Building Bridges:

Exploring the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools

Submitted by

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Statement of Authorship and Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No parts of this thesis have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics/Safety committee (where required).

Tania Nelson

9/06/2016

Dedication

To my parents, John and Lois Miegel

Statement of Appreciation

This research has been made possible by the support and encouragement of many people.

Firstly, I acknowledge the guidance of my principal supervisor, Dr Helga Neidhart, as well as the support of co-supervisor, Associate Professor Michael T Buchanan. On numerous occasions they have encouraged me to attend more nearly to details, to think more deeply, and to write more clearly. Thank you for your persistence.

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Finally, heartfelt thanks to my patient and understanding husband, David, who is as pleased as I that this thesis is completed.

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Abstract

In this research the mission of the Lutheran primary school, and the contributions of principals and pastors to that mission, was explored. The concern of the Lutheran Church of Australia about how best to respond to the mission opportunities that are present in schools was addressed.

Principal and pastor perceptions of the mission of the Lutheran primary school and their contributions to the mission were investigated. Spiritual leadership of the principal and the pastor was explored. Recommendations are made to assist school leadership and system authorities in advancing professional development programmes and initiatives for school leadership.

A social constructionist epistemology was adopted with an interpretivist research paradigm to explore the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of the Lutheran school. A constructivist grounded theory methodology was used to generate themes and develop a theoretical framework.

Exploration of the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of the Lutheran primary school was limited to six school sites across Australia. Unstructured interviews were conducted with purposely sampled leaders who were located across the three Lutheran Education regions. The emerging themes were presented to all Lutheran primary principals and their local congregational pastor for further clarification and validation through an electronic survey.

The research revealed that the principals and pastors conceptualised the mission of the school in terms of *witness* and the purpose of the school in terms of *vocation*, and viewed their role in the mission as a *calling*. They perceived each other's contribution as uniting the

community. They promoted the mission by valuing relationships, and the caring culture, and they contributed to the mission by leading with an attitude of service and prioritising the spiritual dimension. The principals and pastors shared their missional leadership and strived to build bridges between the school and the local faith community. The investigation of contributions to mission provided insights into positive and exemplary school and church partnerships and suggested a framework for missional leadership highlighting the importance of the spiritual leadership of the principal and the pastor for the benefit of the school and church community.

Chapter One – Introduction

What is the mission of the Lutheran school and how do principals and pastors contribute to that mission? Why does the Lutheran Church of Australia own and operate schools? What makes a Lutheran school Lutheran? These questions formed the basis of the following research and were investigated from the viewpoint of principals of Lutheran primary schools and the pastors who support Lutheran primary schools. In the current research the reality of day to day mission practice was discovered and considered against the marketing rhetoric. The response of leaders in congregations and schools to the mission opportunities that schools provide was explored and the researcher was situated within the research topic.

1.1 Context of the Research Problem

As a Director of Lutheran Education Australia Limited, I am a member of the Board that has oversight of the programs and activities - political and administrative - of the Lutheran education institutions across Australia. Lutheran Education Australia Limited (LEA) is responsible for Lutheran Child Care Centres, Family Day Care, Early Learning Centres, Kindergartens, Primary and Secondary Schools. Lutheran schools are systemic and many administrative tasks are directed and supported by the three regions within Australia - Lutheran Education Queensland (LEQ); Lutheran Schools Association (LSA); and Lutheran Education Victoria New South Wales Tasmania (LEVNT). LEQ is responsible for primary, secondary and Foundation to Year 12 (F-12) schools and Early Learning Centres across Queensland. LSA administers schools across South Australia, Western Australia and

Northern Territory. LEVNT has oversight of the schools in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania (Lutheran Education Australia (2014). Table 1.1 indicates the extent of the oversight of Board for Lutheran Education Australia. As a member of the Board of Directors of LEA, I have a unique view of Lutheran schools across Australia.

Table 1.1. Lutheran Education Australia sites

Table 1.1

State	Primary	Secondary	Composite (Prim/Sec)	Total	Early Childhood
South Australia	21	4	8	33	**13**
Northern Territory	2	1	1	4	**1**
Western Australia	0	0	2	2	**0**
Queensland	10	1	16	27	**37**
Victoria	8	1	6	15	**4**
Tasmania	0	0	1	1	**0**
New South Wales	3	1	0	4	**2**
Total	**44**	**8**	**34**	**86**	**57**

Data based on *LCA Yearbook 2014*. Copyright 2014 by Lutheran Education Australia. Reprinted with permission.

LEA is one of the Boards that manages the various ministries of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA). LEA was established to set strategic direction and establish the overall policy environment for the schools of the church (Lutheran Education Australia Limited, 2010) and because of its position within the LCA and its responsibility to report to the Synod of the LCA, many of the issues that LEA grapples with are issues that directly affect the church. One example of the work of the LEA is the development of the *Equip* (Lutheran

Education Australia, 2010) program, which is a theological and spiritual development program for teachers in Lutheran schools and completion of this professional learning program, or equivalent, is a prerequisite for accreditation as a teacher of Christian Studies in Lutheran schools. My role on the Board of LEA means that I also have a distinctive view of the Lutheran Church in Australia and its relationship to its schools.

As a member of a Lutheran congregation which shares its grounds with a Lutheran primary school, and as a former leader in a Lutheran primary school, the joys, and the frustrations, of schools and congregations working together in mission are apparent. In various contexts, discussions on school and church partnerships often lead to a position that can be summed up by this line of thinking: "Lutheran schools are thriving. Why aren't our congregations thriving too?" Perhaps these discussions are simply leading to the wrong question. A better focus for the joys, and frustrations, of building bridges between the school and the congregation, and the school and the community, would be to ask: *How can I assist the school in its mission for the church,* and *How can I assist the church in its mission to the school?* My interest in this particular research came out of a desire to strengthen the partnerships between Lutheran schools and congregations. There are many exciting programs and initiatives that connect schools and congregations, however there are also instances of fractured school and church communities. The 2000 General Convention of Synod of the Lutheran Church of Australia resolved that "Congregations and schools are encouraged to be more intentional, diligent, sensitive and flexible in responding to these mission opportunities" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2000b, p. 1). In this research the intentional, diligent, sensitive and flexible actions of principals and pastors for the mission of their school were explored.

1.2 Format of Research

The research consists of seven chapters, an overview of which is provided in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2. Structure of Research

Table 1.2

Overview of the Research Structure

Chapter number	Chapter heading
One	Introduction
Two	The Research Problem Defined
Three	Literature Review
Four	Research Design
Five	Presentation and Analysis of Data
Six	Discussion of Findings
Seven	Conclusion and Recommendations

In Chapter One the researcher is positioned within the context of the research problem. The research problem is defined in Chapter Two and the research questions and guiding questions are identified. The literature - on the nexus of school leadership, values and culture – is explored in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four the research is positioned within a social constructionist theory of knowledge and the research design is justified. The data from unstructured interviews and from a subsequent survey is presented and analysed in Chapter Five. In Chapter Six, the findings arising from the data are discussed and a theoretical

framework is offered. In the final chapter the research is brought to a conclusion and recommendations are made.

In this introductory chapter the researcher's place within the research was acknowledged and a brief overview of the thesis was provided. In the next chapter issues are presented which assist in defining the research problem. Also, in chapter two, the purpose of the research is described, the research questions are presented, and reasons for the significance of the research are suggested.

Chapter Two – The Research Problem Defined

2.1 Research Issue

Upon enrolling their children in a Lutheran school, parents and caregivers are required to sign an enrolment document. The document, apart from the usual family specific details, asks the family to uphold and abide by the ethos and core values of the school. These values are communicated widely - via websites, promotional material, school magazines, and other means used by individual schools - and are communicated personally in the enrolment interview. This process of asking the family to commit to the Lutheran school is a first step in the acceptance of the family into the Lutheran school community. Lutheran schools aim to draw the students and their families into the life of the school community.

The Lutheran school community exists under the banner of the Lutheran Church of Australia. Lutheran schools exist first and foremost as places of education. However, they are also agencies of the Lutheran Church and as such aim to connect school students and families with the local Lutheran community (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001b, 2006b). Similarly, the Catholic school is considered to be an integral part of the Church's mission and the presence of the parish priest or his assistants is a sign of the Catholic school's relationship with the local Catholic community (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007).

Lutheran schools are widely promoted as caring communities (Lutheran Education Australia, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c). Anecdotal evidence suggests that they are generally considered to be successful in drawing students and their families into the life of the school community. Much of the success of a school community can be attributed to the leadership of the principal (Sergiovanni, 2009). Lutheran Education Australia lists five leadership

dimensions – spiritual, authentic, educative, organisational and community (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005a). Community leadership is described in terms of human interdependence, nurture, morals, ethics, and distributed leadership. There are barriers, however, in extending the school community relationship to a relationship with the community of the local Lutheran church. Students and their families are connected to the school community upon enrolment, despite varying levels of participation and involvement on the part of the parents. The nature of the local congregation means that participation and involvement do not require a signed enrolment document yet anecdotal evidence suggests that there appears to be a reluctance for many school families to perceive themselves as members of the church community.

2.1.1 Role of the Lutheran school and its place within the LCA.

The Lutheran school is an agency of the Lutheran Church of Australia (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001b). This means that the Lutheran school is placed within the LCA and under its jurisdiction and the Church utilises the school as one avenue of carrying out its ministry and mission to the people of Australia (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001b). "The official document outlining the relationship between the LCA and Lutheran schools, namely 'The Lutheran church of Australia and its schools', was adopted by the General Church Council in 1999, edited in 2001 and still remains the church's official policy statement" (Wegener, 2006, p. 136). The document indicates the purposes of Lutheran schools when it states that:

Through its schools the church offers a program of Christian education which:

- serves students, parents, the church, the community, and the government, by providing a quality education for the whole person
- strives for excellence in the development and creative use by all students of their God-given gifts
- equips students for a life of service to God in the church and the community
- provides an alternative to a secular, humanistic philosophy and practice of education
- includes, as a core part of the program, a Christian Studies curriculum which has been developed deliberately and consciously from the perspective of what the Lutheran church believes and teaches
- involves the school community in regular Christian worship (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001b, p. 136).

In this research the terms church and congregation were used to signify the individual faith community in one locality. Capitalisation indicates references to the Church catholic, or universal. Some Lutheran schools have a strong connection to the LCA through the close relationship with their local supporting congregation or congregations. Many Lutheran schools in Australia were established by Lutheran congregations. They shared facilities and resources and the local pastor was regarded as the school pastor. It is a "tradition amongst Lutherans in Australia that formal schooling is one of the Church's essential activities" (Hauser, 2009, p. 182).

The connection between the school and the local church or parish was of pivotal importance in ministering to the students and their families. Schools by nature are busy places. Despite dedicated staff, formalised Christian Studies curriculum, multiple worship

opportunities and intentional programs for community building, there is always more to be done when it comes to reaching out to, and nurturing, the students and their families.

When principals and pastors inspire a common vision and enable others to become responsible and authentic leaders themselves much may be achieved by their leadership (Neidhart & Carlin, 2011). There are many examples of creative and innovative leadership programs and activities that link Lutheran schools and their local supporting congregation. These innovative programs may link the school and church in fellowship, in service, in ministry and mission, and in worship. At Golden Grove Lutheran Primary, the "Step up to Communion" course (a prerequisite course for children participating in Holy Communion) was conducted with some sessions held in class time and some sessions held on weekends. The course linked school families with the local Golden Grove Lutheran Fellowship. In various congregations, the "Shed Men" program (a group established to support men and provide Christian fellowship) includes the fathers from the neighbouring Lutheran primary school and offers father and son events. These groups provide a powerful link between the community of the congregation and the community of the school.

There are, however, instances of fractured or strained relationships between the Lutheran school and congregation. "Many Lutheran schools have limited connection to a congregation and, vice versa, many congregations have little or no connection to Lutheran schools in their midst" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2006b, p. 1). Where the connection exists, the relationship may be one where the school and the congregation "take for granted" the tasks traditionally adopted by each body, and this corresponding apathetic attitude, or lack of creativity, ultimately leads to complacency and staleness. There may be power struggles between the management of the school and the management of the church. The larger budgets of schools, compared to the often constrained budgets of churches, can be a cause of

resentment or frustration. There may be perceptions that the school or the church are encroaching on the "territory" that belongs to the other organisation. Whatever the cause of fractured and strained school/church relationships, the principal and pastor play a crucial role in either easing these tensions or exasperating them.

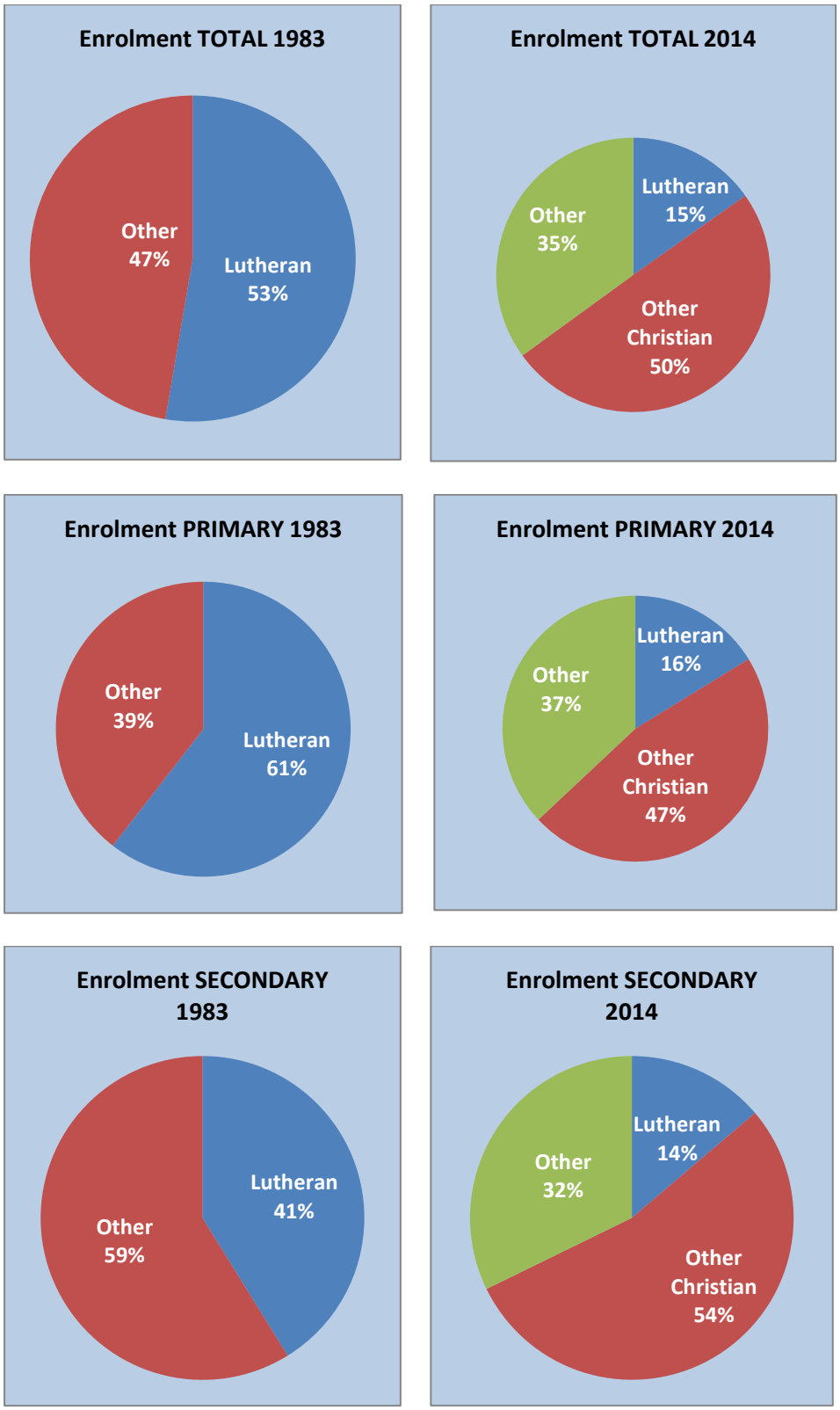
When principals and pastors work in isolation, when the relationship is superficial or when tension exists, difficulties exist in developing and sustaining links between the school and the local congregation (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007; Frijo, 2009). Without strong school and church links, the likelihood of bridging the gap between membership of the school community and membership of the church community becomes more difficult (Schoff, 2000).

2.1.2 Growth of Lutheran schools.

Lutheran schools in Australia have grown rapidly in a short period of time. The first Lutheran school was established in South Australia in 1839. By 1916 there were forty-nine Lutheran primary schools in SA; however, due to anti-German sentiment because of the War, these schools were forced to close by an act of parliament. Both World War One and World War Two had a devastating effect on Lutheran schools, not just in SA but across Australia. Contemporary Lutheran schools are very much a part of the recent growth of non-government schooling across Australia and have grown from an enrolment of 3592 in 1966 (Hauser, 2009)to 39 764 in 2014 (Lutheran Education Australia, 2014). Together with this growth has been a gradual shift in the dynamic of the Lutheran school. In 1983 Lutherans comprised 53% of the student population in our schools (with 61% of Lutherans enrolled in primary schools and a lower 41% enrolled in secondary school). In 2014 a total of 15% of students listed their religious affiliation as Lutheran (16% in primary schools and just 14% in

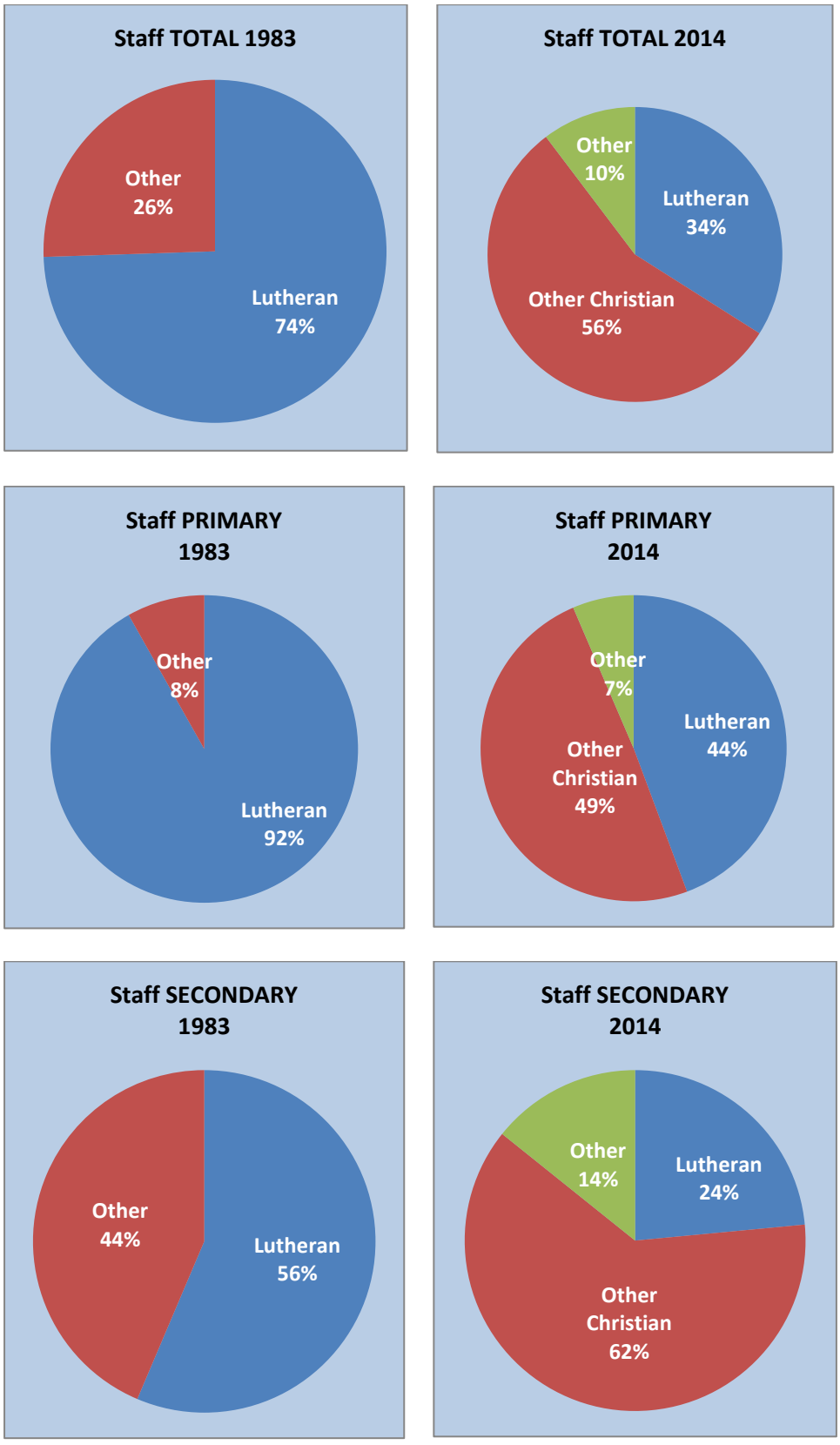
secondary schools) (see Figure 2.1). Consistent with the percentage decrease in the Lutheran student population has been a corresponding percentage decrease in the number of Lutheran staff members (see Figure 2.2). Lutheran staff comprised 74% of the staffing total in 1983 (with 92% Lutheran in the primary sector and 56% Lutheran in the secondary sector). In 2014 Lutheran staff totalled 34% (with 44% in primary school and 24% in secondary schools) (Lutheran Education Australia, 2014). The growth of Lutheran schools has brought changes over time to the student and staff populations. These changes have impacted the way that Lutheran schools have been conceptualised. The literature on the changing dynamic of Lutheran schools is discussed in the following chapter.

Figure 2.1. Trends in Student Enrolments 1983 - 2014 Comparison



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Figure 2.2. Trends in Staffing 1983 - 2014 Comparison



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2.1.3 Schools as communities.

Lutheran schools provide more than a Christian education to their students; they aim to provide a community. When parents and guardians send their child to a Lutheran school, they sign up to a place of care and grace, not just an educational place (Albinger, 2010). They are asked to accept and uphold the ethos and values of the school. These core values are promoted as love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, service, humility, courage, hope, quality and appreciation (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005b). In accepting and upholding the values and ethos of the school, parents are invited and encouraged to become active participants in the school. There are many opportunities for parent participation and involvement in Lutheran schools - joining the Parents and Friends group or School Board, volunteering in the classroom or for specific events and excursions, and involvement in programs like the Learning Assistance Program or sporting teams. Many schools have support and training programs for parents and families. Good Shepherd Lutheran Primary, Para Vista began a Class Carer program where each class had a number of volunteers who were the "Class Carers" and their role was to support and assist families in need. This assistance varied from organising the provision of meals to a family upon the arrival of a baby, to organising the transport of children when sickness prevented children from attending school. Involvement in these programs and activities, in other words involvement in the school, could lead to the perception of membership of the school community.

Parents' are likely to have varied views of their membership of the school community and these may be dependent on their level of involvement. Some working parents rarely enter the school grounds and their view of the school as a community may differ from the parent who is often involved in school activities and frequently participates in school worship. Despite differences in parents' personal involvement, anecdotal evidence indicates that

Lutheran schools are considered to be friendly and caring communities in which parents feel that they can be active participants should they choose to be. Many schools organise specific activities that are designed to bring parents in closer contact with the school. Salisbury Lutheran Kindergarten organised evenings for fathers and/or "significant" males where they brought their pre-schooler to the Kindergarten to experience a typical Kindy session, albeit held in the evening. This activity brought fathers and male role models into closer contact with the Kindergarten and allowed them to feel a part of that community.

There were, however, many factors that worked against involvement in the school community. When schools restricted their extra-curricular activities and programs to school hours, working parents were at a disadvantage. Time pressures and their children's involvement in non-school activities limited the connection with the school community. Schools need to be proactive and enabling in community building (Starratt, 2004), and recognise purpose, relationships and felt interdependencies among the members (Sergiovanni, 2007). They need to find creative and innovative ways to reach out with relevant and purposeful programs and activities to time poor families.

2.1.4 Schools as worshipping communities.

One of the aims of drawing families into the school community is to enable them to experience and connect with the worshipping community, or *community of faith* (Bartsch, 2001) that exists within the school. From opening or closing the day in prayer to sub-school devotions, from prayer before meals to whole school worship services, the students and staff are invited to participate in worship. Lutheran schools provide many opportunities for worship. Worship is considered an integral part of the life of the school and is not something that is done for or to students. Students have many opportunities to involve themselves in

planning and leading worship. At Endeavour College, Mawson Lakes, the weekly whole school worship was usually led by staff members and the songs were accompanied by a staff and student band. Parents were welcome to attend this worship service and invited to remain behind to participate in fellowship through the "Coffee Club", which was offered to promote their involvement in the school community.

