But Jesus called for them [the children] and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is such as these that the kingdom of God belongs" (Luke 18:16–17). Jesus publicly challenged conventional beliefs concerning the

treatment of those who were thought much less of or ignored (O'Murch, 2010). Living the kingdom of God ensures that each and every person feels included and appreciated and is treated with dignity and respect.

Hence, the implication for Catholic school leadership suggests that it's pivotal focus must be in modelling and nurturing a kingdom perspective in the way people live and engage in organisational life. Leadership practice must be founded upon the core vision of the kingdom as preached by Jesus. It is only with an appreciation of this vision that the practice of specifically Catholic school leadership can be given definition and expansion. It is only against the articulation of this vision that the Catholic school leadership can be viewed and examined for its authenticity. The development of Catholic school leadership therefore depends on how one views the world in terms of the vision of God's kingdom. It is an influence which underpins all things, and in the ideal form, it is a power which is directed towards the human good of all associated with the school's community.

SYNODALITY – THE RELATIONAL IMPERATIVE WITHIN THE KINGDOM

At the conclusion of the 2018 Synod of Youth, Pope Francis wrote in the Final Document of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment (122) that "it is in relationships - with Christ, with others, in the community – that faith is handed on." He continued by calling upon the Church to "adopt a relational manner" for the sake of its mission. Such a relational approach "places emphasis on listening, caring, welcoming, dialogue and common discernment in a process that transforms the lives of those taking part." Importantly, Pope Francis describes the essential outcomes achieved by this process by speaking of synodality for mission, or missionary synodality: "Making a synodal church a reality is an indispensable precondition for a new missionary energy that will involve the entire people of God." (Final Document of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment, 2018, 118)

As Pope Francis had previously proclaimed, "it is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third Millennium" (Pope Francis, 2015, Paragraph 123).

Moreover, in Pope Francis' view, missionary synodality does not merely apply to the Church, rather it applies above all to individual communities since it demands that all people journey together and present a real witness of fraternity and service to one another. More specifically, when emphasising the foundational nature of missionary synodality, Pope Francis described how "it is therefore necessary to reawaken in every local reality the awareness that we are the people of God, responsible for incarnating the gospel in our different contexts and in all daily situations. … So, it is not enough to have structures, if authentic relationships are not developed within them; it is actually the quality of these relationships that evangelises." (Paragraph 128) It is argued that it can only be through synodality, walking together through authentic relationships in service to one another, that we are able to fully experience the kingdom of God (Paragraph 124).

For Pope Francis, a synodal Catholic school would be characterised by the valuing of each person's charism, a dynamic of relationship and co-responsibility, through conversion of the heart and readiness for mutual listening. A synodal Catholic school would seek to become a participatory and co-responsible school community in which no one is put aside and in which the contributions of all are welcomed. Thus, from this synodal perspective, relationships must become the cornerstone of Catholic school leadership because heightening as it does the sense of togetherness throughout the school community. Synodality, as the manifestation of the kingdom of God, calls upon Catholic school leaders to have the capacity to enact inclusive, participative, empowering, relational leadership. A form of leadership that invites full cooperation and joint discernment so as to interpret the signs of the times in the light of faith and under the guidance of the Spirit with all the members of the school's community contributing, starting with those whose voice can easily be overlooked.

UNITING THE ECCLESIAL AND SECULAR THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP

As described earlier in this article, a current source of considerable stress for Catholic school principals is the perception that they are the 'meat in the sandwich', the servant to two

masters, as a result of the perceived differences between their ecclesial and educational leadership responsibilities. The perception being that each of these responsibilities are significantly independent in both nature and practice. Arguably, this sense of differentiation has been accentuated by the politicisation of education, heightened by its emphasis on stringent and extensive accountability, validation and verification procedures (Branson and Marra, 2020; Gleeson, 2015) being seen as detracting from the principal's capacity to adequately proclaim, create and model the Church's mission. This leadership perception of contested dualism is especially so when an understanding of mission is understood as necessitating additional responsibilities, tasks and ways of being to that required of school principals in other, particularly non-faith based, educational systems. Essentially, there is a widely held perception that Catholic leadership is theoretically and therefore practically different from general leadership and having to enact both forms simultaneously within the role of a Catholic school principal is excessively demanding if not impossible. In truth, however, when the Catholic school mission is aligned with the Church's mission of proclaiming and creating the kingdom of God in the lived experiences of each day, then Catholic (ecclesial) school leadership is one and the same thing as today's understanding of what constitutes general (secular) leadership.