Worship in Lutheran schools, though integral and central to the school community, must be by nature student-focused. Worship leaders need to be aware of their audience and the prayers, songs, message and liturgy need to be relevant and understandable for the students. The LCA's *Statement on School Worship* acknowledges the differences between school and congregational worship. In school worship there is: "no presupposition of a participant's faith; no presupposition of baptism; no presupposition of involvement in congregational worship practices; no presupposition of biblical literacy; compulsory attendance" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2002c, p. 1). It cannot be presumed that the student body are all believers and willing to be involved in worship activities. Active participation in leading prayers and worship leading is by invitation. In any Lutheran school the spirituality or spiritual development of those students who consider themselves to be Christians would also vary considerably. The content of the sermon or message, therefore, cannot be aimed at a level of spiritual maturity that may be considered appropriate for a congregational worship service. Participation in worship in Lutheran schools is voluntary though attendance may be compulsory.

Parents are encouraged to consider themselves a part of the school worshipping community. A number of parents, when asked where they worship, cite the Lutheran school, rather than a traditional congregation.

> Amongst the families who seek out our schools for the education of their children, many effectively see the school as their church, although they would not naturally or consciously use the word church. Our schools however have become the most significant and often only source of any spiritual dimension in the lives of these families (Grieger, 2010b, p. 2).

This reliance on the school to provide for the spiritual needs of adults as well as the students of the school, can be problematic. Schools are well resourced to provide for the spiritual needs of their students. The Lutheran school provides Christian fellowship, worship, nurture, outreach and opportunities for service for its students. The spiritual needs, however, of the parents, grandparents and friends of the school are different from those of the students. It is in trying to resolve this tension, that is, in meeting the spiritual needs of the entire school community, that the school often relies on the support and assistance of the local pastor and the local Lutheran congregation.

2.1.5 From school community to church community.

When schools and churches seek a thriving dynamic church-school partnership in which the shared vision for the combined community is to connect people with Jesus (Grieger, 2011) the transition from school community to church community may become a natural progression. Indeed, in some cases, congregational members who have children in the local Lutheran school may have difficulty in distinguishing between where the school community ends and the church community begins, such is the closeness and overlap of their activities and influence. For many other families, their exposure to the message of the Gospel begins at the enrolment interview. Parents enrol their children in Lutheran schools for a wide variety of reasons and certainly not all are actively seeking a Christian education for their

child. Some parents may perceive that the local Lutheran school provides a better alternative to the local government school. Others are seeking a particular level of discipline and expectations of behaviour, while yet others may describe their choice of schooling in terms of opportunities. Whatever the reason for deciding on a Lutheran education, for some families the message of God's grace is a new one, or is taught by the school in a new light. There are many anecdotes of students and families seeking to have their child baptised and/or confirmed in their faith and these families would acknowledge that the connection with the Lutheran school led them to a connection with the local church.

2.1.6 Barriers to church community membership.

There are also many families who are active members of the school community but choose to have little or no relationship with the local Lutheran church. Despite events and activities designed to draw the two communities closer, and despite worship opportunities where the school is involved or even lead the Sunday church service, such families, once they no longer have school age children, no longer participate in the school or church community. For these once active members of the school communities, there may have been barriers impeding their involvement in the church community.

2.2 Defining the Research Problem

The problem identified in this research was that, despite the resolution [at General Convention of Synod of the Lutheran Church of Australia in 2000] that "congregations and schools are encouraged to be more intentional, diligent, sensitive and flexible in responding to mission opportunities (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2000b, p. 1)", leaders in schools and

congregations were unsure about how to effectively respond to these mission opportunities. Though the core business of a Lutheran school is holistic education – an education which extends beyond the academic dimension to the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual (deSouza in deSouza, Engebretson, Durka, Jackson, & McGrady, 2006) - from a Christian worldview, a "by-product" of that education was a heightened education in the spiritual dimension (deSouza et al., 2006). The Lutheran school seeks to respond to students' and parents' spiritual needs by nurturing them in the faith and pointing them in the direction of their local church and /or the local Lutheran community. Evidence suggested that many people are searching for spiritual answers in today's society (Kitson, 2008; National Church Life Survey, 2001) though there appeared to be few who made the connection from Lutheran school to Lutheran congregation. This raised the question of the effectiveness of congregations to reach out to others in mission and the effectiveness of schools and congregations to bridge the gap between school communities and their associated church communities.

The roles that principals and pastors played in contributing to the mission of the school was a significant part of this exploration. The roles they played in connecting school students and their families with their local Lutheran congregation was also explored. Principals and pastors were interviewed to ascertain their views of, or perceptions about, their roles and the relationships between schools and churches. The research problem was investigated in terms of the role of the school in mission, and the nature of the partnerships between Lutheran schools and their local Lutheran church.

2.3 Research Purpose

The research purpose was to explore the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools.

2.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to explore the leaders' contributions to the mission of their school. The specific questions ensured that principal and pastor perceptions of mission were revealed, as well as the extent of their promotion of mission, and how they perceived the other's contributions.

How do principals contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?

How do pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?

Specific questions:

How do principals perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school?

How do pastors perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school?

How do principals perceive the pastor's contribution to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?

How do pastors perceive the principal's contribution to the mission of the primary school community?

To what extent do principals promote the mission of the primary school community?

To what extent do pastors promote the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?

2.5 Significance of the Research

Currently the Lutheran Church of Australia has a statement on the role of the pastor and their relationship with their school (Board for Lutheran Schools, 2001; Lutheran Church of Australia, 2002b). This statement, though designed to be encompassing of both school pastor and the local congregational pastor, emphasises the school pastor (sometimes known as the school chaplain) who is an employee of the school. Much discussion has occurred within the Lutheran church and within Lutheran schools, regarding the Lutheran Church of Australia's decision to regard principals as the spiritual head of Lutheran schools (Bartsch, 2006; Semmler, 2010, March 3) and subsequently placing chaplains in a lesser role to the school principal (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2002b). While dialogue regarding the role of the principal and the role of the school chaplain has been broad, very little discussion and subsequently fairly vague direction has been given to the role of the local Lutheran pastor regarding his support to the neighbouring Lutheran school. Schools pastors are often employed by Lutheran secondary schools, F – 12 schools, or large schools. Past theses in the field of Lutheran educational leadership have often focused on Lutheran secondary schools or both primary and secondary schools (Albinger, 2005; Bartel, 2004; Jericho, 2004; Ruwoldt, 2006). In this research, however, the focus was on primary schools where the schools rely on, and hope for, support from local pastors and congregations.

The current research may lead to further discussion on the role of the Lutheran pastor in regards to his relationship to and responsibilities for the Lutheran school within his community. The need for clarity on the pastor's responsibilities to the local Lutheran school may lead to a statement from the Lutheran Church of Australia on the role of the congregational pastor within and to the local Lutheran school.

In addition, the current research may lead to the development of professional learning opportunities for school leadership. As schools increasingly struggle to attract teachers who have theological training (Lutheran Education Australia, 2014), the need for professional learning opportunities that build bridges between congregations and schools is likely to increase. Professional learning may explore the importance of spiritual and community leadership and the impact of Lutheran theology on decision making as well as understandings of the role that culture and values play within communities.

Chapter Three – Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools. The purpose of chapter three is to review the relevant scholarly literature in regards to the nexus of leadership (particularly principal and pastor leadership), mission and leadership contributions. The literature review situates the current research in the context of the existing body of literature. This research contributes to the literature in providing empirical evidence on existing theories and by the creation of new knowledge. The review of the literature is organised according to three broad areas: leadership, values (with an emphasis on missional values) and culture (with an emphasis on contributions to culture). The first area, leadership, was developed through the lens of leadership preparation, leadership approaches, selected dimensions of educational leadership and leadership challenges. The second area, values, was explored through a Christian worldview informed by Lutheran theology, and through the metaphors of nurture, mission, service and vocation. Finally, the third area, culture, was explored using the concepts of a spiritual community, a worshipping community and a caring community. The literature review was based on a conceptual framework which viewed the school community as a pillar, or pylon, that is not an isolated entity, but part of a larger structure connected to the local community in general and the church community in particular.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

Three interrelated bodies of literature were regarded as relevant to the research on the contributions of the principal and pastor to Lutheran school communities. These were: Leadership; Values; and Culture. Leadership, values and culture are explored in this chapter with a focus on the leadership of principals and pastors and on schools as places of mission and community. Leadership in schools influences the values (Branson, 2007b; Burford, 2005, June; Starratt, 2004) and the culture (Cook, 1998; Schein, 2010) of the school community. In similar ways the values held by leadership personnel and the values that exist in a school community influence the school's leadership and the context or culture (Striepe, Clarke, & O'Donoghue, 2014). The school's culture, the way the school enacts its values, influences both leadership and values. Leadership, culture and values are fundamentally intertwined and

> leaders as entrepreneurs are the main architects of culture; after cultures are formed, they influence what kind of leadership is possible; and if elements of the culture become dysfunctional, leadership can and must do something to speed up culture change (Schein, 2010, p. xi).

The relationship between leadership, values and culture is viewed in the decisions of the leader. Leadership, values and culture are intertwined as "an administrator, any administrator, is constantly faced with value choices. To govern is to choose. One can accept or not the values dictates imposed by the particular culture in which one works" (Hodgkinson, 1996, p. 109).

A linear representation of the conceptual framework that guided the literature search (see Table 3.1), as well as a diagrammatic representation (see Figure 3.1), is provided below. An explanation of the conceptual framework guiding the literature search is also provided.

Table 3.1. Linear Conceptual Framework

Table 3.1

Linear Representation of the Conceptual Framework

3.3	**Leadership**		
		3.3.1	Leadership preparation
		3.3.2	Approaches to leadership
		3.3.2	Leadership dimensions
		3.3.4	Leadership challenges
3.4	**Values**		
		3.4.1	Lutheran theology
		3.4.2	Nurture and mission
		3.4.3	Service and vocation
3.5	**Culture**		
		3.5.1	A spiritual community
		3.5.2	A worshipping community
		3.5.2	A caring community

Figure 3.1. Diagrammatic Conceptual Framework



Figure 3.1. The school as community: diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework.

The conceptual diagram shows the key elements that guided the literature review. The church and school cultures are represented by the pylons. Across Australia, all Lutheran schools are connected, in some way, with a Lutheran congregation or parish. This connection or relationship can be vital and strong, and easily bridged. Schools and churches that are intrinsically connected hold a common culture, shared values, and leadership that build the relationship and bridge the communities. There are Lutheran schools, however, with little connection to a congregation and congregations with minor or token connections to the local Lutheran school. The pathway between these schools and congregations may be seen as distant and unstable. The metaphor of building bridges, or removing barriers, is one way of

viewing the relationship between the communities of Christian schools and their supporting congregations.

As discussed in chapter two, many factors influence the bridging of the school and church communities. The *leadership* of the two communities, the *values* inherent in the communities, and the community's *culture* all act as either bridges or barriers to the school-church relationship. The school community is not an isolated community. Lutheran schools are connected to Lutheran congregations, and school communities are connected to the wider community in its locality and beyond. “There is a growing body of literature that emphasises the contribution that independent church-related schools make to the educational and social context of a nation” (Jennings, 2011, p. 106). Just as schools seek to build bridges with their local community to develop community-minded citizens, so too Lutheran schools seek to build bridges with the local church community to develop spiritually minded community participants who come to know Jesus as their Saviour.

Though the literature review explores the concepts of leadership, values and culture as individual entities it is important to note that they are interdependent concepts, just as a bridge is designed and built with the interplay of roadway or deck, arches, supports and pylons. In this literature review the concept of leadership includes leadership preparation, leadership approaches, leadership dimensions and leadership challenges. Leadership has been placed in a foundational position as its influence, whether positive or negative, has a pivotal effect on bridging the school and church community. Leadership can be seen as the means to pave a smooth connection between school and congregation. The influence of leadership affects the culture and values of the communities.

In this literature review the concept of values included the mission, vision and core values of the school community. Values overarch the community providing structure, support

and balance. In exploring values, the question "What is important?" was asked. Values were explored in terms of the metaphors of nurture, mission, vocation and service. Underlying values influence leadership and culture.

The concept of culture was explored in the literature review through a focus on the spirit of the community. It included the level of care and attitude of service of both leaders and community members. In exploring culture, the question "How do we live out our mission, vision and core values?" was asked. The school's culture was explored in terms of spirituality, worship, and care in the school community. The school community was explored from a Christian worldview informed by Lutheran theology. The culture of the community affects the leadership and the values of the community. Leadership, values and culture are interconnected and are all aspects of the Lutheran primary school community.

3.3 Leadership

The focus of the review of literature on leadership was on principal and pastoral leadership of the school community. Leadership has been defined variously from the Chief Executive Officer, to heads of a department or section, or to anyone who takes the initiative to change things (Schein, 2010). The literature review focused on the principal leadership of the school and the leadership that the pastor provides to the school community. This research used the term *pastor* which is the salutation used for ordained clergy in the Lutheran Church of Australia. Other terms like minister, chaplain and reverend are also appropriate.

In Lutheran schools in Australia leadership is generally exercised in the following way. The principal is the ultimate leader and is supported by a leadership team which may consist of deputy principals, staff executive teams, heads of departments, Christian Studies

key teachers - also known as Religious Education coordinators - or other teacher leaders. Pastors are another arm of the leadership of a Lutheran school. Their leadership role is distinct as they are ordained clergy in the Lutheran Church of Australia and as such are accountable to the Lutheran Church of Australia. Their leadership role is one of service in a Lutheran church or parish in a specific location, and they may provide leadership in Lutheran schools through School Boards or Councils and through invitation into the school community. There is a lack of clarity over the leadership role of congregational pastors within the local Lutheran primary school which this research aimed to address. The leadership literature that informed this research focussed on four broad areas; leadership preparation, approaches to leadership, dimensions of leadership and leadership challenges.

3.3.1 Leadership preparation.

The importance of leadership preparation should not be underestimated. School system authorities are facing an impending shortage of qualified leaders with experience to move into leadership positions (Starr in Cranston & Ehrich, 2009; Normore, 2004) and this shortage amplifies the need for well-conceived school leadership preparation programs. Research on the effectiveness of school leadership preparation programs recommended stronger ties between schools and universities; authentic and on-going school-based experiences; and less emphasis on management and more emphasis on instructional leadership (Barnett, 2004). Leadership development programs need to cover more than managerial aspects of the role. There is a call for leaders to be architects and builders of a new social order and for leadership preparation programs to infuse social justice into every aspect of leadership preparation (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009). Leadership

preparation needs to include the religious dimensions as well (Belmonte, 2007, March). Though the formation process of leadership preparation is:

> essentially an educative process, it requires much more than the mere acquisition of knowledge and/or the transmission of facts. Leadership formation programs should challenge principals to make judgements about significance, 'rightness' and 'wrongness' when faced with dilemmas and paradoxes that have ethical and moral implications (Duignan, 2002, pp. 172-173).

Effective school leadership preparation is considered to be an important element in ensuring competent leadership practice.

Preparation for faith leadership is a vital aspect of leadership preparation as faith leadership is a fundamental element in the leadership of Christian schools. The faith leader is one who "understands the mission, the vision, the set of beliefs (purposes) of the school, and nourishes a world view that embraces the staff, the students, and the community served by the school" (Wallace, Ridenour, & Biddle, 1999, p. 108). Despite the importance of faith leadership, US Catholic secondary principals rated their formal preparation to be a faith leader as inadequate (Wallace et al., 1999). This view of inadequate leadership preparation has implications, beyond the Catholic secondary sector, to leadership preparation for Australian Lutheran schools. If faith leadership is considered to be the competency that distinguishes Christian school leaders from public school leaders, then preparation for faith leadership is an area that requires further addressing. Faith leadership was explored in the current research.

Preparation for community leadership, and understanding the influence of leadership on the culture of the community, is also a vital aspect of leadership preparation. In his research on the culture of Lutheran schools in Queensland, Marks (2000) found that

perceptions of leadership and its influence on school culture showed the greatest variance across the questionnaire sample. He concluded that "the professional development of school leadership personnel in understanding, assessing, and developing school cultural perceptions of all stakeholders within the school is an imperative for the strengthening of each school's culture" (2000, p. 294). Community leadership was explored in the current research.

The growth, post-second world war, of Lutheran schools together with the decline in the relative numbers of Lutheran students and Lutheran staff brought about important change in the dynamic of Lutheran schools (see 2.1.2 Growth of Lutheran schools). Where once they were considered *nurseries of the church* and the prevailing metaphor used to describe Lutheran schools was *nurture* (Zweck in Jennings, 2007; Jennings, 2009), the declining Lutheran student and staff population of the schools meant that Lutheran schools were no longer placed in society to purely nurture fellow Lutherans. The prevailing metaphor became one of both nurture and mission and this is reflected in many of the policies and literature regarding Lutheran schools (Bartsch, 2001; Jennings, 2009; Lutheran Church of Australia, 2006b, 2006c). The decline in the relative numbers of Lutheran staff and students in Lutheran schools, together with the changing conceptualisation of what it means to be a Lutheran school, has highlighted the need for focused leadership preparation in the area of Lutheran distinctiveness. The changing view of Lutheran schools is a contested area and this research explored the views of current principals and pastors on the purpose and mission of Lutheran schools.

The increased complexity of principalship (Starr, in Cranston & Ehrich, 2009), together with the changing conceptualisation of the Lutheran school, and declining percentage of Lutheran staff has led to the need for targeted leadership preparation. The difficulty of attracting and retaining suitable leaders for principal positions in Australia (Starr,

in Cranston & Ehrich, 2009) has also been felt in the Lutheran school system. Added to the general societal reluctance of teacher leaders stepping up to the rigors of principalship, is the limited and declining number of teachers with the spiritual and theological training necessary (Belmonte, 2007, March) and required (Lutheran Education Australia, 2009) to lead a Lutheran school. The Board for Lutheran Schools (now Lutheran Education Australia Ltd) recognised the need for suitably prepared future leaders with the introduction of part-scholarships to study for a Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Leadership with units from both Australian Lutheran College and Australian Catholic University. The study component of the scholarship was combined with a program of mentorship and developed into a Leadership Development Program (d'Arbon, Cunliffe, Canavan & Jericho, in Cranston & Ehrich, 2009). Lutheran Education Australia provided training for principals and aspiring leaders through ongoing provision of the Leadership Development Program (the sixth iteration began in 2016).

Teachers in Lutheran schools are expected to meet accreditation standards as required by the Lutheran Church of Australia's staffing policy (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2006c). The minimum requirement - accreditation as a teacher - asks teachers to complete the equivalent of six days orientation over their first three years of employment in Lutheran schools. Teachers of Christian Studies are required to complete a ten day orientation program for Christian Studies, known as *Equip*, or four units of study through Australian Lutheran College or equivalent. Further to these requirements, leaders in Lutheran schools are also asked to complete the Graduate Certificate in Leadership, or equivalent, from Australian Lutheran College (Lutheran Education Australia, 2009). The above pathway for the training of leaders ensures that Lutheran principals have a minimum standard of theological and leadership training.

In contrast to the accreditation process for teachers, Christian Studies teachers, and leaders required by Lutheran Education Australia, there are no defined post-graduate pathways for the ongoing training of pastors within the Lutheran Church. Though there are many avenues available to pastors for personal professional development, and opportunities for post-graduate study through Australian Lutheran College (ALC), or other education institutions, the graduate qualifications received from ALC are deemed to be sufficient to lead a church community. Pastors receive the same leadership preparation whether they work in a small community with one pastor as the only paid employee, or whether they lead in a large community with several pastors, multiple employees and teams of volunteers. This research showed a lacuna between the leadership preparation of pastors and the reality of their leadership in the local Lutheran school.

Australian Lutheran College has received criticism from some sectors within the church in regards to its preparation of pastors. It has been felt that the *cloistered walls and ivory towers* of ALC are removed from the realities of present-day pastors and congregations of the Lutheran Church of Australia (Kempe, 2006). This growing unrest came to a head with the proposal to the 2006 General Synod "that the Lutheran Church of Australia move to establish alternative routes to ordination which supplement what Australian Lutheran College currently offers" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2006a, p. 13). The proposal implied that the present theological training is insufficient to cater for the needs of pastoral students and that it is time that the Lutheran church joins the local, national and even international discussion regarding theological education, and engages in dialogue, debate and dialectic (Kempe, 2006) (debate intended to resolve a conflict between two contradictory ideas). As a solution to the unrest regarding pastor preparation, a change in theological pedagogy to action-reflection methodology and transformational pedagogy was proposed, which would promote experiential learning, and emphasise mutual education between teacher and learner (Kempe,

2006). It should be noted that since the 2006 proposal *establishing alternative route to ordination,* ALC has expanded its educational offerings. There were 134 higher education students studying through ALC - 30 in the pastoral stream, 73 in pre-service and post graduate teacher education, 31 in theological studies - and 24 vocational education students with more in non-accredited forms of study (Semester 2, 2014 statistics provided with permission from Australian Lutheran College). The preparation of pastors continues to be a focus for the Lutheran Church. The literature on leadership preparation of pastors and principals informed the current research and was built upon in the research interviews and survey.

3.3.2 Approaches to leadership.

Principals and pastors exercise leadership in faith-based schools. What constitutes leadership is contestable. Much has been written in the field of education on approaches to leadership. Analysis of the various approaches to leadership is vital, for leadership is an important contributor to the formation of cultural cognitions within schools (Marks, 2000) and to the values that inform school leadership.

Strategic leadership

Industry approaches to leadership have filtered into school leadership with the language of strategic planner, strategic leadership and strategic management (Caldwell, 2002, September). Strategic leaders keep abreast of trends and issues in the educational environment and society; share such knowledge with others in the school community; establish structures and processes which enable the school to set priorities and formulate

strategies; ensuring the school is focussed on matters of strategic importance; and monitoring the implementation of strategies (Caldwell, 2002, September). Strategic leadership is one form of managerial leadership. Though strategising is important for the day-to-day functioning of the school, as well as the long-term management of the school, this form of managerial leadership has little to add to the exploration of principal and pastor actions in terms of the mission of Lutheran primary schools. Strategic leadership manages the process of implementing a vision of what the school could become through strategic planning (Caldwell, 2002, September). It is in the big picture actions of visioning, rather than in the breaking down of a vision into manageable steps, that the leader needs to draw upon the values and culture of the school as well as their leadership skills.

Authentic leadership

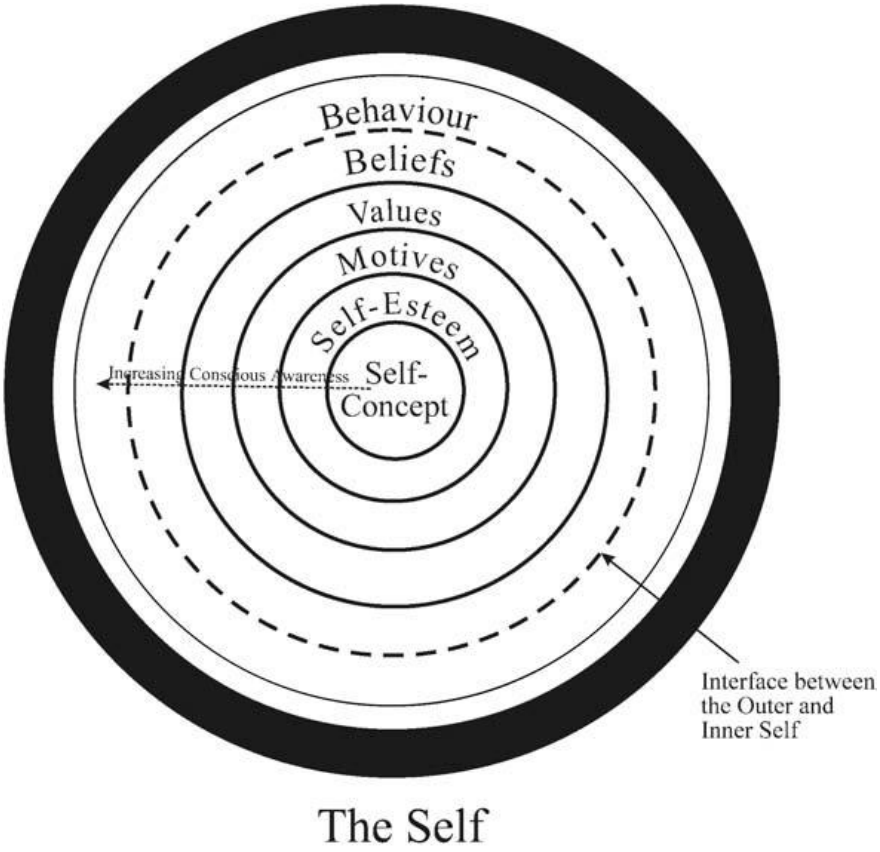
Authentic, or ethical, leadership (Duignan, 2003, August; Starratt, 2004) are terms that have been used to describe leaders who are morally responsible, present and proactive. Authentic leaders lead with purpose, meaning and values, building relationships with people and striving to develop themselves as self-disciplined leaders (George, 2003). They understand their purpose, practice solid values, lead with heart, establish connected relationships, and demonstrate self-discipline (George, 2003). Authentic leaders continuously reflect on their practice and encourage reflection in others (Blase & Blase, 2004). The process of deep reflection on the *self*, or the nurturing of a leader's moral consciousness, has been described as an essential step in the leaders' professional development in the area of moral leadership (Branson, 2007b).