When the Catholic school principal strives to closely align their school's culture to the salvific mission of the Catholic Church by creating the kingdom of God in the daily affairs of the school community, then the development of mutually beneficial interpersonal relationship throughout the entire school community becomes the highest priority. This same outcome is now being universally acknowledged as the highest priority for all leaders. Both in the corporate and educational fields, leadership is not only considered an essentially relational phenomenon but also the core responsibility of a leader is now to create an organisational culture that asserts, develops and supports healthy interpersonal relationships and we can understand what these relationships look like in the person of Jesus Christ.

For example, the 2018 *Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends Report* highlights a profound shift facing

organisational leaders worldwide. Specifically, this report showcases *"the growing importance of social capital in shaping an organisation's purpose, guiding its relationships with stakeholders, and influencing its ultimate success or failure"* (p.2). This report goes on to argue that the success of today's organisations is no longer simply assessed on traditional metrics such as financial performance, or even the quality of their products or services. Rather, it is claimed that organisations are now increasingly being judged based on relationships amongst employees, with their clients and with their communities, as well as their impact on society at large. Such expectations not only impact on what the leader needs to be able to accomplish but also on how they are to lead. A leader cannot create such a holistically relational and socially influential culture without personally being relational and socially involved. Hence, this report labels the highest priority for today's organisational leaders as being their capacity to model and create harmonious teamwork through healthy and mutually beneficial relationships.

Similarly, the research by Buckingham and Goodall (2015) on behalf of the Gallup organisation found that one simple way a leader can begin to enhance employee engagement is to ensure they actively support a mutually beneficial relationship with their employees. These authors suggest that such a relationship keeps the essential human priorities in focus and gives the employee the opportunity to talk about how best to do their work. Simply, employee engagement needs to be understood by leaders as an outcome influenced by their relationship with the employee. Then, in a subsequent Gallup article (2018), Robison advances this focus of the essential relational capacity of organisational leaders by arguing that leaders need to primarily attend to the "people" outcomes throughout the organisation. Specifically, Robison claimed that, as well as handling the usual administrative tasks, leaders "have to know their people as people – and sometimes better than their people know themselves" (p.1). Something that cannot be done second-hand or by casual observation. Authentic knowledge of another person can only evolve out of a close relationship and, for us underpinned by a Christian anthropology, each of us are made in the image and likeness of God.

At the heart of this relationship, according to Han Ming Chng and colleagues in their 2018 MIT Sloan Management Review article, is the leader's credibility amongst those they are tasked with leading. Furthermore, the research performed by these authors highlighted how the leader's credibility is founded on "two critical elements: perceived competence (people's faith in the leader's knowledge, skills, and ability to do the job) and trustworthiness (their belief in the leader's values and dependability)" (p.1). More precisely, this research identified the key leadership behaviours that built relational trustworthiness as including communicating and acting consistently, protecting the organisation and the employees, embodying the organisation's vision and values, consulting with and listening to others, communicating openly, valuing employees, and offering support to employees.

In their 2018 McKinsey Quarterly journal article, Bourton, Lavoie and Vogel describe how, in the current age of accelerated complexity and pace of change, many organisational leaders have reverted to a survival instinct which tends to induce a mental panic to regain control and, therefore, they limit the involvement of others in the decision-making process. As described by these authors, during these frequently difficult times leaders actually "need inner agility, but [their] brain instinctively seeks stasis. At the very time that visionary, empathetic, and creative leadership is needed, [they] fall into conservative, rigid old habits" (p.62). The alternative solution provided by these authors to these reactive but unhelpful leadership habits is one that is clearly relationally based.

Finally, in Michael Fullan's (2019) most recent publication, *Nuance: Why Some Leaders Succeed and Others Fail*, he makes the claim that "society in general is worsening and that education in particular is less effective at its main role of producing better citizens" (p. ix). Hence, he calls for the need for a new kind of leader, a nuanced leader, "one who can get beneath the surface and help us understand and leverage deep change for the better" (p. ix). At the very core of Fullan's nuanced educational leader is a person who is willing and able to be fully present and engaged with all those they are leading. A leader who seeks to fully understand a situation, despite its complexity and unfamiliarity, by listening and learning

about it from others, by building the capacity of others to deal with the situation and by trusting others to resolve the situation with whatever help from the leader that is required. According to Fullan, such nuanced leaders are able to "unlock, mobilize, and create collective care" (p. 42) – effective, purposeful and successful teamwork – when it comes to the challenging task of resolving complex, unfamiliar and problematic educational situations. Essentially, Fullan's nuanced leadership manifests through the positive relationship the leader has with each person they are leading.