Those who lead schools need to have moral depth and a well-articulated platform for the moral work of learning in the school, as well as a clear sense of how to proactively

> engage teachers and students in an authentic process of learning (Starratt, 2004, p. 136).

Leaders are required to be fully aware of not only "the objective, the factual, and the irrefutable influences upon their choices, but also they need to be aware of the subjective, the personal, and the inter-personal influences upon their choices" (Branson, 2007b, p. 474). The following conceptual framework has been developed by Branson (2007a) to illustrate how a person's behaviour is influenced by the various components of the self (see Figure 3.2). The ability to recognise the influences that shape reality and impact on behaviour is a prerequisite for authentic leadership (Branson, 2007a). Authentic leadership is one of the leadership dimensions identified by Lutheran Education Australia (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005a).

Figure 3.2. Components of the Self



Source: Branson (2005, p.19)

Figure 3.4. A representation of the components of the self which shows how these components are able to interact in order to influence a person's behaviour. From "Effects of Structured Self-reflection on the Development of Authentic Leadership Practices among Queensland Primary School Principals," by C. Branson, 2007, *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *35(2),* p. 225-246. Copyright 2005 by Christopher Branson. Reprinted with permission.

Related to authentic and moral leadership is socially responsible leadership. Socially responsible leaders:

1. Critique and challenge assumptions and taken-for-granted norms that condone or encourage injustices and inequalities;

2. Make deliberate intervention to challenge inequities (material and attitudinal), even in the face of majority opposition;
3. Use power as a moral force;
4. Model 'deep democracy,' especially through forms of shared leadership;
5. Connect leadership to pedagogical principles that promote and support authentic learning and teaching;
6. Serve others through their collaborative leadership;
7. Understand that the tension between economic rationalist and market-driven imperatives can be mediated through ethical, moral and socially responsible policies and practices (Duignan, 2005, pp. 11-12).

The outcome of authentic, or socially responsible, leadership is "an integration of espoused values and lived behaviour in the leader and in the group" (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005a, p. 5). Authentic leadership is leadership that results from living out personal, professional and cultural values and is an important leadership approach in faith-based schools.

Transformational leadership

The term transformational leadership (Bezzina & Wilson, 1999; Standen, 2008) has been used to describe a leadership approach that seeks to build school capacity by growing a collaborative school culture which fosters teacher development and commitment to the organisation. Transformational leadership seeks to transform the attitude and actions of others. The way to lead change is through moral purpose, empathy and collaboration sharing (Fullan, 2001, 2011) in the context of a community of trust, support and integrity (Burford, 2005, June). The literature on educational leadership also speak of enlightened leadership -

leaders that seek openness as a fundamental principle of leadership (Houston, Blankstein, & Cole, 2008). Transformational and enlightened leadership seek to build school capacity and speak into the culture of faith-based schools.

Distributed leadership

In recent years discussion on distributed leadership (Harris, 2008; Standen, 2008) and shared leadership (Bezzina, 2007) has come to the fore. Characteristics of distributed leadership are:

> Vision is a unifying force
>
> Leaders have expert rather than formal authority
>
> Collaborative teams formed for specific purposes
>
> Communities of practice emerge
>
> Individuals perceive themselves as stakeholders
>
> The organisational goals are disaggregated
>
> Distributed roles and tasks
>
> Enquiry is central to change and development (Harris, 2008, p. 112).

Distributed leaders share and extend leadership within and between organisations (Harris, 2008). Leadership sustainability is another key dimension to educational leadership (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Sustainable leadership requires:

> depth (it matters); length (it lasts); breadth (it spreads); justice (it does no harm to and actively improves the surrounding environment); diversity (it promotes cohesive diversity); resourcefulness (it develops and does not deplete material and human

> resources); and conservation (it honours and learns from the best of the past to create an even better future) (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, pp. 18-20).

Distributed leadership and leadership sustainability are relevant to the practice of leadership in faith-based schools, as they play a part in influencing the culture and values of the school.

Spiritual leadership

There is growing recognition beyond the moral/ethical and functional dimension of educational leadership to the spiritual. Spiritual leadership is a complex concept that encompasses servant leadership (Buchanan, 2013; Greenleaf, 1977), religious leadership (Coughlan, 2009) and transcendental leadership (Neidhart & Carlin, 2011). The principal, as spiritual leader, is one who' ministers' to the needs of the school he or she serves and the term servant leadership is used to describe the approach to leadership (Sergiovanni, 2007).

> One of the great secrets of leadership is that before one can command the respect and followership of others, she or he must demonstrate devotion to the organization's purposes and commitment to those in the organization who work day by day on the ordinary tasks that are necessary for those purposes to be realized (Sergiovanni, 2007, p. 34)

In exploring contributions to the mission of the school, the need to explore the principal's and pastor's understanding of mission and spiritual leadership became important.

Servant leadership

Servant leadership comes from the biblical call of Jesus in Matthew 20:26-28:

> ...whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Version, 1973).

The servant leader's identity and values determine his or her attitudes and actions.

> The servant-leader *is* servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first.* Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead... The difference [between servant first and leader first] manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 13).

Servant leadership is connected to distributed leadership and moral leadership, and involves relationship and followership (Ruwoldt, 2006). Servant leadership is an aspect of spiritual leadership that was explored in the current research.

Religious leadership

Religious leadership involves not only the leadership of the religious education program of the school but also the spiritual formation of staff (Coughlan, 2009). In his research on the role of the principal in a changing Catholic landscape, Coughlan (2009) found that the clergy focussed more on the ecclesial dimension of the principal's role while the principals and employing authorities used the language of pastoral leadership to describe the principal's role. "The spiritual development of staff must be a priority task of an authentic

Lutheran School spiritual leader" (Grieger, 2010a, p. 3). Religious leadership includes leadership of the faith tradition of the school. This is an important consideration in Lutheran schools as the Lutheran student and staff cohort is relatively small (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2) and consequently leaders may struggle to maintain Lutheran distinctiveness.

Transcendental leadership

Spiritual, or transcendental, leadership was considered the highest level on a continuum of leadership approaches (Neidhart & Carlin, 2011), with transactional leadership - leadership that focused on effectiveness, efficiency and achievement or "effective management of the status quo" (Neidhart & Carlin in Cranston & Ehrich, 2009, p. 111) - described as the lowest level and transformational leadership placed in the middle of the continuum. Transcendental leadership comprises three dimensions of spirituality: consciousness, moral character and faith. It is important principals and pastors regularly reflect on whether their lives and their work is meaningful and purposeful for the communities that they lead (Duignan, 2003, August). In a discussion document on spiritual leadership in Lutheran schools, Grieger (2010a) suggested the spiritual leader needs to ensure that they take time out for personal spiritual renewal; connect the school meaningfully with the church and Lutheran heritage; look to and lean on the Gospel; and build a Christian community. Research on Christian Parent Controlled Schools in Australia recommended that principals are given appropriate professional development, because of the difficult nature of their leadership, that "gives priority to theological or transcendent values which require translating into a schooling context" (Justins, 2002, p. 262). The spiritual or faith leadership dimension of the principal's leadership role is still evolving. Deliberate and systemic spiritual formation is needed as school leaders struggle with the increasing expectations placed on

[them] to undertake faith leadership roles in the parish and wider community (Neidhart, 2014; Neidhart & Lamb, 2009). An awareness of spiritual leadership appears to be a dimension that distinguishes leaders in Christian schools from their government school counterparts. The literature on transcendental and spiritual leadership was important as it provided terminology and definitions for leadership approaches that were revealed in the current research.

Understanding of various approaches to leadership is vital for leaders in schools. The current discussion on leadership approaches has recognised various forms of managerial leadership, however, the focus for the current research was on spiritual leadership. Principals and pastors in Lutheran school exercise spiritual leadership and this leadership was explored as their contributions to the mission of their schools were revealed.

3.3.3 Leadership dimensions.

Leadership frameworks from a variety of educational authorities acknowledge the spiritual and community dimensions of leadership (Australian Principals Associations, 2007; Catholic Education, 2005; CEO Sydney, 2010). The Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council, a body that includes the public sector's principals associations, recognises the spiritual dimension of leadership in their *L5 Frame* by focusing on the starting point of building leadership as "leadership starts from within" and using terms like beliefs, values, integrity, and vision (Bywaters et al., 2007). The *L5Frame,* however, does not speculate from where these beliefs, values, integrity and vision emanate and refrains from using terms such as morals or spirituality. Research on leadership at three faith-based schools in Western Australia found that "understandings of leadership are value-driven; practices of leadership are guided by values; and perspectives on leadership are ultimately shaped by the leader's personal philosophy or spirituality and are enhanced by the ethos of

the school's affiliated faith" (Striepe et al., 2014, p. 90). The Western Australian research, which was not confined to Christian schools, explored the connection between faith and leadership. In the "tidal forces" of school leadership, Albinger (2002) encourages leaders to find and articulate to significant others and reference groups - the groups whose perspectives we use - the perspective, beliefs and information from the past to inform the present. "If we have reflected on our values and beliefs and have a healthy sense of self, we should be able to find a place to stand" (Albinger, 2002, p. 13). Spiritual leaders are to "develop a community of life and worship" (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005a, p. 5).

In the document *Leadership Framework for Lutheran Schools* (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005a) Lutheran Education Australia have articulated five leadership dimensions – spiritual leadership; authentic leadership; educative leadership; organisational leadership; and community leadership. The current research focussed on spiritual leadership - "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" - and on community leadership - "on achieving a culture of solidarity and patterns of cooperation that encourages human interdependence as a means to achieve the mission of the school community" (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005a, p. 5). The role of the Catholic school principal as viewed by governance and by the principals themselves shows consensus about the importance of the principal as community leader and as "a person of vision, a model of the desired qualities and values of the community and a model of personal authenticity" (Coughlan, 2009, p. 162).

No known research has been conducted regarding the pastor's leadership within the Lutheran school community. The policy document *The role of the Pastor in the Lutheran school* states "it is desirable that every Lutheran school has a school pastor so that the

connection between the school and the mission of the church is reinforced and supported" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2002b, p. 1). The document uses terms like *partnership in ministry* and speaks of *team spirit* and *relationships with the school team,* listing under the leadership role: Develop understanding of the LCA, its identity and purpose; Prophetic role – remind people of their Christian commitment; Building of ethos and morality; Building links between congregation and school(s); and Building links with other ministries of the LCA (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2002b). This research explored the roles of the pastor within the Lutheran school and partnerships that exist with the school community and school leadership.

The generally recommended model for church leadership in Lutheran churches is servant leadership (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2002a). The practice of leading out a service orientation aligns with St. Paul's view of the church as a group of equals since all are *sinners* and all are, at the same time, *saints.* Lutheran theology points out that the Church (universal) and the local church is not defined by its hierarchy or structure. Lutherans "have been most reticent in according those who are ministers of the gospel a special, elevated status as representatives of the Church as an institution" (Hebart, 2009, p. 164).

It is important that school leaders reflect on their approaches to leadership. "There is a need for Australian school leadership scholars to avoid simplistic 'solutions', lists and adjectival forms of leadership. It makes no sense...to apply the same leadership style all the time" (Cranston & Ehrich, 2009, p. 424) or in all settings. When principals see their role in terms of managers rather than educators, they risk concentrating on structures, procedures and the smooth running of the school to the detriment of the students (Starratt, 2003). There is danger in thinking of educational leadership as one preferred theory or approach; rather principals and pastors need to hold their personal values and those of the school as a light to

guide their decision-making and reflect on the school's culture as a mirror to assess integrity and authenticity.

3.3.4 Leadership challenges.

The challenges facing school leaders in working together can be categorised as follows: managerial; relational; spiritual; and community. One challenge for pastors in faith-based schools may be the adjustment required when moving from the flexibility and self-determined nature of congregational ministry to the timetabled structure of school ministry. Seminal research on improving person-environment fit – the compatibility that occurs when work environment and individual characteristics are well matched (Zedeck, 2011) - has called for intervention research which takes into account the systemic properties of organisations as a predictor of the likelihood and nature of individuals adjusting to the environment (Caplan, 1987). All leaders are also challenged to be proactive and to reflect regularly on their work. One of the reasons that Catholic principals are required to have regular appraisals of their leadership is the often "strained relationships between principal and priest, and a lack of understanding and confusion as to the precise nature of the school-parish relationship" (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007, p. 19).

Lutheran schools and churches also experience these kinds of relational challenges. The Board for Lutheran Schools found it necessary to write the policy statement *Relative responsibilities of pastor and principal within the Lutheran school* (2001) to clarify the roles of these leaders. The document called for pastors and principals to exercise openness where "both pastor and principal must understand and accept the other as striving to achieve the same goals. Such openness will exist if the principal is church-minded and the pastor school-minded" (2001, p. 3). The LCA further defined the pastor's responsibilities in the policy *The*

role of the pastor in the Lutheran school (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2002b). The policy describes the school pastor "as a key link in leading people from the world of the school into a permanent worshipping community" and further elaborates that this "partnership in ministry should not be left to chance" (p. 4). In order to be a key link between school and church, the pastor must develop a good working relationship with school leadership and the school community.

The spiritual leadership of principals has been recently debated. The principal is seen as the spiritual head of the school *family* (Bartsch, 2006). The term *spiritual head* has been widely discussed in Lutheran schools and congregations, for some perceived that designating the principal as spiritual head elevated his/her status above the role of the pastor. This is despite the clear message in the role statement for the pastor, who is employed in the Lutheran school, that he "is responsible to the principal and comes under the jurisdiction of the school council" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2002b, p. 2). Anecdotally, not all principals are comfortable with being labelled the spiritual head of the school. Some of the challenges of spiritual leadership include:

> Being the public face of the school and therefore open to public scrutiny
>
> The agony of making decisions without being able to disclose publically the full facts of the situation because of issues of confidentiality
>
> Balancing the various areas of responsibility of the principal as part of his vocation
>
> Making the best use of school pastor(s) to support the spiritual development within the school (Bartsch, 2006, p. 38).

Belmonte adds to this list of spiritual challenges with the expectation that Catholic [or equally, Lutheran] principals "are expected to lead not only in the more traditional sense of

school leadership, but also as a driver of Catholic [Lutheran] identity in their schools" (2007, March, p. 2). "Catholic educators have a special responsibility to lead as Jesus did" and the "model of community life in the early church is a compelling example for contemporary Catholic educational communities" (Nuzzi, in Hunt, Oldenski, & Wallace, 2000, p. 269). Education is described in terms of a *moral imperative* and there is a call on leaders to develop leadership in others to generate and sustain moral purpose across the school (Fullan, 2003). When faced with the myriad of demands in education to measure and inform and pander to individualism (or to follow the latest trends), spiritual leaders are called to stay close to the Gospel and take a stand (McCutcheon, 2008, October). When Christian school leaders from two US Christian school associations were surveyed regarding the areas that needed research the topic that received the most concern and response, which was specific to Christian schools, related to the linkage between school mission and practice (Boerema, 2011). The challenge for faith-based school leaders continues to be the closing of the gap "between the mission of the Christian schools and the way they attempt to bring life to that mission in the day to day activities of the school" (Boerema, 2011, p. 44).

Not only are principals and pastors expected to be relational and spiritual leaders - as well as organisational leaders, servant leaders and, particularly in the case of principals, instructional or educative leaders - but they are also challenged with being community leaders. Here community is defined as a socially organised and interdependent group who are bonded around shared values and relationships (Sergiovanni, 2007). The prevailing metaphor for the Lutheran school and church community is family. Sergiovanni (2007) addressed the different constructs of communities when he wrote of covenantal communities and used the German terms *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Covenantal communities "have at their centre shared ideas, principles and purposes" (2007, p. 2). *Gesellschaft* refers to an organisation or society with its corresponding structures and hierarchy needed to function efficiently.

Gemeinschaft is translated as community and is seen through the metaphor of the family. Therefore Lutheran schools and Lutheran congregations aim to be seen as covenantal communities through their shared core values, mission and vision and aim to be viewed as Gemeinschaft.

A challenge of Lutheran pastors and principals is to grow and build this family-modelled community. Families experience highs and lows, times of struggle and good times, times when the team works well together and times when family members rebel or need to "spread their wings". There are even times when the family becomes irrevocably fractured. These images of families can equally be applied to the school and church communities. Though it is the role of all family members to be responsible to the family and all community members to behave responsibly within and for the community, the ultimate responsibility for holding the family/community together belongs to the leadership - and there is always more to do!

> There is more that the local church could do in terms of involvement with the schools within their established regional boundaries, if not with priests, then perhaps in the involvement of pastoral workers, pastoral associates and youth workers in the schools (Frijo, 2009, p. 237).

There is more that the Lutheran Church can do to build bridges and remove barriers to the church community and similarly there is more that the Lutheran school can do to bridge the gap between school community and church community. And ultimately it is the principal who shapes the culture and climate of the school community (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009).

The Lutheran school community is also affected by structural and human resource factors. Research in Queensland Lutheran schools showed that the type of school (primary,

secondary or foundation to year 12), its size and the percentage of Lutheran teachers and Lutheran students have an effect on the culture of the school (Marks, 2000). “These are important results for administrators and policymakers in...Lutheran schools to consider in order to optimise the culture of the schools” (Marks, 2000, p. 303). The ethical dilemmas raised by principals have been categorised according to: “conflicts of interest; conflict between the individual and the community; conflict among the dimensions of a code of conduct; conflict between justice and mercy; and dealing with a supervisor’s directive” (Cranston & Ehrich, 2009, p. 46). In dealing with ethical dilemmas, the importance of understanding values and culture come to the fore.

Another challenge for community leaders, beyond the internal management of the community, is addressing the perception of the community of those outside, or those in the wider community. Lutheran pastors should be encouraged to be ecumenically minded and return to their Reformation roots where Lutheranism had the character, not of a “break away” church, but of a movement within the Church “with the duty of reminding the Church what the centre of the Christian faith is and where it must find its orientation in its Christian teaching and its practice” (Hebart, 2009, p. 165). Principals have to counter the perception of Lutheran schools for Lutheran students. With only 15 percent of students having a Lutheran affiliation (Lutheran Education Australia, 2014), the principal should promote the school as a Christian school providing a Christian education which is informed by a Lutheran ethos (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001a).

At the 2000 Synod of the LCA, the *Hand-in-hand Schools and Mission Vision Statement* was adopted. It was resolved that “Congregations and schools are encouraged to be more intentional, diligent, sensitive and flexible in responding to...mission opportunities” (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2000b). (See Appendix D.) This resolution provides

challenges for the leaders of schools and churches and it is these challenges – that is, how can the pastor and principal be more intentional, diligent, sensitive and flexible in responding to mission opportunities? The challenge of enacting the vision statement has led to the researcher's motivation to undertake this research.

Many and varied challenges exist for principals and pastors in leading their communities. It has been argued that the principals' work has intensified and become more complex as educational leaders face greater responsibilities than ever before (Dempster, Carter, Freakley, & Parry, 2004). Research on Queensland government school principals has shown "a critical need for the identification of professional development activities that assist principals to learn how to accommodate both macro-contextual and micro-contextual influences in their ethical decision-making" (Dempster et al., 2004, p. 165) and has suggested a need for support networks and professional development that provides a knowledge base. There is "no clear understanding of *what* faith leadership is or *how* to go about faith leadership in the context of the Catholic primary school or the wider parish community" (Neidhart & Lamb, 2009, p. 6). The principal and the local Lutheran pastor are well placed to support each other. A mutual support network may be an ideal but what, in practice, is the reality? Research is needed regarding how principals and pastors work together and how principals and pastors work within the school context. This led to the following specific questions:

To what extent do pastors promote the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?

How do principals perceive the pastor's contribution to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?

To what extent do principals promote the mission of the primary school community?

How do pastors perceive the principal's contribution to the mission of the primary school community?

3.4 Values

In reviewing the body of literature on values, the focus was on discovering the values present and required to build a strong Lutheran school and church community. In exploring school and church community values, the fundamental questions of what we value and what is essential, central and pivotal to our community became important. Cook (1998) writes of a school's core values as those cherished and accepted ideals which provide meaning and identity. Values are defined as "concepts of the desirable with motivating force" (Hodgkinson, 1996, p. 110) and "clarity of personal beliefs, character, integrity, knowing and prioritising one's values, knowing oneself and one's limits, being in tune with oneself" (Houston et al., 2008, p. 113). One's values may come from a Christian worldview or an ideology, from convention or tradition, from a culture, from personal moral imperatives, or "the leader may seek the bureaucratic option of avoiding philosophical and values issues altogether by becoming a technician,...a manager" (Hodgkinson, 1996, p. 109). Values can be personal or professional. Leaders in schools work from the personal ethical dimensions of justice, critique, and care and from a professional ethic dimension (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001). While school leaders are expected to work from their own personal ethical code, they are also expected to conform to the code of the profession. Personal codes, when combined with a professional code, may serve as a values toolkit. The ethic of justice "focuses on rights and law and is part of a liberal democratic tradition" (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001, p. 11) - liberal, meaning a commitment to human freedom; and democratic, meaning decision making that respects equal sovereignty of people. The ethic of critique is based on critical

theory - an analysis of social class and its inequities. It aims “at awakening educators to inequities in society and, in particular, in the schools” (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001, p. 14). The ethic of care for moral decision making, leads to discussions of concepts such loyalty, trust and empowerment, emphasis on social responsibility and asks that individuals consider the consequences of their decisions and actions. The ethic of the profession “includes principles and codes of ethics embodied in the justice paradigms... as well as professional judgement and professional decision making. It is a dynamic process requiring that administrators develop their own personal and professional codes” (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001, p. 21). It is important

> when dealing with the ethic of the profession...to take the time to locate the formal codes of the profession and the standards of the field...we strongly recommend that everyone write out personal and professional ethical codes and compare and contrast their two codes...these exercises lead to a much better understanding of 'self' both as a professional and as a person (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001, p. 7).

Values act as a filter that allows for a particular perception of events and sometimes “meaning is made without questioning the filtering values” (Albinger, 2002, p. 12). It is important therefore that leaders in Lutheran schools have values that are consistent with the ethos of the school.

Why is this literature relevant? The day to day decisions that are made within schools, from decisions regarding classroom interactions to long-term strategic planning, are essentially decisions that involve selecting preferred alternatives and rejecting others (Begley, 2001). The basis of these decisions involves personal values and is influenced by social, professional and organisational values. Principals need to understand the values under which they are operating and are using as filters for their decisions. Research on school values is

vital for there has been: an overemphasis on the technical aspects and a neglect of the more moral aspects of leadership; values conflicts are common; articulated values may vary from committed values; leaders must understand their own motivations, biases and actions; leaders must be able to interpret the actions of others; and leaders must be able to distinguish among personal, professional, organisational and social values (Begley, 2001). Asking questions about what we value, and what is essential, calls for the examination of what makes a Lutheran school Lutheran. It calls the leader to examine the core personal and professional values required to build a vision for the school community.

Understanding and enacting both personal and professional values is at the heart or centre of building a strong school community. At the core of a Lutheran school is a Christian worldview. Starratt uses the term *myth* to describe this core (see Figure 3.3). Myths "are stories whose symbolism enable us to define value, judge human striving, and place ourselves in an identifiable order of things" (Starratt, 2003, p. 18). Radiating out from a Christian worldview are beliefs and assumptions which, in the context of the Lutheran school, are grounded in a Lutheran viewpoint, or Lutheran theology. It is from this "core of myth, meaning and belief that leaders find the foundation for their vision of what the school can and should become" (Starratt, 2003, p. 19). Here the *goals* and *purposes* of Starratt's onion model can be equated to the vision or mission/purpose of a Lutheran school. Schools can continue to function without the focus of a unifying core (see Figure 3.4) however such schools lack direction and the motivating force of deeply held convictions and purpose.

Figure 3.3. Model of Schools



Figure 3.3. Starratt's onion model of schools. Starratt, R. J. (2003). From *Centering Educational Administration: cultivating meaning, community, responsibility*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Copyright 2003 by Robert Starratt. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 3.4. A School With No Vision



Figure 3.4. Starratt's A school with no vision. From *Centering Educational Administration: cultivating meaning, community, responsibility*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Copyright 2003 by Robert Starratt. Reprinted with permission.

The core of Lutheran schools was explored in terms of Lutheran theology and moving beyond a nurture/mission metaphor, to Lutheran schools as places of nurture, mission, service and vocation.

3.4.1 Lutheran theology.

Teachers who work in Lutheran schools are expected to "have a basic understanding of and commitment to the Christian faith and a basic understanding and commitment to support the teachings of the Church, and the mission of the Lutheran School" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2006c). The Lutheran Church teaches that:

> the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as a whole and in all their parts, as the divinely inspired, written and inerrant Word of God [is] the only infallible source and norm for all matters of faith, doctrine and life (Lutheran Education Australia Limited, 2010).