The common message across each of these documents is that leadership is contextual and not generic because it emerges out of a sincere interpersonal engagement of the leader with those to be led. It is now becoming universally accepted that the essential purpose of leadership is to engender positive relationships throughout the organisation. Leaders are now being called upon to direct attention on manifesting an organisational or educational culture based upon the shared values of trust, openness, transparency, inclusiveness, honesty, integrity, collegiality and ethicalness. This is a culture in which all feel a sense of safety and security because they each feel that they can rely on each other so as to achieve their best. Through facilitating and supporting mutually beneficial relationships, the leader enables the organisational conditions to be created whereby those they are leading willingly and readily perform at their best. This, in turn, allows the leader to actually become the leader, and to continue to enact true leadership, which ensures the growth and sustainability of the organisation. This has been described as a transrelational way of leading because leadership today "is best understood as a transrelational phenomenon as its essence is to move others, the organisation and the leader to another level of functioning by means of relationships" (Branson, Franken, and Penney, 2016, p. 155).

Moreover, despite the brevity of this description of some of the current corporate and educational leadership literature, there is a clear theoretical alignment not only among these diverse sources but also, and more significantly, with Catholic ecclesial expectations as well. It is through the promotion, creation, modelling and support of positive relationship

that the Catholic school leader is able to confidently and capably attend to both their ecclesial and their secular responsibilities as will be described in more detail in the following section.

INTEGRATING FAITH, SPIRITUAL AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Although the practical implications of enacting a transrelational approach to leadership has been described and justified in far more detail elsewhere (for example, see Branson & Marra, 2021; Branson, Marra, Franken & Penney, 2018), suffice to say here that it involves the seamless integration of five foundational leadership responsibilities: relevant knowledge and skills; a commitment to integral membership; championing and affirming; growing and transforming; securing and transcending. This section will describe the practical implications associated with each of these responsibilities from both an educational and an ecclesial leadership perspective.

Possessing the relevant knowledge and skills acknowledges the growing awareness that leadership is founded on trust. The appointed leader must be seen as trustworthy by those that are to be led. The appointment process does not automatically make the person a leader. They become the leader when those to be led accept them as their leader. The initial essential sense of trust comes from the appointed person being perceived to have the relevant knowledge, skills and experiences thought necessary to meet the current needs of the particular school community. The specific benefit in possessing the relevant knowledge, skills, and experiences towards the development of trustworthiness is not about enabling the appointed leader to take command and control but to be able to initiate and actively participate in professionally enriching conversations, which enable personal and professional growth of all involved. As with all human relationships, mutually beneficial communication is an unequivocally important component. Within the school leadership practice, such conversations are all-embracing professional dialogues that are positively focussed on progressing the learning and teaching culture.

For a Catholic school principal this relevant knowledge, skills, and experiences must not only be associated with the educational areas of curriculum, pedagogy and school administration but also with ecclesial areas of theology, spirituality and faith. Moreover, the Catholic school principal must be continually seeking to integrate these two essential areas within their professional dialogues to bring to life the tangible sense that God is active in the everyday professional affairs of the school. The kingdom of God is being created in the school. God is incarnate within the important professional thoughts, experiences and activities throughout the school community. From an educational leadership perspective, this foundational leadership responsibility can be seen as the practice of instructional leadership. While, from an ecclesial leadership responsibility, this foundational leadership responsibility can also be seen as the practice of theological leadership.

But such knowledge, skills and experience are only the source of initial trust. These are not a source of sustainable trust. What those to be led will look for to consolidate their trust in the appointed leader is to see that this person is quickly, willingly and sincerely committed to becoming an integral member of the school community. Sustainable trust is built upon predictability, consistency and authenticity. For a school principal this means interacting with the staff, building trusting relationships with them, talking with them, understanding what is happening for them in their classrooms and their additional roles. This allows the principal to understand workloads and pressures, achievements and effort, the learning needs of the teachers and assistants, where there are gaps in professional knowledge and capability and how these can be overcome, and how to affirm and promote the school. It also provides the platform for the principal to create professional networks and connections so that new ideas can flow and be shared in order to generate continual professional growth and development.

Such a relational principal has the wisdom to know how people interact and behave in a group, understands what makes people tick, and what keeps them connected and engaged in their community. Importantly, this attention to becoming an integral member of the school community embraces the key aspects of servant and ethical leadership. It clearly shows that the leader sincerely desires to be of service to the community. That the needs of the school community and not their own self-interests are guiding their views and actions. The school community members want to know that their principal is there for them; that the principal is one of them and will invariably act fairly, justly and promote good rather than harm. They want their principal to be accountable to them in what they do just as they accept that they will be accountable to the principal and others in what they do.

Importantly, throughout all of these school community engagements, the Catholic school principal must also be authentically describing and modelling that God's presence and grace are being manifested through these every day and ordinary events of life; "through our minds and bodies, through our works and efforts, in the depth of our own being and through our relationship with others, through the events and experiences that come our way, through all forms of human art and creativity, through nature and the whole created order, through everything and anything of life" (Groome, 1996, p.112). This is about the Catholic school principal showing faith leadership whereby faith is understood as being much more than knowledge of creeds and doctrines. "Christian faith must be viewed as committed participation in God's liberating and recreating work for the sake of the world" (Schipani, 1997, p. 295). Schipani goes further by saying that "Faith is thus a practical way of life conceived in terms of commitment, following, doing, and action, that is, discipleship oriented to the realisation of God's utopia of shalom" (p. 297). Faith leadership is not only putting beliefs into actions, but also acting to bring about justice and peace in the world. In this way, the Catholic school principal is showing how faith can be seen as a way of life; as the way towards creating the kingdom of God.

Words of praise and affirmation from the Catholic school leader for behaviour that mirrors desired beliefs, values and aspirations are a powerful influence not only on the thoughts and actions of school community members but also for reinforcing their own trustworthiness. To be able to truly champion members of the school community in this way, a leader must first be able to deeply understand and appreciate what is happening, which requires the leader

to already be an integral member of the community. Championing is about affirming, praising and celebrating the achievements and successes of individuals, groups and the school both in formal and informal ways, on stage or in corridors. This is about being able to see and appreciate all the good things that are happening no matter how large or small the outcome. Importantly, it is about seeing how such achievements are slowly but surely achieving the school's vision and mission. However, the most persuasive form of championing is founded upon the leader having clarified purposes, expectations and responsibilities with the help and input from those involved, and then allowing them to complete the task to the best of their ability. This involves the implementation of key aspects of distributed or shared leadership in which the leader is modelling a growth mindset because the leader knows that their view of the school is only one of many and a more realistic view can only be formed when different views are openly shared, critiqued and supported.

Amid this championing and affirming is the need for the Catholic school leader to be promoting the Gospel in deed and word as not only an essential guide in the decision-making process but also as a pivotal touchstone for determining what and how individual, group, and school achievements need to be championed and affirmed. This is about the leader, themselves, as well as about their encouragement of others, to seek spiritual awareness. Informed by the views of Neidhart (1996), an "authentic contemporary spirituality is not about something additional or even something new. It is not meant to take us out of anywhere, but should give depth, meaning and resonance to the ordinary in daily life; all experience has some, greater or lesser, spiritual value" (p. 20). Hence, in its most basic sense, spirituality involves an understanding of what it is that we believe and a living application of this belief. Thus, Crawford and Rossiter (1994) define spirituality as "the expression of one's piety and beliefs as well as the patterns of behaviour characterised in thinking, feeling and communicating" (p. 14). Within a Catholic school community, this search for what is truly believed is made in response to the Gospel portrayal of Jesus' revelation of God and the values inherent within this understanding. Ultimately, this involves the Catholic school principal portraying spiritual

leadership by modelling "what faith looks like in everyday attitudes and behaviours" (Dreyer, 1996, p. 13). Spiritual leadership involves the Catholic school principal openly becoming awake to their self within the context of the school community, and the myriad of relationships therein, and making a response which is integrated and aligned to a commitment towards creating the kingdom of God within their school.