The Lutheran Church's confessional stance is recorded in *The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, which contains the three Creeds of the Church, The Augsburg Confession (1530), Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531), The Smalcald Articles (1537), Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (1537), Luther's Small Catechism (1529) and Luther's Large Catechism (1529) and the Formula of Concord (1577) (Tappert, 1959). The Lutheran Church makes an important distinction between Scripture (the Bible) and the Lutheran Confessions:

> Holy Scripture is God's own Word, the Confession the human answer to that Word. The Scriptures are given by inspiration of God and are therefore the only source of

> Christian doctrine, 'the only rule and standard according to which at once all dogmas and teachers should be esteemed and judged', while the Confessions, like all human writings, even if written with the assistance of the Holy Ghost, 'should be altogether subordinated to them' (LCA, 2001a).

It is important that leaders in Lutheran schools have an understanding of the teachings of the church to ensure that the school retains its Lutheran distinctiveness.

Many teachers in Lutheran schools and some principals however have a limited understanding of Lutheran theology and a limited understanding how theology informs values and ultimately practice (Wegener, 2006). Leaders are faced with many *spirit-testing* and *mind-bending* moral dilemmas and those that really challenge are not right versus wrong, but right versus right. The most challenging issues are those that have:

> more than one right answer, and those in which competing values are represented... For example, should I make decisions based on what's right for the student? The teachers? Parents? Taxpayers? Should I decide based on a certain principle such as accountability for one's actions? Compassion for the individual? Concern for the common good? Adherence to policies or contracts? (Houston et al., 2008, p. 91)

Preparation for leadership should include dialogue between theology and educational practice.

The fundamental guiding principle, or starting point, in Lutheran theology is the doctrine of justification and the Lutheran understanding of grace. The *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* states that "we are justified [made right] before God by faith alone, since by faith alone we receive the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation for Christ's sake" (Tappert, 1959, p. 132). Lutherans speak of justification in terms of by *grace*, through *faith*

alone in *Christ* alone. “God accepts the sinner by grace, on account of Christ, through faith” (Bartsch, 2001, p. 38). Lutheran schools are challenged to be grace places (Grieger, 2011).

> The challenge for the people operating Lutheran schools is to find ways to make the schools primarily grace places, environments where the grace of God finds expressions in the lives of the people who are gathered for the educational activities that is the main focus of the school (Albinger, 2010, p. 153).

An understanding of grace, and its practice in schools, affects the values and the culture of the school.

The Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms informs how the school community and the church community are viewed. Christians are citizens of *two kingdoms* at the same time – the sacred and the secular.

> From a theological perspective, the distinction...is between God’s operation in the world as creator/preserver and his operation as redeemer/sanctifier. In Lutheran theological terms, we have here the distinction between God operating with his law, through reason, through the structures of family, government and the economic order to maintain and preserve the world (God’s ‘left hand’), and God operating in and through his church in the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments (God’s ‘right hand’) (Bartsch, 2002, May, p. 5).

The concept that God has both an earthly rule and a spiritual one frees Christians to be engaged in the secular world. “At one and the same time, the Christian lives in the world through vocation and lives in heaven through faith” (Veith, 1999, p. 92). The Lutheran school then is regarded as belonging to the kingdom of the left in its actions that create and preserve society. The Church, in providing Lutheran schools, is “providing schooling on behalf of

parents and on behalf of the state and not in the first instance as a function of the church" (Bartsch, 2002, May, p. 5). The Church (the people of God, not the institution) operates in the kingdom of the right, which is a kingdom of salvation and grace. The Lutheran school works in the kingdom of the right when it proclaims and mediates grace and forgiveness. The doctrine of the two kingdoms allows Christians to be active in society, and at the same time it ensures that the Church's priority is to proclaim the gospel, not to enforce the law (Veith, 1999). An understanding of the doctrine of two kingdoms, or two hands of God, allows leaders to show grace in the school as well as to ensure that boundaries exist and are maintained for the civic protection of the school community.

In a discussion paper *An Authentic Lutheran School*, leaders and those in governance in Lutheran schools were asked to consider the following five core propositions - A Lutheran School is:

1. A place where grace abounds
2. A place with a social conscience
3. A place that models community
4. A place that models servanthood
5. A place that models authentic spirituality (Grieger, 2011, p. 3).

If Lutheran education is truly Lutheran then "the centrality of the cross should be evident in the purposes of Lutheran education" (Schumacher, 2014, p. 2). Lutheran theology brings, to the Lutheran schools and church, the centrality of the cross and the grace of God; the value of service and the culture of a family community; and an understanding of the place of the school and church in society.

> The mystery of what makes a Lutheran school Lutheran...is tied up to the extent to which all learning and teaching, all human relationships and all activities in a

> Lutheran school are informed by the gospel of Jesus Christ as interpreted and expressed in the confessions of the Lutheran church. The centre of the confessions is the teaching of justification by grace through faith on account of Christ (Wegener, 2006).

3.4.2 Nurture and mission.

Lutheran schools have existed in Australia since 1839. The early Lutheran schools were run by the pastor, or a teacher appointed by the pastor, to nurture the children of church families. The concept of *nurture* "has been a persistent metaphor applied to an understanding of Lutheran schooling over the almost two centuries of its history" (Jennings, 2007, p. 147). As discussed earlier, the dynamic of Lutheran schools has changed dramatically from those early beginnings. This changing dynamic has led to discussions on the purpose of Lutheran schools and has seen a shift in the way that Lutheran schools have been conceptualised over time. Research in Lutheran schools within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod drew together literature on each school's philosophy of education. Six common themes were found in the philosophies and/or mission statements which were combined into an overarching philosophy of Lutheran education for these US schools:

> In response to the Gospel message of forgiveness and eternal salvation, Lutheran educational institutions exist to nurture students through a partnership with their families and an integration of faith into a carefully planned curriculum which addresses the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, social and physical need of the students with academic excellence and integrity as students prepared for sanctified service to the Lord and His world (Doering & Eells, 2010, p. 5).

Discussion on the purpose of faith based schools is not confined to Lutheran circles. The essential focus of Catholic education is teased out of the Vatican document *Educating Together* as the "nurturing of the humanity of its students" (McLaughlin, 2008). The aims of a Catholic school are listed in *An Introduction to Catholic Education* as the formation of Catholic believers, fostering Catholic principles, witnessing Catholic educational values, and that the spirit of Christ should permeate everything that is done in the Catholic school (Buchanan & Rymarz, 2008). These aims have a strong emphasis on the nurturing of Catholics in the faith and may reflect a strong Catholic culture rather than a need to be outward focussed and "do mission".

One outcome of the declining percentage of Lutheran students in Lutheran schools has been the ongoing discussion regarding the school's prime purpose and a shift of focus from nurture (or formation) to outreach (also known as mission or witness).

> During recent decades the clientele of our schools has changed from being predominantly children of Lutheran families to a high percentage of people who are non-Christian. This has meant that the basic religious role of many schools has shifted from catechesis to outreach (Minge, 2004, September, p. 1).

However, nurture and mission need not be seen as opposing constructs, and can both be applied to Lutheran schools:

> Only the Holy Spirit knows whether the student is hearing the word of God as a call to faith or as a challenge to grow in faith: the role of the Lutheran school is to bring the student and the word of God together so that the Holy Spirit can do the Spirit's work (Bartsch, 2001, p. 30).

Metaphors shape meaning. “The history of Australian Lutheran education has alerted [the writer] to the way in which Lutheran education had been, and still is, shaped by specific metaphors related to its identity and purpose” (Jennings, 2007, p. 147). The discussion on the Lutheran school as a place of mission has had its opponents. “To use the classroom for indoctrination is both unethical and an expression of a distinct lack of pastoral concern for any student’s spiritual life and family heritage” (Nuske, 2001, p. 57). Here the term “spiritual harassment” (Nuske, 2001, p. 57) is used to describe the action of those who attempt to evangelise students. In this research the views of principals and pastors on Lutheran schools as places for mission were explored.

3.4.3 Service and vocation.

The discussions regarding the purpose and identity of Lutheran schools continue. The changing dynamic of Lutheran schools means that the student population of Lutheran schools reflects “the diverse multi-cultural, multi-faith communities of Australia today” (Altmann & Nuske, 2009, p. 40). The metaphor of *service* is increasingly found in Lutheran schools’ brochures, newsletters and mission statements (Jennings, 2007).

> While this is not a new concept for Lutheran education, being a fundamental Christian attribute – nor one unknown to the general educational community – it aptly captures the valuable contribution Lutheran education, and, indeed, the education offered in faith based schools, can make to a society, which has begun reacting against the modernist elevation of the individual at the expense of a cooperative and collaborative community, and which is seeking interconnections in order to survive as a global species. (Jennings, 2007, p. 154).

Service has also come to the fore with the development and release of LEA's *Service learning* web materials. Ann Mitchell, then Chair of the Board of Lutheran Education Australia, stated at the launch:

> Lutheran schools recognise the importance of engaging the 'heart, head, hands and feet' of our young people through their life experience in the formative school years. Service is central to who and what we are – a pivotal values focus on Lutheran schools. (Macqueen, 2011, p. 18)

"The notion of unconditional service to others, as a response to God's serving of us in Christ, may represent the greatest contribution our schools can make to the wider community" (Jennings, 2011, p. 111).

The metaphor of vocation has also been put forward as a way to view the role or purpose of Lutheran schools in Australia. Luther's concept of vocation insists:

> that all vocations are acceptable to God. *Vocatio* is a 'mask of God', for in and through human giftedness God continues to work in creation. The school is an educational institution that prepares the ground for the continuing creative work of God through successive generations in the world (Nuske, 2001, p. 64).

"Luther calls...people God's masks. They are God's agents. But unbelievers see only the agents, only the masks, and not God, the giver of all, who conceals himself behind them and is 'seen' only by faith" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2009a, p. 2). Some educators feel that Lutheran schools should be freed from the concerns of the institutions that own them, that is, freed from being institutions for mission (or a means for maintaining or growing membership within the church) "and together with the church develop a vision for engaging in God's world" (Altmann & Nuske, 2009, p. 47). The theology of vocation acknowledges that:

> All human beings have been given places in this world and roles to fulfil. All people belong to God-ordained and blessed structures or social formations. Within these structures God wants all people everywhere to do justice, show compassion to the neighbour, and care for creation, so that the life of the world is nurtured and preserved, and everyone (and everything) gets a fair go.
>
> Everybody has their God-given places of responsibility. This is true whether or not people acknowledge these places and roles as masks behind which God is hidden (Strelan, 2003, p. 3).

Thus, according to the concept of vocation, the purpose of a Lutheran school is to enable the student "to become the person God has created them to be in order that God's purposes for creation may be accomplished" (Altmann & Nuske, 2009, p. 47). Lutheran schools are to take seriously that all people, all students, are created in the image of God and are to ensure that students are prepared to be the *future care-takers* in our world (Nuske, 2011).

The call to nurture, and to reach out in mission, is core and foundational values of Lutheran congregations. Church communities whose mission and vision is to serve, which have service as a primary responsibility, and those who recognise their role in the ongoing creative work of God (that is, understand the part they play in vocation) will be able to join with the Lutheran schools in their midst for the benefit of the wider community.

The literature on school and Church values in the Lutheran context (Altmann & Nuske, 2009; Grieger, 2011; Jennings, 2007; Wegener, 2006) emphasised the importance of the foundation of Lutheran theology and the underlying values of nurture, mission, service and vocation. However, principals and pastors of Lutheran primary schools may hold differing values, to the values cited in the literature, when confronted with the everyday reality of timetables and meetings, curriculum changes and parental expectations, marketing

and human resource management. The potential dissonance between theory and practice led to the following specific research questions:

How do principals perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school?

How do pastors perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school?

3.5 Culture

In reviewing the body of literature on culture (Cook, 1998; MacNeil et al., 2009; Mizelle, 2010; Schein, 2010), the focus was on the practical elements of how the school culture is perceived and how leaders shape culture. Here the emphasis was on moving from what is basic and fundamental (the values), to the living out of those values in everyday life or culture of the community. Culture is a complex phenomenon that "operates at several different levels of observability" (Schein, 2010, p. 5). Organisational cultures can be viewed on a continuum, from broad macro cultures through to sub-cultures and micro cultures. Culture "is an abstraction, yet the forces that are created in social and organisational situations deriving from culture are powerful. If we don't understand the operation of these forces, we become victim to them" (Schein, 2010, p. 7). Definitions of culture have developed over time from simply "the product of learning in social interaction" to a classic anthropological definition that culture "consists of what humans learn as members of societies, especially in regard to the expectations their fellow members have of them in the context of living and working together" (Goodenough, 2003, p. 6). Communities can be seen as having a culture and a language and the community's culture is learned in much the same way as the language, or the unique way of interacting, is learned (Goodenough, 2003).

The purpose, in reviewing the body of literature on culture, is to examine how principals and pastors embed and transit culture in the school community. Six primary mechanisms for embedding the assumptions held by leaders have been identified (Schein, 2010). These mechanisms are

> means by which founders or leaders are able to embed their own assumptions in the ongoing daily life of their organizations. Through what they pay attention to and reward, through the ways in which they allocate resources, through their role modeling, through the manner in which they deal with critical incidents, and through the criteria they use for recruitment, selection, promotion, and excommunication, leaders communicate both explicitly and implicitly the assumptions they actually hold (Schein, 2010, p. 257).

The current research seeks to explore the contributions of principals and pastors as they strive to embed a missional culture in the school community.

A school's culture can be regarded as the school's learning environment. School culture is defined by:

> its longstanding traditions, its mottos, the quality of formal interactions, the style of day-to-day interactions between everyone from the principal to the youngest Preppie, the messages posted in the hallways, and the general feeling that permeates the school. Every school culture is distinct and creates an identity or 'personality' (Laubli, 2010, May, p. 7).

The learning environment may be described in terms of feel, or personality, that a school exudes. Culture and climate may be used interchangeably, with the distinction that climate is viewed from a psychological perspective and culture is viewed from an anthropological

perspective (Cook, 1998; MacNeil et al., 2009). Table 3.2 illustrates Cook's (1998) summary of the differences between school culture and climate.

Table 3.2. School Culture and School Climate

Table 3.2

Cook's (1998) School Culture and School Climate

School Culture	School Climate
Character	Personality
Ethos	Morale
Core values	Attitudes
Underground	Atmosphere
Soul	Spirit
Way of life	Daily routine

From Cook, T. J. (1998). Building the Kingdom: school leaders as architects of Catholic culture. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 2*(2), 133-150.

The term *culture* was used, in the current research, as a broad notion that encompassed school climate (Cook, 1998).

Characteristics that typify a healthy school culture have been identified: collegiality; experimentation and exploration; high expectations and the celebration of successes; care; trust; and engagement in professional development (Laubli, 2010, May). Research on the effects of school culture and climate identified that healthy school environments positively impact on student achievement and the strongest determinant of a healthy school culture was the schools' ability to be goal focused and able to adapt to change (MacNeil et al., 2009). Six distinctive cultural dimensions were identified in research on the culture of Queensland

Lutheran schools. These were: caring, Christ-centred community; quality Christian education, worship as celebration; worship as life in vocation; Christian relationships and interactions; and Christian leadership (Marks, 2000). Three vital characteristics of the Lutheran school community are its spirituality, worship and care. The notion of spiritual, worshipping and caring school communities guide this section of the literature review as these cultural concepts impact and interact with principal and pastor leadership contributions.

3.5.1 A spiritual community.

As Lutheran schools promote themselves as Christian learning communities (Lutheran Education Australia, 2011c) discussion on the culture of Lutheran primary schools (and on the culture of all faith-based schools) necessarily includes reference to the religious and spiritual dimensions of the community. The focus of the current research is on the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of the school and in exploring their contributions to the religious and spiritual dimensions of the community an exploration of how these leaders embed and transit the religious and spiritual culture is revealed. Religion is defined as an organised system of beliefs and practices, often portrayed in contemporary literature with negative connotations, while the term spirituality uses metaphors of the personal, connection, inner search, and meaning (Habel, 2004, September). “Much of the allure of non-government schooling may lie in its ability to ‘read against the grain of modern culture’ ” (Coloe, in Jennings, 2004, February, p. 4). “This means that it is no longer adequate to aim exclusively at reproducing a traditional church-going, Christian [Lutheran] spirituality” (Rossiter, 2010, p. 130). This does not mean a radical new direction is needed for the expression of spirituality in Lutheran schools, but rather a subtle paradigm shift. Schools and classrooms need “a greater emphasis on critical/interpretive/evaluative activity” and an

emphasis on “a lifelong search for meaning, purpose and value in life” (Rossiter, 2010, p. 130). Lutheran schools should be places where “young adults can begin a critical examination of their respective religious traditions” (Nuske, 2011, p. 83). “Walking with people on a spiritual search is a new experience and very different from telling people what to believe” (Obst, 2011, p. 2). Schools and congregations that are responsive to the needs of students and families will nurture hope for the future and explore ways to connect members of the community in authentic relationships and meaningful service. This may mean that schools and congregations develop a diversity of ministries which target a variety of micro cultures (Obst, 2004, September). Faith communities need to be *personalised* for “the feeling of being accepted and comfortable within a local faith community is crucial” (Rossiter, 2011, p. 13). One factor in connecting people to Jesus is the image of God. Rather than portraying God as the ruler and judge, “the God of ‘new’ spirituality (remembering that there is actually nothing new here, just a re-discovering) is far more personal, intimate and localised” (Grieger, 2008, September, p. 4).

In considering spirituality, and the contemporary view of institutionalised religion, the concept of connecting students and their families to the church comes into question. “Ten or twenty years ago the key word was always ‘transition’ ... How well are we helping people who experience ministry in a school context to transition into the local Lutheran congregation?” (Greenthaner, 2011, p. 89).

> For centuries we have visualised, described, and even constitutionally defined ‘church’ according to an institutional model that relies heavily on the sole concept of ‘congregation’ as ‘church’, often thinking ‘Sunday worshipping congregation’. Sub-consciously, at least, we have referenced everything to this single conceptual model,

> and that model has been struggling to maintain its status as effective for engaging with the modern Australian community (Greenthaner, 2011, p. 91).

Rather than asking how we can connect students and families to the church community, schools need to ask how they can ensure that the spirituality of the school is authentic and the spiritual experiences of the students and their families connect them into a meaningful relationship with Jesus in whichever personal form that takes. This means going beyond having special celebrations and making the Mass more relevant to our youth today (Flynn & Mok, 2002). Research on youth spirituality in Australia suggests that there needs to be "a more deliberate formation of pathways so that the exploration of faith can be developed in meaningful steps" (Hughes, 2007, p. 197). Hughes (2007) suggests that churches can do better at providing opportunities for faith exploration without first requiring Sunday morning commitment. These issues are important to spiritual leaders of faith-based schools and the supporting congregations in their provision of spiritual oversight of the faith community. A paper resulting from the 2006 National Church Life Survey (see Table 3.3 below) reveals that younger generations (which includes the students and their parents) are more likely to relate to small groups rather than the feel a sense of belonging and commitment to a congregation (Powell & Jacka, 2008).

Table 3.3. Generations approach church differently

Table 3.3

Generational Attitudes and Behaviour Regarding Church Involvement

Older generations are more likely to:

- attend worship services weekly
- prefer traditional styles of music in worship services
- spend regular time in private devotional activity
- have a strong sense of belonging to their denomination
- be involved in church-based community service, justice or welfare activities
- be involved in community-based service, care or welfare activities

Younger generations are more likely to:

- be involved in small groups
- prefer contemporary styles of music in worship services
- feel that their gifts and skills are encouraged
- have helped others in a range of informal ways
- value outreach, be involved in evangelistic activities, and actually invite others to church
- be newcomers to church life, have switched denominations or transferred congregations in the previous five years

From Powell, R., & Jacka, K. (2008). Generations approach church differently. *National Church Life Survey Occasional Paper, 11*, 1-11. Retrieved from http://www.ncls.org.au/default.aspx?sitemapid=6270

In exploring the actions of principals and pastors the current research explores how the leaders create, promote and maintain faith communities within the school. Rather than identifying with "traditional life-long concepts of denominational attachment," people may choose to identify with a local Christian community (like the Christian community that exists in the Lutheran school) where their current circumstances are situated (Greenthaner, 2011). Spiritual leaders can "help reshape the traditional way we think about church, by expanding the boundaries of church beyond the church building to include the school staffroom, the school yard and car park and even into the community at large" (Grieger, 2010a, p. 6). In

exploring the contributions of Lutheran principals and pastors to the mission of the primary school, the spiritual actions of these schools leaders were presented.

3.5.2 A worshipping community.

Worship is practised in all Lutheran schools – ranging from class and staff devotions to weekly worship services, from sub-school or cluster worship to worship which may include the celebration of Holy Communion and Baptism. The term *worship* was used, however, in faith-based school contexts the terms Chapel, worship service, Mass, Eucharist and Liturgy may also be applicable. Worship is considered to be a fundamental and defining activity of faith-based schools (Justins, 2002). The practice of worship - God's action, human response (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2002c) – has a strong influence on the culture of the Lutheran school and contributes to the sense of community within the school (Jennings, 2004, February; Marks, 2000). The focus of the current research is on the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of the school and in exploring their contributions to the worshipping community an exploration of how these leaders embed and transit a worshipping culture is revealed.

The discussion on compulsory attendance of students at worship (Altmann & Nuske, 2009; Bartsch, 2001; Lutheran Church of Australia, 2002c) has been an interesting one. It has been argued that compulsory attendance at worship is an organisational rather than a theological construct and there is little evidence to support the continuance of the practice (Altmann & Nuske, 2009). Rather than a call for the ending of compulsory worship, it may be helpful to differentiate between compulsory attendance (acknowledging that this may be an organisational necessity) and voluntary participation and be sensitive in planning and leading worship (Bartsch, 2001, 2013). The LCA's *Statement on School Worship* cautions

"Where there is compulsory attendance at worship in a Lutheran school, God's loving action should be emphasised rather than the demand for faith responses from participants" (2002c, p. 4).

In the *meeting place* of worship and a school's culture, the authenticity of worship and the regard in which it is held may build bridges to the worshipping community of the congregation or create barriers to the congregation. School worship can have many styles (from traditional to contemporary, from formal to informal) but its place in the school - as a high point in the school week, a real celebration, or as something that has to be "done" before lesson two begins – is crucial. Worship as *celebration* is a dimension of culture that is important to Lutheran schools and Marks recommended that schools and teachers receive assistance in worship planning (2000).

Apart from students and staff, parents and friends are often invited to participate in whole school worship. For many adults, this weekly worship time is the only faith community that they experience. School worship, by necessity is "spiritual milk" as there can be "no presupposition of a participant's faith; no presupposition of baptism; no presupposition of involvement in congregational worship practices; no presupposition of biblical literacy" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2002c, p. 1). The term spiritual milk is based on the Bible passage: "Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready (1 Cor. 3:1-2)." Therefore, schools are asked to "explore and develop strategic partnerships with those LCA congregations which are well placed to care for the spiritual needs of students and their families" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2002c, p. 4). Schools, on the other hand, may need to "take on more of the responsibilities of a faith community. Without becoming institutionalised, such communities give attention to

discipleship and outreach. Obviously the ministry in these places needs to include word and sacrament" (Obst, 2004, September, p. 3). "Both Baptism and Holy Communion are huge tools available to us...a toolbox that is rarely opened in our [Lutheran] schools" (Grieger, 2008, September, p. 5).

It is a task of both the school and congregation to ensure that the step between the faith community of the school and the worshipping community of the congregation is a small one. It is accepted that many leaders of Christian schools struggle with the school's expression of religious identity and in closing the gap between the mission of the faith-based school and the living out of that mission (Boerema, 2011; Wallace et al., 1999). The key factors that can improve and consolidate religious identity in the school and build bridges to the church is recognised as an area for further exploration (Neidhart & Carlin, 2011). A new way of viewing the school and church relationship has been sought (Sharkey, 2011). Sharkey calls for a "single ecclesial community that builds Church out of the school community by creating strong and multi-layered bonds to other parts of the local Church" which is "organic" and "recognisably much more than a school" (2011, p. 7). Surveys conducted by the Lutheran Schools Association in conjunction with the SA/NT District of the LCA found that while Lutheran schools and congregations reflected healthy relationships, communication between congregation and school needed improving and congregation leaders were not confident of congregational hospitality to unchurched families from the school (Obst, 2004, September). The welcome of the school may be extended to the congregation when there are similarities in the culture of the organisations. When viewing the culture of the worshipping communities, similarities in styles of worship between school and church, where worship participants feel comfortable regarding the worship elements of the church, assist in limiting barriers and building bridges between the school and church. "Exciting times lie ahead if we dare take an expanded multi-focal view that allows us to move the boundaries of church

beyond the walls of existing sacred buildings to include the school yard and indeed the community at large" (Grieger, 2010b, p. 7).

3.5.3 A caring community.

Care is considered to be an essential element of a healthy school culture (Laubli, 2010, May).

> Our society... needs to care for its children – to reduce violence, to respect honest work of every kind, to reward excellence at every level, to ensure a place for every child and emerging adult in the economic and social world, to produce people who can care competently for their own families and contribute effectively to their own communities (Noddings, 1995, p. 366).

In her seminal work, Noddings calls for the reordering of priorities from an emphasis on academics and the organisation of schools around traditional disciplines to an emphasis on encouraging "the growth of competent, caring, loving and lovable people" (1995, p. 366). Research on the leadership attributes of female principals confirmed that the principals utilized ethical perspectives of care and responsibility when dealing with children and adults within their school. The research concluded that the ethic of caring should be placed at the top of the values hierarchy as ethical leadership is informed and guided by caring (Kropiewnicki & Shapiro, 2001). The focus of the current research is on the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of the school and in exploring their contributions to the caring community an exploration of how these leaders embed and transit a culture of care is revealed.

Lutheran schools and Lutheran congregations aim to be caring communities. Lutheran schools are recognised for their pastoral care and community service (Jennings, 2007). Being part of a caring school community means:

> being a valued, contributing member of a group dedicated to the shared purposes of helping and supporting all members as they work together, learn and grow. At the heart of [a caring community] are respectful, supportive relationships among and between students, teachers and parents (Schaps in Houston et al., 2008, p. 75).

Supportive relationships are the key to the perception of a caring community in schools for students, staff and parents. "Supportive relationships help parents...to take active roles in the school and in their children's education" (Houston et al., 2008, p. 75).

Lutheran schools describe themselves in promotional material as caring, Christ-centred communities. Four characteristics of caring Christ-centred communities are forgiveness and acceptance; growing as individuals; family orientation; and pastoral care (Marks, 2000). Research on the culture of Queensland Lutheran schools has revealed that more research is needed to understand and appreciate "the richness and diversity of community in [Lutheran] schools and to consider further methods by which it can be further enriched" (Marks, 2000, p. 295). Research in Catholic schools found that the "balancing act" required to meet the demands of both administrative and educational leadership is further exacerbated by the perception that the principal will care for all problems encountered by the school community (Coughlan, 2009). "This exposes the imprecise boundaries of the principal's role which is often interpreted as being all things to all people" (Coughlan, 2009, p. 167). In the current research, how principals and pastors build the school/church relationship was explored by analysing their contributions in furthering the caring, Christ-centred nature of the school-church community.

It is human nature to want to be a part of a community. As society becomes increasingly fragmented and people are feeling more insecure, they are searching for a sense of community - somewhere to belong and somewhere that offers identity and security (National Church Life Survey, 2001). People are "disconnected, feeling isolated and longing for connection with local people, for themselves and their children" (Kitson, 2008, p. 79). The communion of the three persons of the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – serves as an illustration of the ultimate community. With this analogy, where the church community becomes the means "to experience true and ultimate community" with God, baptism is the "point of ultimate acceptance into community" and the Lord's Supper becomes "the ultimate point of deepest fellowship" (Kitson, 2008). The Church should be seeking to be the ultimate community in the local community. The current research explored the pastors' and principals' contributions in the school community.

Lutheran church communities strive to attract the local community to their faith community. They do this by being a welcoming church (Kitson, 2008). Welcoming involves being a witness to the divine community; going and getting strangers; being outward focussed; requiring effort; being authentic to who they are; being ecumenically minded; encouraging lay participation; and using the inclusive language of *guest* and *host* rather than the exclusive language of *visitor* and *member* (Kitson, 2008). The current research explored the leadership actions that contributed to the mission of the school, including the actions that welcomed and connected the school and church communities.

Building bridges from school community to church community is not the purpose of Lutheran education. The role of the school is not to indoctrinate, nor to coerce a faith response from students or parents. Rather a faith response or bridges between the school and

congregation is a by-product of the relationship between schools and congregations. Involvement in the church community is seen rather as a gift of the Holy Spirit.

> Faith is not the product of education, but the gift of God's grace through the independent working of the Holy Spirit. The most Christians could hope for from education would be for it to provide opportunities and conditions favourable and conducive to the acquisition of such faith (Walker in Bartsch, 2001, p. 87).

Acknowledging the spiritual starting points of young people and their parents is the best way of providing an authentic spiritual education and experience in both schools and churches. The school's role is to enhance and resource young people whether or not they ever become practising members of a local church (Rossiter, 2011). The current research explored the principals' and pastors' actions with students and parents.

The literature on school culture reviewed above highlighted the changing nature of spirituality in today's society. While recognising that structural and organisational changes need to be made for churches to connect more meaningfully with today's families, evidence suggests that schools and churches are struggling to provide means of connection between the school community and the church community (Frijo, 2009). The literature also highlighted worship and care as visible characteristics of faith-based school culture. Worship and care are regular features of Lutheran school promotional material (Lutheran Education Australia, 2011c). Principal and pastor perceptions of worship and care are investigated in the current research to explore whether the reality matches the rhetoric.

When leadership, values and culture of leaders in Lutheran schools align, principals and pastors can work together to build bridges between the school community and the faith community, for students and their families. The researcher's desire to explore the

contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of the school, and thereby analyse their leadership actions, has led to the following overarching research questions:

How do the principals contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?

How do the pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, literature on the roles of principals and pastors in Lutheran primary schools was reviewed and discussed. This broad field was explored through the interrelated concepts of leadership, values and culture. Leadership, values and culture were viewed using the metaphor of a bridge where the structures or elements of a bridge – pylons, roadway, arches and supports – together form the whole bridge and no part can be taken from the whole lest it ceases to function as a bridge. In a similar way, the school as community is the sum total of leadership, values and culture and these elements together form the school community. The Lutheran school was conceptualised using a Christian worldview which acknowledges the spiritual dimension of the community. The Lutheran school is led by the principal who, ideally, welcomes the proactive support of the pastor. In this research the various demands on school community leadership were explored by asking how principals and pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools. In the following chapter the research design is explained and justified to enable the contributions of principals and pastors to be presented.

Chapter Four – Research Design

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore the perceptions of principals and pastors regarding their contributions to the mission of Lutheran primary schools in Australia. In this chapter the research design is explained and justified. The research questions that focused the research design were:

How do the principals contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?

How do the pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?

A social constructionist epistemology was adopted with an interpretivist research paradigm to explore the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of the Lutheran school. The principles of constructivist grounded theory methodology were used to generate themes and develop a theoretical framework.

4.2 Theoretical Framework

4.2.1 Epistemology.

In the current research the epistemological underpinning of constructionism was adopted as the means of describing the contributions of principals and pastors to the Lutheran school and church communities. Constructionism is the theory of knowledge where truth and meaning are constructed out of engagement with the world. Constructionism acknowledges that individuals may construct meaning in different

ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The epistemology of constructionism is concerned with "the collective generation [and transmission] of meaning" (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). A constructionist view of the world suggests that meaning is constructed in human interaction. According to constructionism, meaning does not exist outside of shared consciousness (Crotty, 1998). Constructionism acknowledges that human constructions change over time and through social interaction which gives meaning to events and realities. The participants construct their own realities and through the sharing of their realities with the researcher, the researcher in turn categorises the collective realities of the participants and constructs meaning.

The concept of *social constructionism,* which lies within the constructionist paradigm, was proposed by Crotty (1998), who argued that people construct meaning as they encounter the world they are interpreting, and they share these interpretations in the community. Some research theorists have identified this process as social constructionism (Crotty, 1998; Schwandt, 2000). Social constructionism proposes that all meaningful reality is socially constructed and that the social world and the real world are not to be seen as separate worlds. "They are one human world. We are born, each of us, into an already interpreted world and it is at once natural and social" (Crotty, 1998, p. 57). In this research the social constructions of principals and pastors in their school communities are presented and their constructions within their community are shared. The research builds on that of Neidhart and Lamb (2009, 2011) by exploring the social constructions of faith leadership in the context of analysing the social constructions of pastors, as well as principals, in Lutheran primary schools.

Though the aim of this research was to represent the respondents accurately and give an unbiased account, constructionism recognises that not only do the respondents

construct their realities, and these constructions change over time and through social interaction which give meaning to events and their realities, but also the researcher constructed, or reconstructed, the realities of the respondents. Constructionism legitimises the subjective nature of qualitative research while still attempting to pursue an objective account. The constructionist thesis depicts reality as a painting - multi-layered, intricate, complex, and able to be viewed at the level of its brush strokes though better conceptualised from the viewpoint of the whole – rather than as a photograph (as an objective snapshot) (Charmaz in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

4.2.3 Theoretical perspective.

Theoretical perspective refers to the philosophical stance of the research. This informs the methodology, providing a context for the research and a platform for the design (Feast & Melles, 2010, June). Interpretivism was chosen as the theoretical perspective for the current research as interpretivism regards all human action as meaningful and action is interpreted and understood with the context of social practices and culture (O'Donoghue, 2007). The broad perspective of interpretivism has been categorised in terms of symbolic interaction, phenomenology and hermeneutics (Crotty, 1998). Symbolic interactionism views humans as acting towards things on the basis of the meanings or symbols they have for them. Phenomenology focuses on how members of the social world apprehend and act upon the objects or phenomena of their experience (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). Hermeneutics, in contrast, focuses on the meaning or interpretation of language where in order to understand the part (the specific sentence, utterance, or act), the inquirer must grasp the whole (the complex of intentions, beliefs, and desires), and vice versa (Schwandt, 2000). This research drew on the theoretical

perspective of symbolic interactionism because the research focused on the pastor and principal interaction with their community and the meanings they brought to their community. The foundation of symbolic interactionism is based on three premises (Reynolds & Herman-Kinney, 2003). In symbolic interactionism individuals attach their own meanings or symbols to things; it is through social interaction that meanings are derived; and the meanings or symbols are also continually modified through an interpretive or reflective process used by individuals as they interact with others and with the phenomenon (O'Donoghue, 2007). "The value of adopting an interpretivist approach to research, and of the symbolic interactionist approach within it, is that it can uncover people's perspectives on a phenomenon. The important reality ... is what people perceive it to be" (O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 20). Symbolic interactionism stems from the work of Mead (1934), a pragmatist philosopher and social psychologist, who argued that human beings give attention to those things that are meaningful to them. Mead proposed that for the symbolic interactionist, the self is comprised of two key elements, the *I* and the *Me*. The I is the unsocialised self, made of personal desires, needs and dispositions and the Me is the socialised self that can be identified and discussed. The self is constructed and reconstructed through the exchange between the I and the Me (Allan, 2011). In this research the Me of interest were the participants' role as a principal or pastor within the Lutheran primary school community.

In exploring the roles of principals and pastors in Lutheran primary schools, the contributions of these leaders to the mission of the school and their perspective on the leadership, values, culture and mission was investigated. In the research the meanings that principals and pastors brought to the school and church community were revealed and interpreted as they interacted with each other and their communities.

4.3 Research Methodology

This research drew upon the principles of grounded theory to explore the roles of principals and pastors in Lutheran schools. During the early stages of grounded theory methodology, Glaser and Strauss (1967) perceived that the methodology can be used to generate theory in new areas of research which are grounded in the data. Grounded theory proposes that a theory that is discovered during the research will fit the situation being researched better than a theory that was identified before the research began (Creswell, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This methodology has undergone a number of refinements and given way to a range of distinct and acceptable approaches to the methodology. In 1990 and 1998 Strauss teamed with Corbin, taking the theory in one direction by introducing a more prescriptive form of grounded theory. They introduced a process of coding which tended to predetermine the categories. Glaser (1992) took exception to Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1998) grounded theory approach and claimed that the heavy reliance on coding forced the data rather than allowed theory to emerge from the ground up. "He [Glaser] also took issue with what he saw as an emphasis on simply describing acts rather than actively conceptualising patterns or connections in the data that would lead to theory" (Creswell, 2008, p. 433). Another distinction has been the *constructivist* method of grounded theory advanced by Charmaz (2000).

Charmaz (2000) advanced her own approach to grounded theory - the *constructivist* method - stressing the need for flexible strategies, with an emphasis on the meaning participants ascribe to situations, and acknowledging the roles of both the researcher and the individuals being researched (Creswell, 2008). Constructivist grounded theory uses the characteristics of grounded theory design, that is, process approach; theoretical sampling;

constant comparative data analysis; a core category; theory validation; and memos (Creswell, 2008). A process approach refers to the tendency of grounded theorists to examine a process rather than a single idea because the social world involves interacting with others. In grounded theory, theoretical sampling means that "the participants are theoretically selected to help the researcher construct the theory" (Liamputtong, 2013, p. 227). Constant comparative data analysis is the process of developing categories of information by gathering data, sorting it into categories, collecting additional data and comparing the new information with the emerging categories. From the major categories arising from the data, the researcher selects a core category as the central phenomenon for the theory. "In identifying a core category and the process categories that explain it, grounded theorists have generated a middle-range theory" (Creswell, 2008, p. 444). Throughout the data gathering and theory generation process, grounded theorists create memos about the data which assists them in their ongoing dialogue in regards to the emerging theory. Memos may include theoretical concepts, analytical interpretations, frames of relationships and experiences (Liamputtong, 2013). Grounded theory methods consist of:

> systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analyzing data to build middle-range theoretical frameworks that explain the collected data. Throughout the research process, grounded theorists develop analytic interpretations of their data to focus further data collection, which they use in turn to inform and refine their developing theoretical analyses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, pp. 249-250).

A grounded theory approach lies along a continuum. A strict adherence to procedural data collection; purposeful, or theoretical, sampling; computer-assisted data analysis; and a researcher as a neutral observer; places grounded theory towards a positivist theoretical

perspective. This research has been described as constructivist grounded theory to differentiate from a positivist perspective.

Constructivist grounded theory recognises the interactive nature of data collection and analysis and lies "between the more positivist (i.e. more quantitative) stance of Glaser and Strauss and Corbin and postmodern researchers (i.e. those who challenge the importance of methods)" (Creswell, 2008, p. 439). The constructivist approach does not seek truth - single, universal, and lasting - but it remains realistic because it addresses human realities and assumes the existence of real worlds. The approach views that what humans take as real is based upon their perspective. The constructivist approach also fosters the researcher's self-consciousness. It recognises that the discovered reality arises from an interactive process between the viewer and the viewed with the viewer as part of what is viewed. It follows that the research products do not necessarily constitute the reality of the respondents' reality. Rather, the product or writing is a rendering, one interpretation among multiple interpretations, of a shared reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Constructivist grounded theory lies between positivist data gathering techniques and postmodernist critiques.

The methodology of constructivist grounded theory, refined by Charmaz (2003) and based largely on the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), was chosen as the preferred research methodology as there is no known research and literature precisely on this topic under investigation, it allowed the research to develop from the ground up, and it allowed the researcher to discover whether theories emerge. Constructivist grounded theory is a methodology that enabled the researcher to connect with the participants (principals and pastors) – to uncover their views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and ideologies – while maintaining a process for data collection and analysis. The research drew on the principles of constructivist grounded theory as a methodology as it recognises the need for

flexibility of coding and data analysis, acknowledges the voice of the researcher, and allows theories to emerge from the ground up. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the research design.

Table 4.1. Qualitative Research Design

Table 4.1

Elements of Qualitative Research Design

Epistemology	Social constructionism
Theoretical perspective	Interpretivism • Symbolic interactionism
Methodology	Constructivist grounded theory
Methods	Un-structured interviews, on-line survey

4.4 Research Methods

Two data collection methods were employed in the current research – interviews and a survey. Having more than one method or stage of data collection is a grounded theory strategy which allows for refinement and interrelationship of categories to occur across the data collection process (Creswell, 2009). The themes and categories that arose from analysis of the interview data informed the construction of the survey questions. The survey data enabled further refinement of the categories.

Interviews

Interpretivist research seeks to understand the perceived reality of the participants. Interviews were chosen as the initial data gathering tool as this research method allowed for immersion into the world of the principal and pastor in their school community setting for the purpose of understanding their perceived realities. It enabled the researcher to connect deeply with the participants. Interviews "are not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results" (Fontana & Frey, 2000). The selection of interviews as a data collection method allowed deep interaction between the researcher and the participants.

Group interviews were conducted at each site with both pastor and principal present together. Group interviews aid recall, can be structured or unstructured, formal or informal and produce data that is cumulative and elaborative, though the results may become generalised rather than individualised (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The data collection method of unstructured and informal group interview was chosen so that the research agenda - to showcase the contributions of pastors and principals - was clear to the respondents and they could be as comfortable as possible in disclosing how they contribute to the school's mission. To reduce generalisation, the researcher ensured that each respondent elaborated on discussion items equally and care was taken in data analysis to view the data both as a whole and separated into pastor and principal cohorts.

The group interviews were unstructured and in-depth. Unstructured interviews were chosen because the method allowed for a greater breadth of data than a structured interview and allowed the interview to proceed as an active, emergent process. Unstructured interviews allowed the researcher to be open to what the interviewees wished to communicate, with the interviewees choosing the content they wished to deal with, in their timing and at their

direction. This contrasts with structured interviewing where all respondents receive the same set of pre-established questions and where there is little room for the researcher to improvise (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The very essence of unstructured interviewing is "the establishment of a human-to-human relation with the respondent and the desire to *understand* rather than to *explain*" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 654).

The interviews were open-ended and ethnographic (in-depth) which is "the traditional type of unstructured interview" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 652). In-depth, or ethnographic, interviews aim to elicit rich information from the perspective of the participants on a topic under investigation (Liamputtong, 2013). The interviews were in-depth face-to-face interactions between the researcher and the two participants to ensure that the *hows* of the principals' and pastors' roles were explored (the constructive work of producing order in everyday school life) as well as the traditional *whats* (the activity of everyday school life). Analysis of the interview data enabled the researcher to interpret the perceptions of the participants and construct or re-construct the symbols they use from the ground up (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed with line-by-line data coding used, together with memo writing, to generate themes. A constant comparison process - an important element in grounded theory research - was used to reveal similarities and differences in the views of principals and pastors concerning the mission of Lutheran schools, the roles of principals and pastors and their perceptions about their (and each other's) contributions to that mission.

As interviews were conducted within six school settings, it was important for the researcher to have a consistent interviewing framework across the sites. A framework ensures that the interview format can be consistent between participants (Liamputtong, 2013). Unstructured interviews can lead to broad and uncontrolled collection of data and a

framework provides a checklist to ensure that the interviews, though taking on the appearance of everyday conversation, have direction and cover the topics that answer the research questions. The framework used in the current research was in the form of the research questions and guiding questions presented prior to the interview, to allow for preparation and reflection, and used as a focus and checklist for the interaction. The pastors and principals were presented with the following research questions and specific questions prior to the interview to allow for preparation and reflection.

How does the principal contribute to the mission of the Lutheran primary school?

How does the pastor contribute to the mission of the Lutheran primary school?

Specific Questions:

How does the principal perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school?

How does the pastor perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school?

How does the principal perceive the pastor's contribution to the mission of the Lutheran primary school?

How does the pastor perceive the principal's contribution to the mission of the Lutheran primary school?

To what extent does the principal promote the mission of the Lutheran primary school community?

To what extent does the pastor promote the mission of the Lutheran primary school?

The method of unstructured in-depth group interviews was chosen so that through the data analysis process, possible themes and a subsequent theory were enabled to emerge from

the ground up. The interview method also allowed the researcher to get a clearer picture of the priorities of the principals and pastors. Emerging themes from the interview data were clarified, refined and validated by an electronic survey sent to all Australian Lutheran primary principals as well as to the local congregational pastor.

Survey

A survey was chosen as the second data collection method. Surveys are a data collection tool in which researchers administer a questionnaire "to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviours or characteristics on the population" (Creswell, 2008, p. 388). They allow large amounts of data to be gathered relatively quickly. Responses to questions can be compared between different groups of respondents and the data can be expressed statistically (Burton & Bartlett, 2005). Surveys are a systematic qualitative data collection method that assists grounded theory research by exploring a substantive topic – the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools – for the purpose of explaining actions and interactions in time. Descriptive statistics were used to provide simple summaries about the principals and pastors in regard to the data that was measured. Descriptive statistics describe what the data shows and each descriptive statistic reduces data into a simpler summary (Trochim, 2006, October). The survey was designed to confirm and validate the emerging themes arising from the interview data. The construction of the survey questions were informed by the data emanating from the interview texts. The questions clarified issues and refined emerging themes. In the survey the following techniques were used: inviting responses to open-ended questions; ranking of pre-determined categories; indicating perceptions on a five-point scale; and selecting two options that best describe the notion in question. An online survey was used as

it can be administered simply and quickly to encourage a high return rate. Opportunity was given to the participants to comment on any or all aspects of the survey. (See Appendix E.) The advantage of using an on-line survey was for ease of handling data. The use of electronic data enabled clarification of principals' and pastors' perspectives, as individuals and as cohorts. The survey was sent to the entire population of Lutheran primary principals in Australia and their nominated local pastor. Of the 46 principals and 45 pastors invited to participate in the survey, 21 principals and 19 pastors responded, representing a response rate of 44 percent of the total population.

4.5 Participants

The current research focused on six Lutheran primary school sites, with two sites theoretically (or purposefully) sampled from each of the three regions - Lutheran Schools Association (SA, NT, WA); Lutheran Education Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania; and Lutheran Education Queensland. Sampling schools across the regions ensured that the research was not limited to a parochial analysis. The six sites were purposefully sampled in consultation with the District Church Bishops of the corresponding Lutheran Education regions and with the Directors of the Lutheran Education regions. The Executive Officer of Lutheran Education Australia and the Bishop of the Lutheran Church of Australia were also consulted regarding possible sites.

The criteria for selection of the six sites included: the close relationship of principal and pastor in a locality; and/or the growth of the congregation attached to a school; and/or the innovative practices that exist between the school and congregation. The subjective nature of the above criteria is acknowledged by the researcher. In the discussions with the regional Directors and the District Bishops, the above criteria were not weighted. Sites were not

selected on the basis of the principals' gender, nor on the level of expertise/experience of the principal or pastor. Rather, the researcher, together with the consultants, selected sites that were considered to be progressive and successful in fulfilling the mission of the Lutheran primary school. The theoretical sampling enabled research on the actions of exemplary leaders. The findings in regards to the leaders' missional actions will help to enable others to learn from the actions of the principals and pastors.

A constructivist approach to grounded theory necessitates a relationship with the participants in order for them to feel free to share their stories in their terms (Charmaz in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Two days were allocated for data collection at each site. This time frame enabled interviews to be conducted on the first day and allowed time for memo writing and beginning the process of transcribing the interview. Having a second day ensured that time was available if any clarifications were needed from the interview or memo writing. Two days at each site enabled continuing the development of a relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees and ensured a richer understanding of the school community.

A summary of the research design is provided in Table 4.2. The choice of interviews and observations for data collection reflects a tradition in the social sciences "that fundamentally depends on observations taken in people's natural settings and interacting with them in their own language and on their terms" (O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 20). In this way, the issues that were raised and the themes that were generated arose from the participants, limiting the possibility of being pre-formed in the mind of the researcher.

Table 4.2. Summary of Research Design

Table 4.2

Elements of Research Design

The research purpose is to explore the roles of primary principals and pastors in Lutheran schools.			
Research Questions	**Participants**	**Methods**	**Data Analysis**
How do the principals contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools? ***How do the pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?***	Principal and pastor from six sites (two sites from each of the three Lutheran Education regions)	Theoretical sampling using un-structured interviews	Memo writing; manual line-by-line data coding; development of themes; communication with participants for accurate representation
	Forty-six primary principals and 45 pastors	On-line survey	Survey clarifies issues and validates emerging themes; memo writing
	Researcher	Development of a theoretical framework; narrative research report with researcher's voice as participant	Rendering through writing

4.6 Data Gathering Strategies and Analysis of Data

The data gathering occurred in a three stage process – exploratory, refinement and synthesis.

Exploratory phase

In the first stage, or the exploratory phase, unstructured interviews were conducted at six sites with the principal and nominated pastor. Throughout the first stage, memo writing, or journaling, was an ongoing feature of data collection. This narrative form allowed for the recording of impressions and the ongoing formation of ideas. It also ensured that the nuances, emphases and other subtleties from the interviews, which could be lost in the more clinical recording and transcribing of an interview, were noted. The memo writing step assisted data analysis by freeing the researcher to reflect upon the processes, actions and assumptions (of the researcher and the participants).

The interviews were conducted with both pastor and principal present. This joint conversation added to the relaxed atmosphere between researcher and participants and reassured the participants that there was no hidden agenda in exploring the differing roles of the pastor and principal. As stated earlier, the participants were purposefully sampled as leaders who were progressive and successful in furthering the mission of the school. They came to the interview keen to share "their story" of their individual and joint contributions to the mission. The data therefore was not limited by the use of a group interview. Subsequent communication, after the initial interview, was with the individual participant and allowed the individual to add anything which they felt was not covered in the joint interview. This individual communication ensured that representation remained

accurate. The un-structured or open-ended interviews ensured that the "story" the participants wished to communicate was authentically theirs and the relaxed conversation meant that the process was affirming for the participants. Use of the research questions as a checklist ensured that the participants' conversations remained on the topic.