The next foundational leadership responsibility within a transrelational approach to Catholic school leadership is that of nurturing individual, group and school growth and transformation. As Pope Francis (2020) argues in his video message at the Global Compact on Education: Together to Look Beyond meeting, "education, as we know, is meant to be transformative". Growing and transforming responsibility is about fostering dialogue with individuals, groups and the school community that leads to insights about current beliefs, values and practices in order to help the person, group or school to devise ways to enhance and improve learning and teaching outcomes. In essence, this involves the capacity of the leader to create a school culture in which all are committed to being actively and continuously improving or growing in some way towards a visionary ideal. This involves implementing appreciative enquiry processes to nurture a school community that can learn about how it achieves its goals and how this might be done more effectively. The school community members are being encouraged to learn from each other and to network better together in order to improve current practices. In this way, the leadership is evolving as the group is becoming more and more open to having its organisational culture being finely tuned to meeting its strategic vision.

For the Catholic school community, the vision is not solely about how best to enhance the learning environment for each student but also about how the school might be better able to engender a sense of the kingdom of God within the school – how the school's culture can be more tailored towards embracing and enacting Gospel values. Together, this is transformational leadership both in an educational and ecclesial sense. The leader is working with the invaluable cooperation of their school community to transform the school culture so that it better achieves its Catholic school mission of providing

"a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life: the first is reached by integrating all the different aspects of human knowledge through the subjects taught, in the light of the Gospel; the second in the growth of the virtues characteristic of the Christian." (Congregation of Catholic Education, 1977, p. 37)

The final foundational leadership responsibility within a transrelational approach to Catholic school leadership is the need for the principal to develop a secure yet transcendent school environment. Once the school community is working better together towards achieving its vision through incremental improvement, the principal is then in a position to draw the attention of the school community to the changing nature and demands of the external educational environment. This involves all in the school community being supported in looking to the future to determine what is necessary to be initiated in the present. Rather than telling the school community what needs to happen, the accepted principal draws attention to the future possible challenges for the school, especially those associated with the future career and lifestyle opportunities for the students, in an open, honest and inclusive manner, and seeks feedback from school community members as to what this might mean for the learning and teaching environment, what individually and collectively needs to happen now in order to meet these challenges, and how it would be best to initiate these required developments. This is about engaging the people in creating, rather than simply completing, the necessary change strategies. It is about allowing the school community to be involved in designing its future rather than having it thrust upon them with little understanding of why things need to change. People resist change when they cannot see and fully understand the purpose for the change. By aligning the school's identity to its wider reality, the leader is beginning any change process by clearly establishing its purpose in the minds and hearts of each and every school community member. Here, the principal is showing moral leadership as they are devoting themselves to the common good of the school community both now and especially into the future.
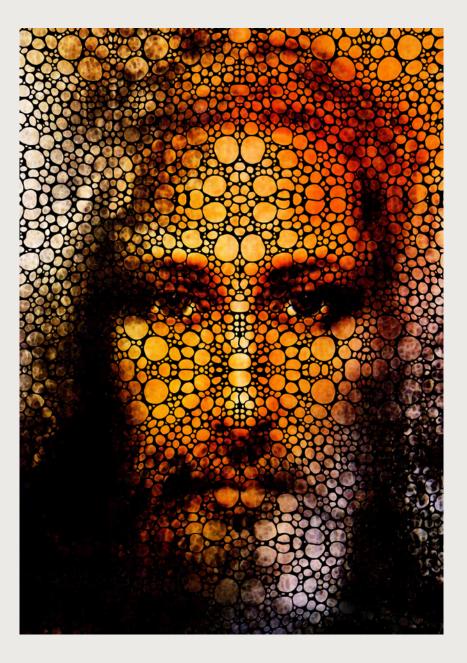
However, an essential aspect of this discussion for the Catholic school leader is to ensure that all within the school community are provided within an opportunity to appreciate the

presence of God in their deliberations, decisions and actions as they work towards a somewhat uncertain, if not ambiguous, future. Through the words and actions of the principal, explicit opportunities are provided for the school community to sense the God given grace of peace, purpose and confidence despite the doubts and challenges. This is the Catholic school principal displaying true discipleship adapted to the particular context of their school community. Discipleship of Jesus requires more than following a set of explicit instructions. It involves a willingness by the Catholic school principal to learn from their school's current challenges, and to grow their self and their school community into progressively deeper understanding of the meaning and demands of the gospel.

Conclusion

From both an ecclesial and a secular perspective, Catholic school leadership is founded upon being an authentic sign and instrument in terms of working in communion with others and offering a service which is grounded in relational knowledge and skills at personal, professional and organisational levels. It is by means of the Catholic school leader having the capacity to form a school culture made manifest in mutually beneficial relationships that they are able to not only enrich the educational milieu but also to engender a tangible sense of the kingdom of God. It is through the creation of such a Catholic school culture that people share in the fellowship of the Spirit and thereby receive and give in the spirit of love for the holistic development of each student.