Line-by-line coding of the interview data was used to reflect upon the conversations and begin the process of theme generation. Figure 4.3 shows an example of the line-by-line coding conducted at Site A. The coding process acted as a deterrent for the researcher to impose her own beliefs on the data and assisted the researcher to remain attuned to the participants' views of their realities. The coding reduced the data to a manageable form enabling the researcher to look for patterns and highlight important quotes which began the process of theme generation.

Table 4.3. Line-by-line Coding of an Interview Statement

Table 4.3

Example of Line-by-line Coding Showing Key Words Highlighted in Boldface and Initial Coding

325	I did a bit of Pathways stuff with the teacher aides … and	Pastor inducting
326	unanimously, unprovoked, they all commented, cos I asked	Receiving feedback
327	them just to tell me a little about their journey, they all	Acknowledging staff journeys
328	said, how much they **love being here**, and some of them	Acknowledging positive culture
329	have been elsewhere. So they **belong here**. What is it that	Valuing community
330	you love; it's an **identification of a spirit that is here**. That	Valuing culture
331	it is **a joy** being here, that there's a **looking out for each**	Valuing shared culture
332	**other**, there's a **building up**, depending where they are at	Caring culture
333	in their Christian life. They put a **value** on what they sense	Caring community
334	is here in the school…The school, broad word school, is	Valuing the community
335	clearly **giving a witness**. When a teacher aide comes in	Acknowledging witness to God
336	from being in a state school, or being in some other school,	Acknowledging staff journeys
337	they sense it straight away and they **value** it. So that	Valuing culture
338	means we are **giving that witness**.	Valuing witness to God

The researcher interacted within the school site for two consecutive days. This length of time facilitated participation in the school day, conversations with staff members in the staff room and experience of the rhythms of school life. The observations from the school site enriched the memo writing. The time spent on the school site and the opportunity for memo writing *in situ* assisted the researcher to make sense of the interview data.

Refinement phase

The second, or refinement phase, of the data collection process cascaded from the interview process. An on-line survey was sent to all Lutheran primary school principals and their nominated pastor. The survey was sent to 46 principals - the cohort of Lutheran primary principals in Australia in 2013 - and to 45 pastors. The pastors were nominated, by the principal, as their local school pastor. The difference in the number of principals and pastors was due to a pastoral vacancy. The survey data added to the interview data to provide a rich narrative of the contributions of pastors and principals to the mission of Lutheran primary schools. Analysis of the survey data supported the emerging themes and served to validate the theoretical framework.

Synthesis phase

The third stage of the process - synthesis phase - involved reconstruction of the data through the report writing process. The interview participants were given a copy of

their transcripts and a draft of the presentation of data chapter to elicit any further comments or feedback. Throughout the three stage process the researcher was neither a neutral observer, nor an expert scholar, but an active participant, lending her voice to the voices of the principals and pastors.

4.7 Trustworthiness

It is the concern of any qualitative researcher that the data produced and the research reporting is credible, dependable, confirmable and transferable (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). In the current research, accuracy of the findings was ensured by employing procedures such as the checking of transcripts, constant comparison of data and memo writing (Creswell, 2009). The four components of trustworthiness – credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability –were addressed in this research and establish its plausibility.

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research is concerned with whether or not the description fits the explanation, and asks, "Is the explanation credible?" while acknowledging that there are multiple ways of interpreting an event or phenomenon (Janesick, 2000). The research method of triangulation was used to ensure credibility. Four basic types of triangulation have been identified: data triangulation; investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978). Data triangulation refers to the use of a variety of data sources and was used in the current

research through the data sourced from interviews and a survey. Investigator triangulation, which is the use of several researchers or evaluators (Janesick, 2000) was employed by presenting the transcripts to the interview participants to ensure that the interview represented the participant accurately. Theory triangulation was used through theory generation occurring across six sites and from the survey data. Methodological triangulation was used in the multiple methods of interview and survey. The breadth of participants, and the in-depth studies at six sites added rigor, complexity, richness and depth to this research, ensuring that the research was credible.

Credibility was also established through prolonged time in the field. The more experience that a researcher has with participants in their setting, the more accurate the findings (Creswell, 2009). Two days were allocated to each school site. In this way, the researcher developed an in-depth understanding of the context of the school and the interview participants which lends credibility to the research report.

Dependability

Dependability was established through the accurate recording and transcribing of interviews, the constant comparative analysis used in grounded theory research, the presenting of data to the research participants and through accurate research reporting. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by the researcher to ensure dependable data. Constant comparative analysis ensured that the data was revisited on multiple occasions (Creswell, 2008). First-order interpretation of the data, or memo writing, began at the conclusion of the interviews. The data was transcribed and initial coding undertaken. This second-order interpretation built upon the intuitive process of

the initial memo writing. Third-order interpretation occurred when all the interviews were complete and the codes and themes emerged across the data. The final stage, or fourth-order interpretation of the data, was reconstruction or rendering of the data through the writing process. Dependability was ensured through communication with the interview participants. Transcripts were given to the participants for review to ensure dependability. Emerging themes and theories from the interview data were further confirmed through the survey to all primary principals and pastors. The research data was confirmed through revisiting the data on multiple occasions. Table 4.4 shows the process of data interpretation as linear and sequential; however this was not the case. The data interpretation was cyclic in nature with memo writing as an overarching process of meaning-making in a narrative form. In reporting the research, thick descriptions, the interweaving of quotes with interpretations, the use of tables and figures and the accuracy of coding all contribute to dependability.

Table 4.4. Data Interpretation Over Time

Table 4.4

Levels of Data Interpretation and Uses of the Coded Data

First-order interpretation	Memo writing at completion of the interview and continuing throughout the data collection process
Second-order interpretation	Initial line-by-line coding of interview transcript
Third-order interpretation	Line-by-line coding compared across all interview transcripts; codes are modified as themes emerge; survey data verifies themes
Fourth-order interpretation	Reconstruction of the data

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent that the research and its conclusions can be transferred from one site or event to another, and this transferability relies on the "thickness" of the description necessary for the reader to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated (O'Donoghue, 2007). This contrasts with researchers operating in the positivist tradition who strive for high levels of external validity. In reporting the research, the detail of chapter one (in which the context is discussed) and two (where the research problem is defined) provide a basis to make decisions regarding transferability. The data produced from in-depth interviews and from the breadth of participants (from sites in Queensland, Victoria and South Australia for the interviews and from across Australia for the survey) added depth, richness and thickness to the research narrative. The constant comparison between the findings and the current body of literature place the current research within the literature which assists in transferability. The issues raised in exploring the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of the Lutheran primary school has transferability to leadership (not confined to that of pastors and principals) and to faith-based schools, which seek to fulfil their mission in a particular context.

Confirmability

Confirmation of data and data analysis was obtained through consultative communication. The relationship formed with the interview participants and the continuing communication with participants ensured that the data produced was verified by the participants. Copies of the interview transcripts were given to the respondents, allowing them to verify the data and clarify or elaborate on any issues. Time spent at the school site helped

to ensure a fuller picture of the context and a broader view of the contributions of the principals and pastors to the mission of the school. The coding or generalising process meant that some data may potentially be "washed away." To ensure that the data remained reliable and valid the researcher's presentation of data was communicated to the interview participants for their further verification.

Confirmability was also assisted by the inclusion of all data and the disclosure of any bias that the researcher may bring to the study. The context and research problem chapters created an open and honest narrative that can resonate with the reader (Creswell, 2009). Negative or discrepant data that ran counter to the themes was presented. The discussion of contrary information added to the confirmability of the account by the open disclosure of realistic circumstances.

The quality of the data also confirmed its reliability and validity. The respondents were located across age groupings and represented a variety of qualifications and years of experience. The only bias was one of gender as all the pastors were by necessity male. The survey was sent to 46 principals and 45 pastors with a response rate of 44 percent. Many survey studies in the field of education report a response rate of 50% or better for mailed questionnaires (Creswell, 2008), however a review of online academic research surveys showed a decline in response rates in recent years with rates of 40% or lower since 1997 (Sheehan, 2006). All interview and survey data were included and no participants received any benefit from participating in either the interview process or the survey. The trustworthiness of the research – its credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability – will be firmly established if others involved in leadership in schools or systems authorities find assurance, assistance and support from the findings generated and find courage to enact recommendations.

4.8 Ethical Issues

"Data collection should be ethical and it should respect individuals and sites" (Creswell, 2008, p. 170). The researcher ensured that the research participants and the school sites were respected by employing a number of protocols regarding consent, confidentiality, and the collection and storage of data. The research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

Informed consent was received from the appropriate regional authorities and the principals before coming on to any site. Verbal and written approval was given by the regional Lutheran Education Directors and the District Bishops and by the principals and pastors in the local setting. The following protocols were employed to protect the rights of the participants:

1. Appropriate permissions were received before entering the school site.
2. Interview participants were given a written description of the research problem, purpose and questions, the processes involved in the data collection and what was expected of their involvement.
3. Interview participants were informed that they had the right to refuse participation at any time, and the right to withdraw from the process without penalty.
4. Interview participants were asked to sign a form indicating that they received sufficient information prior to their participation.
5. Principals were requested to inform their staff of the presence of the researcher on the school site and the purpose of the research.
6. Interview participants received a copy of the interview transcript and had the opportunity to add to, alter or withdraw any comments or statements, in part or in entirety.

7. Participants were not identified in the research writing by name and the site was not identified other than being a school of the Lutheran Church of Australia.
8. Interview participants were consulted throughout the data analysis process and were given a copy of the research findings prior to publication.
9. Survey participants were not identified by name or site.
10. Data was stored and secured according to the Australian Catholic University's protocols.

See Appendix B for the participant information letter.

The research was planned and conducted to avoid ethical dilemmas. One potential ethical or moral issue lay in the choice and wording of the following specific questions:

> How do principals perceive the pastor's contribution to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?
>
> How do pastors perceive the principal's contribution to the mission of the primary school community?

These questions had the potential for the pastor and/or the principal to criticise their colleague and their colleague's leadership in the school and could cause angst amongst the participants within a location. This situation was avoided by holding the interview with both pastor and principal present and by assuring the interviewees that the purpose of the research report was to bring to the fore examples of positive contributions to the mission of Lutheran primary schools. The research was conducted ethically by avoiding ethical dilemmas, by seeking the informed consent of adult participants, and by maintaining confidentiality of the individual, the site, and the data.

4.9 Limitations and Delimitations

The research was limited to exploration at six sites across Australia. Though the six sites were located across the three Lutheran Education regions, the unstructured interviews conducted at those sites uncovered the views of a limited number of participants. To confirm the emergence of themes, an on-line survey was sent to all Lutheran primary school principals and their local pastor.

The research was delimited to primary school settings as Lutheran primary schools do not generally employ the pastor (unlike secondary schools and F-12 schools). However, they do welcome a positive relationship and seek to build bridges with the congregation through the leadership of the pastor. Though the research was delimited to Lutheran schools, many of the notions and themes that emerged may have relevance for faith-based schools and other educational institutions (from child care centres to secondary schools) which seek to make links between their community and the local church. The research was delimited to principal and pastor contributions to the mission of Lutheran primary schools. All leaders, and in fact the entire community, contribute in some way to the mission of the school, however, this research was confined to the contributions of principal and pastor. The research was also delimited to the mission of the school in terms of its connection to the community and its spirituality. Mission is a broad and contested term and the research was delimited by the exploration of leadership in general, and spiritual leadership in particular, and by the exploration of the values and the expression of those values by the principal and pastors in the school community.

4.10 Overview of Research Design

The purpose of this chapter was to justify the location of the research in a research paradigm or epistemology and to justify the appropriateness of the methodology and methods chosen. The research was located within a constructionist epistemology within the general interpretivist theoretical perspective and informed by symbolic interactionism. The methodology chosen was constructivist grounded theory – the term *constructivist* was used to position the grounded theory approach away from a more positivist leaning. The methods of data collection were un-structured interviews and an on-line survey. The research design was focussed on exploring the roles of principal and pastors in Lutheran primary schools and centred on the following research questions:

How do the principals contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?

How do the pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?

The research was conducted in three stages (see Table 4.5) which were developed from the initial exploration and cascaded into the refining of themes and the synthesising of a theoretical framework. In the following chapter the data from the interviews and survey are presented and analysed and findings are offered.

Table 4.5. Overview of Research Stages

Table 4.5

Linking the Elements of the Research Design Over Time

Research Questions	**Stages of Research**	**Data Gathering Strategy**	**Data Analysis**	**Participants**
How do the principals contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?	Stage One - Exploratory phase	Un-structured interviews	Line-by-line coding of interview transcripts, memo writing	6 x Principals 6 x Pastors (purposefully sampled from the three Lutheran Education regions)
How do the Pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?	Stage Two – Refinement phase	On-line survey	Descriptive statistics, Line-by-line coding of survey comments, memo writing	46 x Principals 45 x Pastors
	Stage Three – Synthesis phase	Presentation of draft findings to interview participants	Re-construction through report writing	6 x Principals 6 x Pastors

Chapter Five – Presentation and Analysis of Data

The purpose of this research was to explore the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools. In chapter five data are presented and analysed to explore the contributions of principals and their local pastors to the mission of Lutheran schools. Two data collection methods were employed – interviews conducted at six primary school sites; and a survey sent to all principals and their nominated local supporting pastor. Prior to participating in the survey, the principals nominated their supporting pastor. In the case of a school which is supported by more than one congregation, the principal nominated the pastor that, at the time, was most involved in the school setting.

Analysis of the interviews and survey are presented in four sections which parallel the guiding questions and the research questions. The section topics group the guiding questions and the research, or overall, questions (see Table 5.1). Findings arising from the interview and survey data are combined and presented at the end of the survey data sections.

Table 5.1. Overview of Interview and Survey Data References

Table 5.1

Linking the Research Questions with the Chapter Sections

Section Titles	Guiding Questions and *Research Questions*	Chapter references
Mission of the Lutheran Primary School	How do principals perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school?	5.2.1- interview data 5.7.1 – survey data
	How do pastors perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school?	5.2.2 – interview data 5.7.2 – survey data
Leadership Perspectives	How do principals perceive the pastor's contribution to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?	5.3.1 – interview data 5.8.1 – survey data
	How do pastors perceive the principal's contribution to the mission of the primary school community?	5.3.2 – interview data 5.8.2 – survey data
Promoting the Mission	To what extent do principals promote the mission of the primary school community?	5.4.1 – interview data 5.9.1 – survey data
	To what extent do pastors promote the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?	5.4.2 – interview data 5.9.2 – survey data
Contributions to the Mission	*How do principals contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?*	5.5.1 – interview data 5.10.1 – survey data
	How do pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?	5.5.2 – interview data 5.10.2 – survey data

5.1 Presentation of Interview Data

In sections 5.1 to 5.5 the interview data are presented and analysed. Six interviews were conducted across the three Lutheran Education regions. The regions are known as the *Lutheran Schools Association*, and include schools in South Australia, Western Australian and Northern Territory; *Lutheran Education Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania*; and *Lutheran Education Queensland*. The six sites were purposefully sampled to explore the participants' views in regards to:

How principals and pastors perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school;

How principals and pastors perceive each other's contribution to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school;

The extent to which principals and pastors promote the mission of the primary school community; and

How principals and pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools.

The sites were selected - by the District Bishops of the Lutheran Church of Australia together with the Executive Directors of the Lutheran Education regions - as communities led by exemplary leaders that have enriched the lives of students, staff and the wider school communities. The principals and pastors were interviewed together to explore their collective contributions to the mission of their school.

5.2 Mission of the Lutheran Primary School

The term *mission* is used variously in differing contexts and holds a myriad of symbols and meanings both culturally and personally (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001c). The term mission has historical application, for mission may be associated with past, present or future missionary activity, and it may be associated with a locality in regards to a mission field or fields. The term is also used both specifically and generally. In one context mission may be used in terms of a mission statement or an organisation's motivating tagline, while in another context mission takes on a philosophical perspective and encapsulates the essence of the organisation and its reason for being. This section presents the range of pastors' and principals' views on the mission of Lutheran primary schools that arose from the interview data.

Throughout the six interviews the concept of mission was not specifically defined by the researcher, though there were numerous references by the principals and pastors to *mission* and *mission and ministry*. These terms were used in relation to the specific context of the school and its community and in the philosophical sense of the mission of Lutheran primary schools in general.

5.2.1 Principal perceptions of the school's mission.

The principals viewed the purpose of the Lutheran primary school firstly in terms of the school's educative function.

> For me, for any Lutheran school, our core purpose is education and that is why the school was started…if we take our Lutheran theology and our belief that children are

> unique and created by God that then implies that we've got to be here for more than education [principal: interview A].

Once that foundational purpose had been established, the principals expressed their views on the mission of their school, and Lutheran primary schools in general. They elaborated on mission in terms of nurturing students and families in the faith, witnessing to students and families with the Gospel, serving students and families, and preparing students and families for work in the church and the world.

The notion of the school's mission as nurturing students and families in the faith was discussed by all six principals. The *nurture* role was discussed in terms of walking with students and their families in their individual faith journeys and providing opportunities for the growth of their faith along the journey. One method used in analysing the transcript data was quantifying the frequently used nouns, verbs and adjectives. When searching the interview transcripts for these high frequency words, the term *worship* ranked as one of the highest across the six interviews. As the interviews were unstructured, it was the principals and pastors who directed the discussions to the importance and centrality of worship within their school communities. Providing meaningful worship opportunities was cited as one important means to nurture Christians in the school community. Other high frequency words included *care*, *prayer* and *relationships*. The principals emphasised establishing and promoting a worshipping community, a caring and prayerful community and a community that values and nurtures relationships.

The notion of the school's mission as *witnessing* to students and families with the Gospel was discussed in the six interviews. In discussions on the mission and purpose of Lutheran schools in general, and their school in particular, all principals and pastors reported on their role in sharing the Gospel with families that have little or no association with a

church. The principals recognised the "mission field of people that are outside of the church" [principal: interview B] who are part of their school community. Care was taken by several of the principals to nuance their role in reaching out, or witnessing, as being "a by-product" of the Christian community and culture of the school. Those principals pointed out that the purpose of their school was not to evangelise non-Christians. At the same time, they acknowledged, and shared some examples of, the many occasions that students and their families declared their faith in Christ as a result of the Spirit's work in the school. Other principals viewed their school's role as having an openly evangelistic dimension. These principals didn't feel the need to couch, or nuance, their witnessing role as secondary, or as a by-product, of the Christian education their school aimed to provide. They reported that they shared the good news of Jesus Christ with non-Christian families, as shown in this comment by a principal:

> So we've got a massive, massive mission opportunity, but it's also a badge that we need to wear. I've felt, in conjunction with the pastors that we've got, that we need to be providing that stepping stone to get people from where they are, to coming into the church and that's part of what we've just done with that [worship] service…it's something to get people involved and to be comfortable and come along on a Sunday [principal: interview B].

Despite the varying perceptions about the notion of the school's mission as witnessing or outreach, all principals cited cases of students and families coming to know Christ as their Saviour as a result of the Holy Spirit's work in and through the school.

The notion of the school's mission as serving students and families was discussed across the interviews. Though the term *service* or *serving* was rarely found in the transcripts, the principals shared the extra-curricular programs they promoted and the activities that they

encouraged as being provided to meet the needs of their community in that time and place. They perceived their community actions as meeting people's need for Christian identity and security, which complements the research identified by the National Church Life Survey (2001). Four of the schools employed ministry personnel whose role was to serve not just the students of the school but also the parents. The principals were aware of their unique school culture and the needs within their communities. The interviews began with the principals and pastors speaking of what was distinctive about the school community. Discussions that began with "because of the nature of the farming community" [principal: interview B] or "there's a lot more history involved in [this school] than other schools I've been in" [principal; interview C] demonstrate that the principals were aware of the uniqueness of their community. Subsequent conversation focussed on what was being carried out at the school to promote and enhance the positive aspects of the school's culture. The principals reported their actions in terms of *valuing*, *encouraging*, and *promoting* with an attitude of serving their community.

The notion of the school's mission as preparing students and families for work in the church and the world was implied, rather than overtly stated, in the six interviews. The principals took seriously their role as educators of the whole person. One principal stated: "We are here for the whole physical, emotional, social, spiritual, academic, we need to be here for all of that" [principal: interview A]. Principals were eager to discuss the programs and activities that were run at the school and these programs/activities demonstrated the principal's desire that the school provide more than "the basics". In interview A, the influence of the "shed men" culture within the congregation, and its positive effects on the school, was discussed at length. The principal stated, "I think one unique thing about the congregation is the whole men, the role of men" and the pastor continued the conversation by describing the activities and influence of male role models within the school. All the

principals shared activities where the students were serving, or participating in, the wider community. These community activities included involvement in the town show, participating in community Christmas programs, singing at the neighbouring retirement village as well as student involvement in congregational activities.

5.2.2 Pastor perceptions of the school's mission.

The pastors primarily explored the mission of the school in terms of the school's potential to bring students and their families to faith (outreach) and to nurture students and their families in the faith. One pastor discussed the school in terms of its educational function. The other five pastors either agreed with the principal - on the discussion that the school exists primarily to educate - or presumed the educational function of the school's mission.

The notion of the school's mission as outreach or bringing students and families to faith was explored by the six pastors. One pastor nuanced the actions of outreach or evangelising with the less aggressive/more passive phrasing of giving *witness:*

> I believe that schools are there primarily, firstly to educate… that I believe the school provides opportunity for mission…the mission of the school is to give witness. And so theologically, I can say to give witness to God as creator and provider; to give witness to God in Jesus, Saviour, which impacts on pastoral care, for example, and things like that; and to give witness to God as Spirit, the way the Spirit works in our own lives and by providing opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work as He chooses to do. I actually thought, that's not bad - To give witness - which means that it's

> ultimately God's work. It's not to convert or to put bums on pews… [pastor: interview A]

One pastor challenged the premise that the school's mission to bring students and their families to Christ should automatically presume a connection with a local congregation.

> Is ministry through the school community about integrating the school ministry into the congregation's ministry or does ministry actually stand? Does it have its own place in a school community even apart from, or even distinct from, the congregation ministry? Can you have that as an authentic ministry of the church, and with the concept of community and everything, that is quite different from the congregation? And I think we have been tending to try and explore more that, the authenticity of ministry within and to our school community, to our clients, if you like, rather than seeing ourselves as an auxiliary to the congregation's ministry, as if the congregation is the legitimate and authentic representation of the church in this place [pastor: interview F].

All pastors reported on the school as a "mission field" and the potential for bringing students and their families to know Christ as their Saviour.

The notion of the school's mission as nurturing students and their families in the faith was a recurring discussion topic for the six pastors. These conversations focussed on the opportunities provided, for Christian parents and students, for worship, as well as other ministry programs and activities aimed at growing and enhancing the Christian culture of the school and the faith experience for the school community. One pastor shared of the faith of the students being nurtured within the school, despite their parents' apparent unbelief:

> Not just here but elsewhere there are children who have a faith and their parents don't. The faith actually was nurtured and grew, the seed, within our schools. They take on Christian faith for themselves even though their parents don't. I've seen that [pastor: interview A].

Another pastor described the nurturing role of the congregation in terms of its support of the school – "People need to know that the Lutheran church is quietly behind the scenes" [pastor: interview E]. All pastors acknowledged that there is more to do in nurturing the students and families in their faith.

5.3 Leadership Perspectives

In this section data regarding the principals' perspectives about the pastors' contributions to the mission of the Lutheran primary school are presented, as well as the pastors' perspectives on the principals' contributions. In all six interviews, the pastors and principals were encouraging and supportive of each other. There were many indicators of an excellent professional and personal relationship between the principals and the pastors. These indicators included the high frequency of affirmation directed to each other, the numerous occasions of friendly banter demonstrating trust and comfort, and the frequent finishing of each other's conversations demonstrating a high level of familiarity. Their conversations showed mutual respect and trust, an affirmation and appreciation of each other's roles, and close working relationships.

The unstructured interviews at each of the six school sites were conducted with principal and pastor together. The interviews proceeded in a relaxed conversational manner as evidenced by the friendly banter between principal and pastor, and the numerous occasions

where the conversation started by one interviewee was finished by the other in a manner that was not corrective but was viewed as a keenness to espouse their shared vision. As per the ebbs and flows of conversations, not all topics were commented on by both participants other than to agree with the other's comments, to refine or clarify their comments or to reiterate an important point. On no occasions, across the interviews, did the pastor or principal disagree with each other. Pastors and principals both demonstrated - through their words and actions - that they were working towards a united vision. The principals and pastors reported jointly discussing, clarifying and refining their vision for their school community in their regular meeting times. A united vision was also evidenced by the enthusiasm they both demonstrated when talking of the mission of the school and their eagerness to remark on programs and activities that promoted their vision for the school.