This necessitates the application of a transrelational approach to leadership practice which is kingdom based and, therefore, is a witness to a kingdom culture and an instrument of kingdom building. Thus, today's Catholic school leaders are called to 'be' and 'build' the kingdom in the everyday situations they encounter. An outcome described by Pope Francis (2020) as Catholic school leaders needing "the courage to generate processes that consciously work to overcome the existing fragmentation and the conflicts that we all bring with us. [They] need the courage to renew the fabric of relationships for the sake of a humanity capable of speaking the language of fraternity. The value of our educational practices will be measured not simply by the results of standardised tests, but by the ability to affect the heart of society and to help give birth to a new culture."

REFERENCES

A. BELMONTE, N. CRANSTON, "The religious dimension of lay leadership in Catholic schools: Preserving Catholic culture in an era of change", *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, 12/3-2009, pp. 294-307.

S.B. BEVANS, "The Mission has a Church, the Mission has Ministers", *Compass*, 43/3-2009, pp. 3-14.

S. BOURTON, J. LAVOIE, T. VOGEL, "Leading with inner agility", *The McKinsey Quarterly*, 2-2018, pp. 61-71.

M.J. BOYLE, A. HALLER, E. HUNT, "The Leadership Challenge: Preparing and Developing Catholic School Principals", *Journal of Catholic Education*, 19/3-2016, pp. 292-316.

C.M. BRANSON, M. MARRA, "An ecological approach to school reviews: Going beyond verification and accountability to achieve real school improvement", *La Salle Academy Publications*, 4-2020, pp. 1-16.

C.M. BRANSON, M. MARRA, *A new theory of organizational ecology, and its implications for educational leadership*, Bloomsbury, London 2021.

C.M. BRANSON, M. FRANKEN, D. PENNEY, Reconceptualising middle leadership in higher education: A transrelational approach: *Values and virtues in higher education research: Critical perspectives* (pp.155-170), edited by J. McNiff, Routledge, Abington 2016.

C.M. BRANSON et al., *Leadership in Higher Education from a transrelational perspective*, London: Bloomsbury, London 2018.

R. BROWN, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Yale University Press, New Haven USA 2016.

C.M. BROWN, K.E. O' REILLY, John Paul II and the new evangelization, *Heythrop Journal*, 58/6, 2017

M. BUCKINGHAM, A. GOODALL, Reinventing performance management, *Harvard Business Review*, April 2015, pp. 40-50.

D. HAN MING CHNG et al., Why people believe in their leaders – or not. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, August 2018, pp. 1-10.

M. CIRIELLO (ed.), *Formation and development for Catholic school leaders: The principal as educational leader*, Vol. I, 2nd ed., United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington DC, 1998a.

M. CIRIELLO (ed.), *Formation and development for Catholic school leaders: The principal as spiritual leader*, Vol. II, 2nd ed., United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington DC, 1998b.

M. CIRIELLO (ed.), *Formation and development for Catholic school leaders: The principal as managerial leader*, Vol. III, 2nd ed., United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington DC, 1998c.

CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *The Catholic school*, Society of St Paul, Homebush NSW 1977.

CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school* (2nd ed.), St Paul Publications, Homebush NSW 1988.

CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *The catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium. Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, St Paul Publications, Homebush NSW 1998.

T. COOK, Building the Kingdom: School Leaders as Architects of Catholic Culture, *Journal of Catholic Education*, 2/2-1998, pp. 133–150.

M. CRAWFORD, G. ROSSITER, Staff spirituality - it's not just for religious anymore, *Momentum*, 1994, pp. 13-17.

T. D'ORSA, J D'ORSA, Mission and Catholic schools: Grounding Hope in Uncertain Times: *Catholic schools: Hope in Uncertain Times* (pp. 32-44), edited by A. Benjamin, D. Riley, John Garrett Publishing, Mulgrave 2008.

DELOITTE, The rise of the social enterprise: 2018 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends. *Deloitte Insights*, pp. 1-101 2018.