5.3.1 Principal perspectives on the pastor's contributions to the mission.

The principals shared programs, initiatives and actions that the pastor undertakes which contribute to the mission of the school. These included participating in or leading whole school worship services, staff devotions and staff bible studies. One principal spoke about the prominent role of men in the congregation and the pastor's role in supporting and harnessing the "shed men" culture for service in the school. Other principals reported on the pastor's involvement in, and promotion of, child and youth programs run across the school and church or run from the church for the school. All principals commented on the importance of the pastor's work with the staff. The following quote from a principal is typical of the conversations and demonstrates the principal's appreciation for the pastor's role with the school staff:

> I certainly really value knowing that there is a pastor here for staff. [Pastor's] time is limited in the school and I don't like imposing on it more than what I need to. Once a week [pastor] will lead a [staff] worship/devotion time as he did this morning [principal: interview A].

The pastor's role with staff also included assisting in Christian Studies lessons, when difficult questions arise, and facilitating school retreats.

Principals valued the presence and visibility of the pastor in the school. They also valued that the pastor understood the culture and worked to promote the positive aspects of the culture. The following description of the pastor constituted a typical response from the principals regarding working with a pastor who understands the local culture:

> We are very lucky that we've got a pastor who knows where people are at…and who manages to make [the diverse worshipping community] work [pastor: interview B].

A recurring topic was the way pastors promote the school and its mission to the congregation. One principal shared about the pastor in terms of being an advocate for the school beyond the congregation:

> I think that you promote the school through… he's very… he's probably one of our best advocates for the school out in the community… you know, talks the school up at church and prays for the school constantly and for the people. I have very often heard him speaking well of the school and I think that being involved in so many community things as well. You are probably telling more people about the school than you know, even when you go to Rotary and things like that… I think, very prayerful at church. There'd be a prayer every week that is some way related to the school in some way or another [principal: interview E].

Principals appreciated the pastoral care that the pastors provided to families and staff within the school community. They also valued the pastor's contribution in building relationships with school families.

5.3.2 Pastor perspectives on the principal's contributions to the mission.

The pastors reported on the principals' promotion of parental involvement, of growing and enhancing the community culture of the school, and the development and promotion of joint school and church activities. The pastors valued the principals' role in developing a culture of commitment and inclusiveness amongst the parent body. They valued the principals' role in developing supportive relationships within the school, celebrating volunteers and promoting collegiality. They appreciated the principals' actions in the writing of joint newsletters, cross promotion of events and joint church/school activities. The pastors also appreciated the involvement of the school in Sunday worship and attributed this to the principals' leadership.

The pastors all reported on the importance of the pastor/principal relationship and the influence of this relationship on furthering the mission of the school. Role clarity and shared vision were an important aspect of the relationship between the pastor and the principal. This comment, by a pastor, shows the valuing of role clarity and the importance of the pastor/principal relationship:

> It is so important that the Head of the school and the pastor have an understanding of their role and that it doesn't become a competition. In other words, the pastor and the principal, their relationship is just so central, so pivotal for the whole relational thing [pastor: interview D].

The pastors also shared on the importance of the principal recruiting Christian staff. Typical of the pastors' views of the importance of having dedicated Christian staff is the following statement:

> One of the things that I appreciate that [principal] has managed to do is appoint excellent staff and to manage and encourage and I believe we are really blessed to have a staff, this is not without a few issues, but have a staff who are actually on the same page and even in terms of - specifically with mission and ministry - we have numbers of our staff who are growing, who are actually sort of key people that we are ministering to, in their own development, but they work comfortably and collaboratively and embrace what the school is on about and pretty quickly pick up the vibe [pastor: interview F].

The pastors spoke in praise of the principals' contributions to the mission of the Lutheran primary school in their community.

5.4 Promoting the Mission

In this section data are presented regarding the extent to which principals and pastors promote the mission of the local Lutheran primary school. All principals and pastors shared their perceptions of being active in promoting the community, or family, feel of the school and the importance of relationships in developing the community. Across the interviews, the emphasis was on the Christ-centred nature of the school and how that foundation, or reason for being, permeates the values, decisions and activities of the school.

5.4.1 Principal perceptions regarding their promotion of the mission.

The interviewed principals were active in promoting the mission of their school. They viewed the mission of the school - in nurturing, witnessing to, serving and educating students and their families – as entrusted to them as a unique calling from God. They emphasised that the mission of the school, and their work in promoting the mission, is all-encompassing. The following statement from a principal describes the mission of the school as central to all decision-making:

> Everything that we do is about promoting the mission of the school, otherwise what's the point? It comes down to the people you employ, the programs that you run and the things that you say, that's the main thing. It's got to be at the forefront of every decision that you make. It's whether or not it's really going to serve the school and its purpose [principal: interview E].

In five of the six interviews, the principals emphasised the importance of the joint church and school ministry and the multiple ways that they promote and grow the one church/school community. A principal shared:

> One of the things that I set out to do, when I got here, was to make it clear that at least as far as I'm concerned, the church and the school are here to work together. So, you know, with facilities that we share, or whatever, let's get over who paid for what. Whose responsibility is it to fix? Let's just fix it and move on. If we've got some ideas let's throw it together and see if there's a common goal [principal: interview D].

In one of the six interviews, the principal and pastor both expressed that they were exploring an alternative model of ministry in their school where, despite some connections with the local congregation, the mission and ministry of the school stood on its own and they were

doing ministry "for the sake of being ministers of the Gospel to the people in our care…we are not doing ministry in order for people to wind up in this one particular structure" [pastor: interview F]. The term *ministry* was used in the interviews as mission in action conducted by the people of God where all Christians are called to be ministers working together as the body of Christ. Ministry was used in general terms as distinct from the public or ordained ministry (LCA, 2001b). All six principals gave examples of their actions in promoting the mission of their school. These actions included their commitment to and promotion of worship opportunities for families as well as students, and their encouragement and funding of extra-curricular activities for both students and their families. The principals expressed the value that they placed on programs and activities that furthered the mission of the school, and demonstrated their valuing by providing resources (both time and money) to these mission programs and activities.

5.4.2 Pastor perceptions regarding their promotion of the mission.

The interviewed pastors were active in supporting and promoting the mission of the Lutheran primary school. They emphasised the worship life of the community and the ways that they promote and grow the worshipping community that exists within the school. Some noted that their call to serve a congregation or congregations meant that the time they spend in the school was less than they hoped. One pastor shared:

> In a perfect world, I'd contribute more in terms of offering my time there, but having two congregations, and [Aged Care] responsibilities as well, makes things a bit difficult but I take Chapel about three/four times a term or something [pastor: interview B].

All pastors reported having a common vision with the principal, for the school, and their role in working towards that vision. One pastor remarked on the importance of the language that is used in promoting the unity of the community: "I like to talk 'we'…I'm conscious of the message that comes across" [pastor: interview A]. In all six interviews, the pastors shared their belief in the importance of their presence and visibility in the school. They recognised that, for some families, the school may be the only connection they have to a Christian community. One pastor actively promoted the message to new families that "I'm your pastor" [pastor: interview F]. Pastors promoted the mission of the schools by their support of and presence in the school, and their involvement in worship and other programs and activities.

5.5 Contributions to the Mission

In this section data are presented regarding the principals' and pastors' contributions to the mission of the Lutheran primary school. The principals and pastors openly discussed their roles and highlighted the aspects of their leadership that were important to them. Their actions revealed what they valued. The term *value* is used to describe principal and pastor perceptions of notions that are desirable and have a motivating force (Hodgkinson, 1996). The principals reported on their roles primarily in terms of oversight, spiritual leadership – which they perceived as encompassing authentic and socially responsible leadership (Duignan, 2003, August, 2005) - and the promotion of a Christ-centred community. They perceived that their motivation came from within and expressed their passion as arising from their beliefs and values (Bywaters et al., 2007; Catholic Education, 2005; CEO Sydney, 2010). They perceived their roles as managers, or strategic leaders (Caldwell, 2002, September), and sustainable leaders (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006) as a given. They valued the

opportunity to share and distribute their leadership (Standen, 2008) with the staff and placed greatest value on their spiritual leadership. The pastors discussed their spiritual leadership roles, as well as the importance of their presence and involvement in building the community. The interviews focussed on the community and spiritual leadership dimensions of their roles rather than on an organisational dimension.

5.5.1 Principal perceptions regarding their contributions to the mission.

The six principals used a variety of terms to describe their contributions to the mission of the Lutheran primary school. Terms such as “promoting”, “serving”, “attending”, “praying”, “listening”, “building relationships”, “worshipping”, “leading”, “encouraging” and “supporting” occurred frequently to describe their actions. Two principals expressed difficulty in separating and identifying the way they contribute to the mission of their school as they regarded their contribution as intertwined in all they do. One principal shared:

> It’s hard to peel back the layers. I guess it’s just the way; it’s the natural way we do things. It’s not a special added-on extra. They know that the worship we do and the devotions we have and the Christian Studies is all part of what we do as a school. And the ethos comes through the staff. And it’s just a natural way of life that Jesus is mentioned. That we don’t put a little box around it and say that’s going to be God time. It’s the whole of the day that begins; most would begin with a devotion or a prayer or something and end with a blessing. But in all of our curriculum and in all of our ways, it’s not foreign to talk about God, somewhere in there, if the opportunity arises. So it’s really interwoven in what we do [principal: interview C].

All the principals viewed their visibility as important – both their formal attendance at school events and their informal presence in the staffroom and in the yard, meeting with students, staff and parents. The principals of the rural schools also regarded their presence in the wider community as important. According to one principal:

> That's important, if we are talking about mission into the community, in a community like this you need to be taking part in things, or to be seen to be taking part. I guess I've made a bit of an effort to do that in terms of my interest, tennis and football and my kids. It's given me that relationship building with the townspeople [principal: interview C].

The principals were comfortable in their role as the *spiritual head* of the school. They viewed their actions as the spiritual leader of the school in terms of promoting and encouraging worship opportunities and as having oversight of the ethos of the school. One principal regarded his spiritual leadership responsibility in terms of ensuring Christian values permeate the culture of the school. Another principal, in acknowledging his spiritual headship role, was keen to point out that his relationship with his pastor was deferential and respectful:

> The only bit that worries me about [being the Spiritual Head of the school], I still would dip my hat and defer to the pastor, being respectful to the pastor in that one. He's our trained theologian. I also feel that I need to be, being the CEO of the school, and my role is to link the school into the church. And obviously there's a lot of worship that happens in the school without pastor being involved. But I would still defer to the pastor [principal: interview B].

5.5.2 Pastor perceptions regarding their contributions to the mission.

The six pastors described their contributions to the mission of the Lutheran primary school as “worshipping”, “praying”, “encouraging”, “leading”, “serving” and “meeting”. These terms were frequently used by the pastors to describe their actions in the school community. All the pastors were eager to be involved in the life of the school. One shared:

> I’m involved in the life of the school and I love being involved. I worship with the staff in staff devotions twice a week. One of those I lead. The other one I just like to come and support. Monday I attend, and Friday I lead the devotion. I lead worship usually at the beginning and end of term. I lead worship with, I take worship, with the year 6 and 7 devotions. I visit the Preps. I tend to be involved in different ways. Classes invite me in every so often to talk about the Bible, or baptism, or the church, what’s in the church building and so on [pastor: interview D].

All the pastors stated they were comfortable in regards to their role in the school and their role in relation to the principal. According to one:

> It is so important for pastor and head of the school/principal to have a relationship and a good understanding. And my understanding always is, we both understand that, Christ is the head of the school but under Him [the principal] is the spiritual head of the school. We support that and we are ministers of the gospel but the head of the school, I’ve always contended… some chaplains have argued we can’t talk about the [principal] as the spiritual head. Of course they are! [pastor: interview D]

The pastors perceived their contributions to the mission of the local Lutheran school in terms of their support and promotion of the programs and activities of the school, and their close and supportive relationship with the principal.

5.6 Presentation of Survey Data

In sections 5.6 to 5.10 the survey data is presented and analysed. The survey was the second of the two data collection strategies. A survey was sent to all Lutheran primary principals and their nominated supporting pastor. The survey was developed to validate the themes arising from the unstructured interviews conducted at the six purposefully sampled sites. The themes from the interviews were further explored in the survey. All predetermined categories in the survey questions originated from the interview data.

The survey was sent to 46 principals, comprising the 2013 cohort of Lutheran primary principals in Australia, and their nominated pastor. Of the 46 principals invited to participate, 21 responded and of the 45 pastors invited to participate, 19 responded. This represents a response rate of 44 percent of the total number of respondents. The response rate is a satisfactory result as a review of online academic research surveys indicates a drop in response rates in recent years with rates of 40% or lower since 1997 (Sheehan, 2006). The survey data was collected by means of *Survey Monkey*.

The survey questions (see Appendix E) were designed to explore the participants' perceptions in regards to:

How principals and pastors perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school;

How principals and pastors perceive each other's contribution to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school;

The extent to which principals and pastors promote the mission of the primary school community; and

How principals and pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools.

Questions were ordered so that the responses built upon previous questions in the survey to provide a cumulative picture. As an example of the cumulative questioning employed, the section on spiritual leadership began by asking for a description of the respondents' understanding of the concept *Spiritual Head,* proceeded to an indication of their comfort level in considering the principal as spiritual head, and concluded with a reflection on the principal's/ pastor's spiritual leadership role. To allow for the participants' freedom of expression, initial statements in each section were worded so that participants could select two statements that best describe, indicate or express their opinion about the notion. Each of these statements included an "Other (please specify)" option. In other statements in each section participants were invited to provide a scaled response or to order the responses provided. The final question in each section was open-ended. A high proportion of participants (often between 32 and 36 out of the 40) responded to these open-ended questions indicating a commitment to contribute to the research. Quotations from the survey are presented with the abbreviation "SM" for Survey Monkey for distinguishing from interview quotations.

The survey was designed so that the responses of pastors and principals could be analysed as one combined response and as responses coming from two cohorts –pastors and principals. Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of principal and pastor survey participants.

Figure 5.1. Principal and Pastor Survey Participants

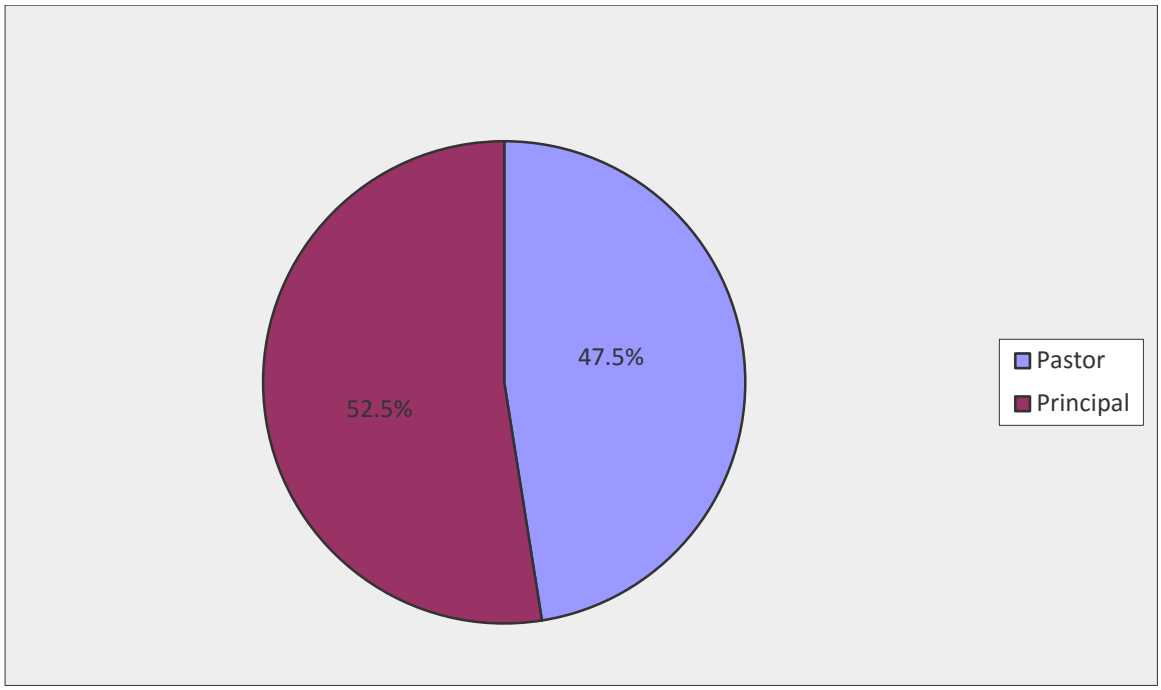


Figure 5.1. Percentage of principal and pastor survey participants.

5.7 Mission of the Lutheran Primary School

The principals' and pastors' perceptions of the mission of the Lutheran primary school were explored according to a number of aspects of mission from the interview data: culture; partnership; relationship; essence of Lutheran schools; activity in time and location; focused programs and action; and community building.

Respondents were invited to describe their *cultural makeup* (Goodenough, 2003). They chose from five categories - strong sense of history, creative and innovative, leaders in quality education, caring community, and multicultural (see Figure 5.2). The "Other" response allowed for additional categories. The categories were the distinctive and recurring descriptors used by both pastors and principals in the unstructured interviews conducted prior

to the survey. School culture was explored as, like Schein (2010), the interviewees viewed leadership and the school's culture as fundamentally intertwined and they prioritised the development and promotion of a healthy school culture (MacNeil et al., 2009).

Figure 5.2. Descriptions of School Culture

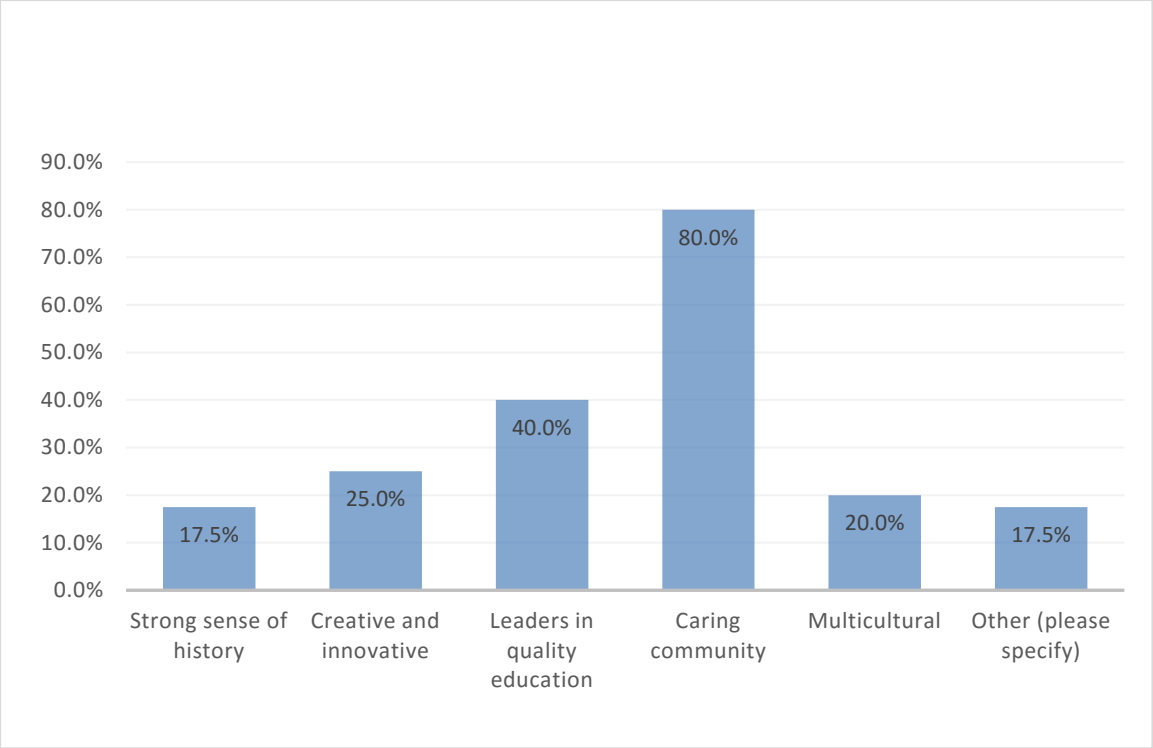


Figure 5.2. Principal and pastor descriptions of the school culture.

From the categories provided, the majority of survey participants selected the "caring community" category. Seven participants selected the "other (please specify)" option and responded with a range of descriptions. These included "traditional", "small, friendly, tightly-knit", "child focused", "School of the Gospel" and "striving for quality education" (as a qualification of the category "leaders in quality education").

The interviews, conducted prior to the survey, were unstructured to ensure that the principals and pastors could direct the conversations to topics that were important to them. A majority of interview time was spent discussing the partnership between school and church

and these topics formed the categories below (see Figure 5.3). Principals and pastors perceived the activity of the pastor in both school and church to be the element which best grows and enhances the partnership between the local school and church.

Figure 5.3. Actions to Grow and Enhance School/Church Partnership

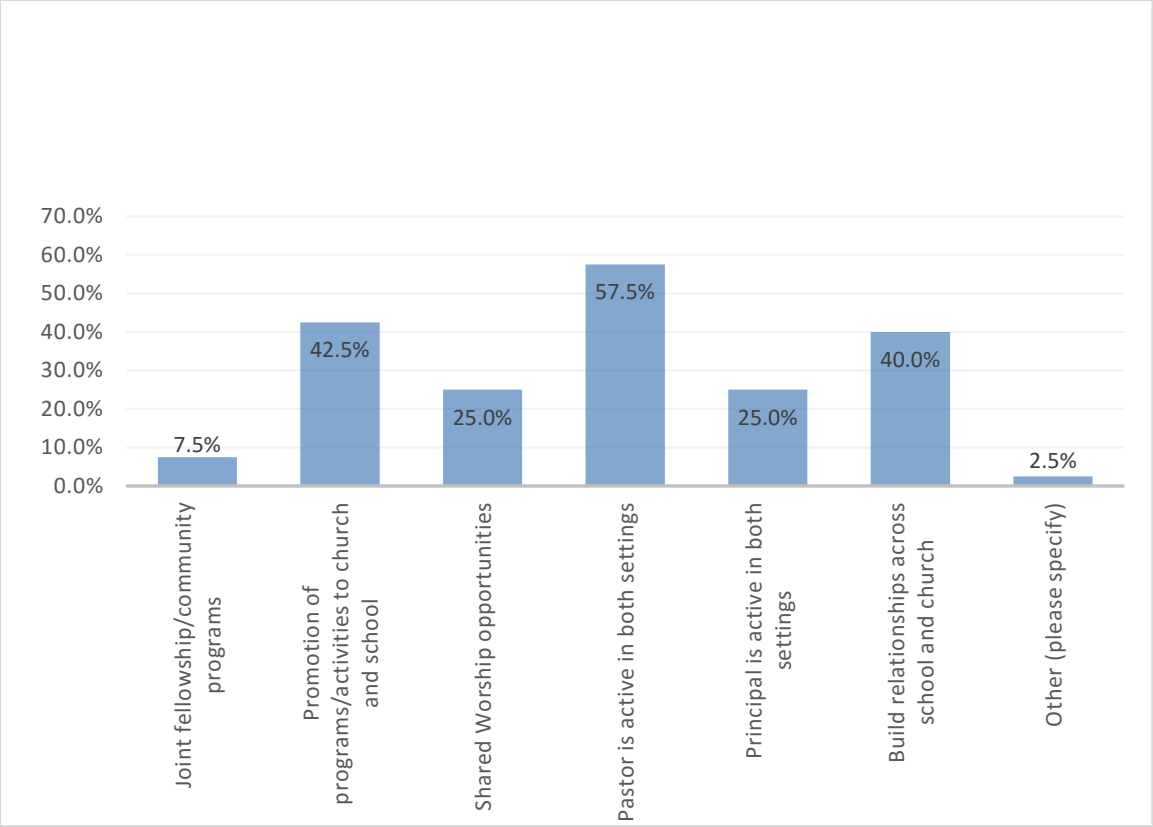


Figure 5.3. Principal and pastor actions to grow and enhance the partnership between school and church.

Respondents were invited to rate the quality of relationships in two areas: (a) between the church and the school; and (b) between the pastor and the principal. Table 5.2 illustrates the relationship between the two institutions, church and school.

Table 5.2. Relationship Between Church and School

Table 5.2

Principal and Pastor Perceptions of the Working Relationship Between the Local Church and School

Answer Options	1: No relationship	2: Limited relationship	3: Neutral relationship	4: Good relationship	5: Excellent relationship	Rating Mean	Response Count
	1	3	5	28	3	3.73	40
						answered question	**40**
						Total cohort	**40**

Though a majority of respondents perceived that there was a "good relationship" between the church and the school in their setting, there was also a spread of responses which suggests that some individuals experienced church/school relationship difficulties. Three respondents (7.5%) perceived the relationship to be excellent.

The professional nature of the individual relationship between pastor and principal was explored (see Table 5.3). Both principals and pastors perceived the professional relationship between pastor and principal as better than the church/school relationship (from good in the latter, to excellent in the former). Though 80% of the principals and pastors perceived their relationship with each other as either good or excellent, 15% perceived it as limited or non-existent. This is a wide spread of responses. Interestingly, there was a corresponding spread in the responses between the individual relationships (see Table 5.3) and the relationship between the church and school (see Table 5.2) demonstrating a connection between the relationship of the individual leaders and that of the church and school communities.