J. DRANE, *Introducing the New Testament*, Lion Publishing, Tring UK 1986.

E. DREYER, Spirituality more easily found in the world than in Churches. *National Catholic Reporter*, 1996, pp. 9-11.

B. DWYER, *Catholic schools at the crossroads*, Dove Publications, Blackburn, Victoria 1986.

P.H. EARL, Spiritual formation for Catholic educators: Understanding the need, *Journal of Catholic Education*, 8/4-2005, pp. 513-530.

D. FINCHAM. Headteachers in Catholic Schools: challenges of leadership, *International Studies in Catholic Education*, 2/1-2010, pp. 64–79.

J.A. FITZMEYER, *An Introductory Bibliography for the Study of Scripture* (Subsidia Biblica) (3rd ed.), Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, Rome, Italy 1990.

M. FULLAN, *Nuance: Why some leaders succeed and others fail*. Corwin, Thousand Oaks, CA 2019.

M. GLACKIN, J. LYDON, Getting embedded together: New partnerships for twenty-first century Catholic education: *Researching Catholic Education* (pp. 191-202), S. Whittle (ed.), Springer, Singapore 2018.

B. GLEESON, The mission of the kingdom of God: Ultimate source of meaning, value and energy for Jesus. *The Australian Catholic Record*, 93/3-2016, pp. 326–339.

J. GLEESON, Critical challenges and dilemmas for Catholic Education Leadership internationally, *International Studies in Catholic Education*, 7/2-2015, pp. 145-161.

G. GRACE, Mission integrity: contemporary challenges for Catholic school leaders: *Second International Handbook of Educational Leadership and Administration* (pp. 427-449), edited by K. Leithwood, P. Hallinger, Kluwer Academic Press, Dordrecht 2002.

T. GROOME, What Makes a School Catholic?: *The Contemporary Catholic School* (pp. 107–125), edited by T. McLoughlin, J. O'Keefe, B. O'Keefe, Falmer Press, London 1996.

T. GROOME, Catholic Education: From and for Faith. *International Studies in Catholic Education*, 6/2-2014, pp. 113–127.

D.J. HARRINGTON, *Who is Jesus? Why is he Important? An Invitation to the New Testament*, Sheed and Ward, Lanham, MD 1999.

J.L. HEFT, *Catholic identity and the future of Catholic schools*, National Catholic Educational Association, Washington, DC 1991.

S. JOUBERT, Not by order, nor by dialogue: The metanoetic presence of the kingdom of God in a fluid new world and Church, *Acta Theologica*, 33/1-2013, pp. 114–134.

W. KASPER, *The missionary and dialogical church in the Catholic Church: Nature, reality and mission*, Bloomsbury, London 2015.

G.J. MALAN, The Kingdom of God: Utopian or Existential?, *Theological Studies*, 70/3-2014, pp. 1–9.

P.R. MANNING, Disintegrating worldviews and the future of Catholic education: Addressing the deep roots of Catholic disaffiliation, *Journal of Catholic Education*, 21/2-2018, pp. 25-52.

R.P. McBRIEN, *What is 'the Kingdom of God'?* 1980

Accessed October 4, 2017. http://www.lovingjustwise.com/kingdom_of_god.htm.

H. NEIDHART, Spirituality and the Ministry of Leadership - Icing or Leven?, *Catholic School Studies*, 70/1-1997, pp. 20-22.

NEW ZEALAND CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE, *Catholic education of school-age children*, conference paper, Wellington NZ 2014.

A. NOLAN, *Jesus Before Christianity*. Maryknoll NY 2010.

D. O'MURCHU, *The kingdom dimension. Disarming times*. Mercier Press, London 1995.

D. O'MURCHU, *Let's Get Rid of "The kingdom of God"*. Christian life essay (Essay 2), October 10, 2016.

POPE FRANCIS, *Address of His Holiness Pope Francis. Ceremony Commemorating The 50th Anniversary of The Institution Of The Synod of Bishops*, Paul V1 Audience Hall, Vatican, Rome 2015.

POPE FRANCIS, *Evangelii gaudium: The proclamation of the gospel in today's world*, 2013

POPE FRANCIS, *Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete Et Exsultate: On the call to Holiness in today's world*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome 2018a.

POPE FRANCIS, *Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the people of God*, Vatican City Press, Vatican Rome, 20 August 2018b.

POPE FRANCIS, A video message for the event organised by the Congregation for Catholic Education at the Pontifical Lateran University on a Global Compact for Education, 15 October 2020.

POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Redemtoris Mission: On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate* 1990.

D. RANSON, Forming a new generation of leaders for Catholic schools, *Australian Catholic Record*, 83/4-2006, pp. 415-421.

B.S. RIECKHOFF, The development of faith leadership in novice principals, *Journal of Catholic Education*, 17/2-2014, pp. 25-56.

J. ROBISON, Outcome-based managers focus on people and the finish line, *Gallup*, June 2018, pp. 1-5.

R. ROHR, *Jesus' plan for a new world: The Sermon on the Mount*, St Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati OH 1996.

E.A. RUPPRECHT, J.S. WALDROP, M.J. GRAWITCH, Initial validation of a new measure of leadership. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 65-2013, pp. 128-148.

R. RYMARZ, The new evangelization in an ecclesiological context, *Heythrop Journal, 52/5*-2011, pp. 772-784.

D. SCHIPANI, Liberation theology and religious education, *Theologies of religious education* (pp. 286-313), edited by R. C. Miller, Religious Education Press, Birmingham AL 1997.

R. SCHROEDER, *What is the Mission of the Church? A Guide for Catholics*, Orbis Books, New York, 2008.

W. SULTMANN, R. BROWN, Catholic school identity and the new evangelization, *Journal of Religious Education, 62/1*-2014, pp. 1-13.

W.F. SULTMANN, G.D. MCLAUGHLIN, *Spirit of Leadership*. Toowoomba Education Centre, Toowoomba Australia, 2000.

T.J. WALLACE,The faith leadership issue. *Momentum*, 29-1998, pp. 46–49.

K.L. WENELL, Kingdom, not kingly rule: Assessing the kingdom of God as sacred space, *Biblical Interpretation*, 25-2017, pp. 206–233

Image used in this publication

Image used with permission of the artist

Savior - Stone Rock'd Jesus Art By Sharon Cummings, cover page

Dr Christopher M Branson is the Professor of Educational Leadership and the National Director of Catholic Leadership Studies in the La Salle Academy.

Prior to this appointment, he was Professor of Educational Leadership and Director of the Educational Leadership Research Centre at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand.

Chris came to tertiary education after more than 30 years of experience in Australian schools as a teacher, Head of Department, Pastoral Coordinator, Deputy Principal, Principal, Educational Consultant and Supervisor of Schools.

His move to tertiary education in 2009 followed the international recognition and adoption of the outcomes generated by his doctoral and post doctoral research into how personal values influence the leadership behaviours of school principals. His ensuing academic activities extended this research into issues aligned with the nature and practice of contemporary leadership, ethical leadership, leadership of educational change, and organisational culture. He is the author of five books along with a number of book chapters and many articles published in both Australian and international journals.

Professor Br David Hall is the foundation Dean of the La Salle Academy at the Australian Catholic University. La Salle has responsibility for programs that the university offers in the areas of Educational Leadership, Faith Formation and Religious Education and works across the faculties of education and theology. David came to this position after thirty years in Catholic education where he held positions as teacher, head of mission and religious education, principal and systems administrator. In addition to his duties as Dean of La Salle he teaches in Masters of Educational Leadership, and is involved in the governance of Australian Catholic schools. Among his range of international engagements David designed and led a Catholic school leaders program across 22 countries in Africa.

Dr Paul Kidson is Senior Lecturer (Educational Leadership) and Head of Postgraduate Studies in the National School of Education at the Australian Catholic University. He brings 25 years' school experience, including 11 years as a school principal, and, since 2017, as an Educational Leadership academic. His teaching and research reflect a holistic and interdisciplinary approach, drawing on a range of academic disciplines and insights. Through this, he explores how school leaders work within, and critically transform, their complex personal and professional lives. This underpins his current work leading redevelopment of the Master of Educational Leadership degree (in partnership with the La Salle Academy), as well as his involvement with the Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey through ACU's Institute for Positive Psychology.

Associate Professor William (Bill) Sultmann is a teacher, psychologist, theologian and administrator with executive and governance roles in education, health and welfare sectors across 40 years. Qualifications span arts, education, psychology, and leadership with research doctorates in educational psychology and pastoral theology. Fellowships exist within education and management professional bodies. His current position is Associate Professor and Director of Catholic School Identity and Mission within ACU with responsibilities as Deputy Dean within the La Salle Academy. Continuing interests are with professional writing and governance participation in not-for-profit boards in support of mission, nationally and internationally.

Vive Spiritu Fidei
Live by the Spirit of Faith

ACU
LA SALLE ACADEMY