Table 5.3. Relationship Between Principal and Pastor

Table 5.3

Principal and Pastor Perceptions of Their Professional Relationship With Each Other

Answer Options	1: No relationship	2: Limited relationship	3: Neutral relationship	4: Good relationship	5: Excellent relationship	Rating Mean	Response Count
	1	5	2	12	20	4.13	40
					answered question		**40**
					Total cohort		**40**

A minority of surveyed principals were negative about the working relationship between the church and the school and the professional relationship between themselves and the pastor. In comparison the interviewed principals and pastors spoke positively of the relationship between the church and the school and between each other. A high level of respect and support was demonstrated in the interviews, despite acknowledgments of some local difficulties and differences.

The wording of the answer options in the tables below (see Tables 5.4 and 5.5) reflected the phrases used in Lutheran schools regarding the purpose of Lutheran schools over the course of their history to the present day (Hauser, 2009; Jennings, 2007).

Table 5.4. Reasons Why Lutheran Schools Exist

Table 5.4

Principal and Pastor Ranked Perceptions of the Reasons Why Lutheran Schools Exist

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	Rating Mean	Response Count
To nurture the students and their families	4	**20**	9	7	2.48	40
To reach out to those that don't know Jesus as their Saviour	9	7	7	**17**	2.80	40
To serve the Christian community and the general community	6	9	**13**	12	2.78	40
To prepare students for their vocation and for life	**21**	4	11	4	1.95	40
					answered question	**40**
					Total cohort	**40**

Note. The highest rated answer option, in ranked order, is shown in boldface.

The table above illustrates the respondents' rankings of their perceptions about the reason why Lutheran schools exist. Principals and pastors perceived that Lutheran schools exist (in priority order): to prepare students for their vocation and for life; to nurture the students and their families; to serve the Christian community and the general community; and to reach out to those who don't know Jesus as their Saviour. The first two selections – "to prepare…" and "to nurture..." – were chosen by 53% and 50% of respondents respectively, indicating a clear agreement about those responses. These results complemented the research on US Lutheran

school mission statements which emphasised the nurturing of students as preparation for service (Doering & Eells, 2010).

Respondents were invited to describe the mission role of the school (see Table 5.5). Four descriptors, though worded differently from the previous question, retained the metaphors of nurture (to build…), outreach (to witness…), service (to serve…) and vocation (to prepare…). Added to these notions was the metaphor of a "stepping stone", that is, the mission role of the school may be conceptualised as providing a means for transition from school life to congregational life.

Table 5.5. Mission Role of the School

Table 5.5

Principal and Pastor Ranked Perceptions Regarding the Mission Role of the School

Answer Options	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Rating Mean**	**Response Count**
Stepping stone/transition from school life to congregational life	1	1	4	12	**22**	4.33	40
To build the faith	3	12	**13**	7	5	2.98	40
To witness the faith	**18**	11	7	1	3	2.00	40
To serve the school community and the wider community	8	**13**	10	7	2	2.55	40
To prepare students for work in the church and the world	10	3	6	**13**	8	3.15	40
					answered question		**40**
					Total cohort		**40**

Note. The highest rated answer option, in ranked order, is shown in boldface.

The table above - illustrating the principals' and pastors' ranking of the mission role of Lutheran schools – indicates that the mission is (in priority order): to witness the faith; to serve the school community and the wider community; to build the faith; to prepare students for work in the church and the world; and stepping stone/transition from school life to congregational life. Of note is the fact that the "Stepping stone/transition from school life to congregational life" is consistently last. This may indicate that the principals and pastors did not perceive as important their missional role in providing for the transition from school life to congregational life.

The phrases used to describe the actions of the principals and the pastors in living out the mission of the school (see Figure 5.4) have a direct connection with the responses provided at the unstructured interviews. The "Other" option allowed for additional responses.

Figure 5.4. Mission of the School in Action

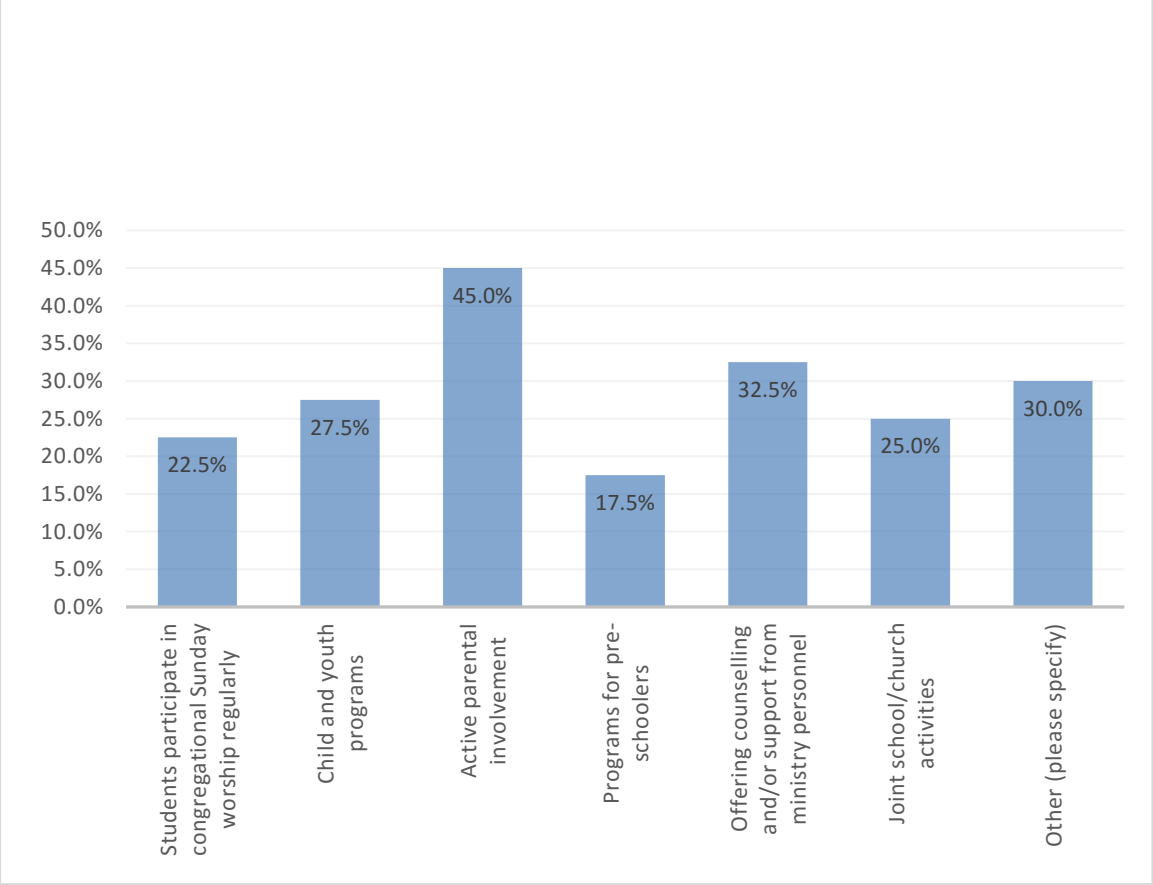


Figure 5.4. Principal and pastor descriptions of how the mission of the school is lived out.

The two options most frequently selected by the respondents were "active parental involvement" (18 responses), followed by "offering counselling and/or support from ministry personnel" (13 responses). There was a large number of principal and pastor respondents (12) who selected the "Other" category. Three of the respondents mentioned the worship program and worship opportunities, and the remaining respondents used terms like "reconciliation", "nurturing relationships", "Pastor's classes", and "An attitude of mutual support across the Parish". One respondent recorded "none of these I think" but did not offer an alternative.

Respondents were asked to rank items in terms of their perceived relevance to building the relationship between the school and church community (see Table 5.6).

Table 5.6. Building the Relationship Between School and Church Community

Table 5.6

Principal and Pastor Ranking of the Elements that Build the Relationship Between the School and Church Community

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Rating Mean	Response Count
Strong pastor/principal relationship	**23**	7	1	4	1	3	1	2.15	40
Active involvement of pastor in school	4	**12**	11	6	4	2	1	3.10	40
Active involvement of principal in congregation	0	8	**12**	8	6	4	2	3.80	40
Christian staff	5	5	5	**6**	8	6	5	4.13	40
Committed staff	2	4	4	3	**11**	9	7	4.80	40
Strong parental support for church/school community	4	3	3	6	4	**10**	10	4.83	40
High proportion of Lutheran staff	2	1	4	7	6	6	**14**	5.20	40
							answered question		**40**
							Total cohort		**40**

Table 5.6 illustrates the number of responses to each statement. The principals and pastors ranked the items, in terms of importance, as follows: strong pastor/principal relationship;

active involvement of pastor in school; active involvement of principal in congregation; Christian staff; committed staff; strong parental support for church/school community; and high proportion of Lutheran staff. Fifty-eight percent of principals and pastors chose "Strong pastor/principal relationship" as their top priority for building the relationship between the school and church community. The perceived importance of the pastor and principal relationship is discussed in chapter six and recommendations to strengthen the relationship are suggested in chapter 7.

In summary, the data from the interviews, and validated by the survey, demonstrated that the principals and pastors perceived the culture and the mission of the school as intrinsically connected. They were deeply aware of the culture and needs of the local school community and their role in meeting community needs. They worked at strengthening partnerships with staff and parents to further the mission of the school. Principals and pastors perceived the mission in terms of relationships. They valued and invested in these relationships – with each other, and with staff and parents – for the mission. They understood and acknowledged the multi-faceted nature of the school's mission– which included the education of the whole child for life; nurturing staff, students and parents in the faith; reaching out to all with the faith; and serving the community and beyond. They were able to clearly articulate the mission role of their school, and viewed the mission of Lutheran schools primarily as witnessing the faith. They perceived their role, in the mission of the school, as a *calling* or having a deep moral purpose and they articulated a commitment to their school and to Lutheran schooling. Table 5.7 presents the findings from the interview and survey data corresponding to the research question.

Table 5.7. Principals' and Pastors' Perceptions of Mission

Table 5.7

Principals' and Pastors' Perceptions on the Mission of the Lutheran Primary School

Research question	Findings
How do **principals and pastors perceive the mission** of the Lutheran primary school?	Principals and pastors perceived the mission: as intrinsically connected to culture. They are deeply aware of the culture and needs of the school community and their role in meeting needs. as strengthened through staff and parent partnerships. They value and invest in those relationships. as multi-faceted – including the education of the whole child for life; nurturing staff, students and parents in the faith; reaching out to all with the faith; and serving the community and beyond. primarily as witnessing the faith. as a 'calling' or having a deep moral purpose. They are committed to their school and to Lutheran schooling.

5.7.1 Principal perceptions of the school's mission.

In this section data on the principals' perceptions of the mission of the Lutheran primary school are presented and analysed. Ninety-one percent of principals (19 respondents) perceived their school as a caring community. When considering how they grow and enhance the local school and church partnership, the principals evenly selected (with each category receiving nine responses): promotion of programs/activities to church and school; pastor is active in both settings; principal is active in both settings; and build relationships across school and church.

In ranking their reasons for the existence of Lutheran schools, the principal cohort weighted the reasons differently from the pastor cohort (see Table 5.8). Both cohorts however selected "to prepare students for their vocation and for life" as the most important reason.

Table 5.8. Principal Cohort: Reasons Why Lutheran Schools Exist

Table 5.8

Principal Cohort: Ranked Perceptions of the Reasons Why Lutheran Schools Exist

Answer Options	**Answer Options**	**Percentage of first responses**
	To nurture the students and their families	9
	To reach out to those that don't know Jesus as their Saviour	29
	To serve the Christian community and the general community	24
	To prepare students for their vocation and for life	38
	answered question	***21***
	Total cohort	***21***

When asked to identify options which best express how the mission of the school is lived out, the majority of principals selected "Active parental involvement". This confirmed the interview data where pastors and principals were keen to share examples of parents actively supporting the school and involving themselves in school life, even in communities with high levels of both parents engaged in paid employment. The responses of the pastors however were evenly spread across "child and youth programs", "active parental involvement", "offering counselling and/or support from ministry personnel", "joint school/church activities", and "other".

Principals perceived the mission of the Lutheran primary school as providing a caring community that prepares students for their vocation and for life, is an avenue for outreach, and provides a service to the community. Discussion of these ideas will be taken up in the next chapter.

In summary, the data showed that the principals could clearly articulate the reason for the existence of Lutheran schools. They perceived the mission of the school as a part, or a sub-set, of the reason that Lutheran schools exist. They perceived Lutheran schools as existing, firstly, to prepare students for their vocation and for life, and secondly, to reach out to those that don't know Jesus as their Saviour. In Table 5.9 the findings from the interview and survey data corresponding to the research question are presented.

Table 5.9. Principal Perceptions of Mission

Table 5.9

Perceptions on the Mission of the Lutheran Primary School: Principal Cohort

Research question	**Findings**
How do **principals perceive the mission** of the Lutheran primary school?	Principals perceived the mission: as part of the broader reason for the existence of Lutheran schools believing that Lutheran schools exist to prepare students for their vocation and for life and to reach out to those that don't know Jesus as their Saviour.

5.7.2 Pastor perceptions of the school's mission.

In this section data are presented and analysed on pastor perceptions of the mission of the Lutheran primary school. Pastors perceived the school culture in terms of both a "caring community" (68% or 13 respondents) and "leaders in quality education" (48% or 7 pastors).

When considering how they grow and enhance the local school and church partnership, the pastors recorded a higher response rate than the principals (at 14 responses or 74%) for "pastor is active in both settings". The surveyed principals, in contrast, selected a larger range of responses, including rating highly their own actions in both school and church settings. Interestingly only one pastor selected "principal is active in both settings". The data indicated that the surveyed pastors perceived themselves as active in both school and church, and generally did not perceive the principal as fulfilling that cross-institutional role. A lacuna of perceptions between pastors and principals on the role of the principal within the congregation has surfaced. The pastors viewed themselves as active in both congregation and school however a minority of surveyed pastors expressed that they expected the principal to involve themselves more within the congregational setting. This contrasted with the data from the principal cohort who perceived that they were active in both school and congregational settings. There is an expectation that the pastor will work within the school that exists in the parish to which he is called. This expectation is documented in the Letter of Call that the pastor receives from the parish. The pastor may hope for the principal to become involved in the local congregation, however there is no policy document that articulates this expectation. In contrast to the low rating of the principals' involvement in both settings, the interviewed principals and pastors valued both the pastor and the principal actively present and serving in the school and church communities as a means for growing the partnership. In most of the interviews, however, the interviewees did not distinguish between the school community and the church community. Rather they reported on working together in the one community.

In ranking the reasons perceived for the existence of Lutheran schools, the pastors selected "to prepare students for their vocation and for life" (at 68%) as their most important, or primary, reason. This matched the primary response from the principals (see Table 5.7

above). The principals, however, chose more varied secondary responses. This difference is discussed in the following chapter.

The pastors' responses to the question of relationship building between the school and church communities are shown in Figure 5.5 below (note that the rating of "strong pastor/principal relationship" is the pastors' first choice and "committed staff" is their last, or least important one). This ordering suggests that the pastors placed greater importance on the number of Lutheran staff and on parental support than they did on "committed staff."

Figure 5.5. Pastor Cohort: Building the Relationship Between School and Church Community

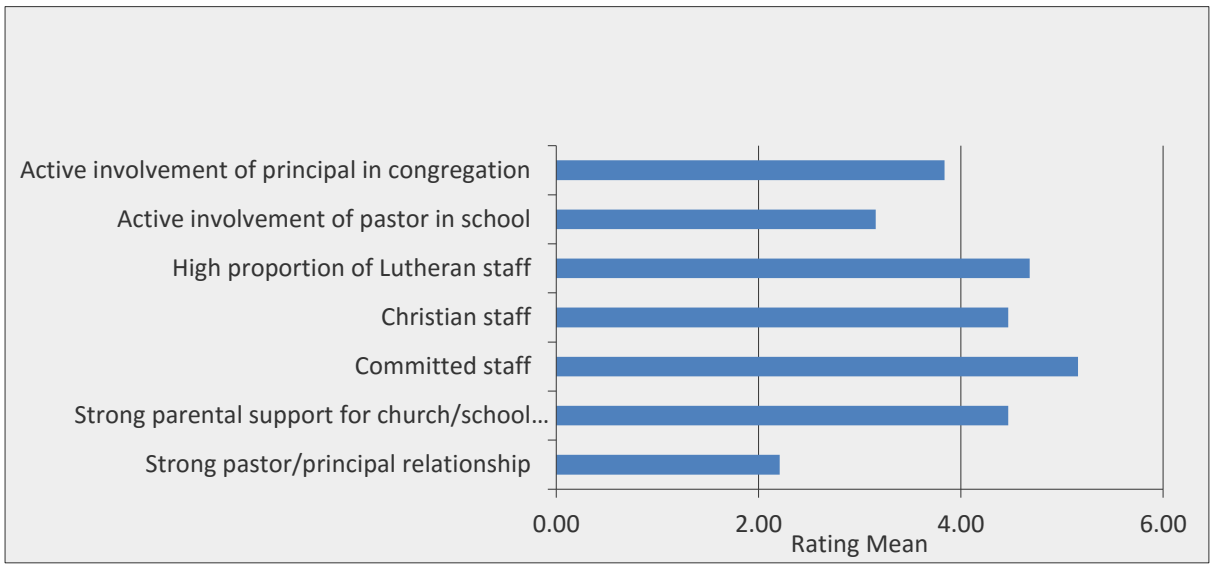


Figure 5.5. Pastor cohort: ranked perceptions of the elements that build the relationship between the school and church community.

The pastors perceived the mission of the Lutheran primary school as providing a caring community and one that leads in quality education. They viewed the school's mission as preparing students for their vocation and for life. They valued a strong principal and pastor relationship, as did the principals, and acknowledged the value of Lutheran staff in the school.

In summary, the pastors could articulate the reason for the existence of Lutheran schools. They perceived the mission of the school as a part or a sub-set of the reason that Lutheran schools exist. They perceived Lutheran schools as existing to prepare students, firstly, for their vocation and for life and, secondly, to nurture the students and their families. Table 5.10 presents the findings from the interview and survey data corresponding to the research question.

Table 5.10. Pastor Perceptions of Mission

Table 5.10

Perceptions on the Mission of the Lutheran Primary School: Pastor Cohort

Research question	Findings
How do **pastors perceive the mission** of the Lutheran primary school?	Pastors perceived the mission: as part of the broader reason for the existence of Lutheran schools believing that Lutheran schools exist to prepare students for their vocation and for life and to nurture the students and their families.

5.8 Leadership Perspectives

Principals' and pastors' perceptions of each other's contributions to the mission of the school was explored. The following leadership themes emerged from the exploration: the significance of the principal and pastor relationship; the leadership role of the pastor in the school; preparation for leadership; the role of leadership in furthering the mission of the school community; and spiritual leadership.

The importance of the principal/pastor relationship was a recurring theme from the interviews prior to the survey. The survey participants were asked to comment on the significance of the principal/pastor relationship in terms of growing and enhancing the school

community. Twenty-seven of the 36 respondents used words like “pivotal”, “significant”, “critical”, “vital”, “utmost importance”, “essential”, “extremely important”, “absolutely key” and “highly significant” to describe the importance of the principal and pastor relationship in terms of growing and enhancing the school community. Most responses were positive, though four of the 36 respondents qualified their comments with the following:

> Pastor attitudes are cited as detrimental to school growth by past parents. [principal: SM]

> …it is difficult…when one party does not immerse themselves into the congregation so the congregation can better connect to the school. [pastor: SM]

> Our relationship is good, trusting and significant but is not all that it could be. [pastor: SM]

> Essential to have a great relationship between school and church. We are in the same business in some respects and different in others. Essentially pastors need acknowledge their primary role of spiritual nurturing and stay out of school politics, whereas principals spiritually nurture too, but stay out of church politics to the same extent. [principal: SM]

This last comment begs a response. Anecdotally, role clarity appears to be a continuing issue for some leaders in Lutheran schools. Role clarity will be discussed in the next chapter.

Principals and pastors were asked to rate the extent to which the pastor fits into the school in their setting (see Table 5.11). Respondents were invited to quantify the relationship. This was followed by a statement which invited the respondents to describe the pastor’s role.

Table 5.11. Pastor's Fit Into the School

Table 5.11

Principal and Pastor Perceptions of the Pastor's Fit Into the Local School

Answer Options	1: No fit	2: Poor fit	3: Neutral fit	4: Good fit	5: Integral member of school staff	Rating Mean	Response Count
	2	2	6	17	13	3.93	40
						answered question	**40**
						Total cohort	**40**

Though the majority of respondents (75%) indicated the pastor's *fit* in the school is positive (from "good fit" to "integral member of school staff"), the spread of responses was an area of concern and is discussed in the next chapter.

The survey participants were asked to describe the role of the congregational pastor who ministers in a school. The pastor's role was described in terms of availability, support, service, spiritual oversight, spiritual support/pastoral care, and witness. The frequently mentioned tasks undertaken by the pastor included leading worship, pastoral care, school governance requirements, leading staff devotions and Bible studies, prayer and in a number of cases a minor "teaching" role. One response that appears to sum up the majority of the 36 responses was:

> Preach, teach, care, administer, lead, promote, serve, create, plan, pray, reflect, support, encourage, dream, vision, share, welcome, integrate, nurture, celebrate. [pastor: SM]

The survey sought comments on whether the training and preparation received for the community leadership role reflected the demands placed on the individual in this area. Both the literature about community leadership and the interviews, highlighted the need to explore this area further. There was a broad mix of responses to this statement. Of the 30 substantive responses, nine were positive, six were neutral, and fifteen were negative. With regard to the positive responses, one pastor was thankful for the time spent in Lutheran primary and secondary schools as part of the seminary field education program, as well as his vicarage placement in a congregation attached to a school. A principal commented:

> I was blessed with completing over two years at Luther Seminary and have also completed a Master of Education with ALC [Australian Lutheran College]. Over the years I have taken advantage of many excellent in-service opportunities i.e. Grief Counselling, Conflict Management, etc. [principal: SM]

Among the negative comments, mention was made of a general inadequacy of training, and comments were included such as: “What training?”; “I was trained as a pastor with no preparation being given for school pastor”; “Little preparation and training for the role of principal”; and “Very little on this through initial training…” The six neutral responses had a qualifying or justifying comment. These neutral responses emphasised the following - training and preparation was gained over time and with on the job experiences; training and preparation was intentionally sought by the principal or pastor; training and preparation occurred through being part of a team and/or a District.

The training and preparation for leadership in the school was a topic of conversation in some of the interviews. A number of the interviewed pastors acknowledged that a paradigm shift was required to minister in a school, though they approached this required change by accepting that they were not the experts and had much to learn from the principal.

Respondents were asked to reflect on the importance of the pastor in the school (see Table 5.12) and the principal in the congregation (see Table 5.13) in furthering the mission in those settings.

Table 5.12. Leadership of the Pastor in the School

Table 5.12

Importance of the Leadership of the Pastor in Furthering the Mission of the Local School

Answer Options	1: Not important	2: Of little importance	3: Neutral importance	4: Some importance	5: Extremely important	Rating Mean	Response Count
	0	1	3	10	26	4.53	40
					answered question		**40**
					Total cohort		**40**

A large percentage of respondents (65%) - of principals and pastors - viewed the leadership of the pastor as extremely important in furthering the mission of the local Lutheran school. When combining the positive responses ("some importance" and "extremely important") the total increased to 90%, that is 90% of the total respondents believed that the leadership of the pastor was important in furthering the mission of their local school. When separating the data into principal and pastor cohorts, there was little difference in the responses.

Table 5.13. Leadership of the Principal in the Congregation

Table 5.13

Importance of the Leadership of the Principal in Furthering the Mission of the Congregation

Answer Options	1: Not important	2: Of little importance	3: Neutral importance	4: Some importance	5: Extremely important	Rating Mean	Response Count
	0	1	3	13	23	4.45	40
						answered question	**40**
						Total cohort	**40**

The leadership of the principal in furthering the mission of the local Lutheran congregation was regarded as extremely important (see Table 5.13). Fifty-eight percent of respondents viewed it this way. When combining the positive responses, the percentage increased to 90%. Table 5.12 and Table 5.13 suggest that respondents perceived the roles of pastor in the school and principal in the congregation, as being important in terms of leadership.

Respondents were asked to describe their understanding of what it means for the principal to be the spiritual head of the school. The term *Spiritual Head* has been used, rather than spiritual leadership, as headship was the debated notion at a national synod of the Lutheran Church of Australia [LCA] and was the term approved by the General Church Council of the LCA subsequent to the debate (Semmler, 2010, March 3). The responses constituted a set of characteristics of the role. The thirty-five responses (listed in full at Appendix F) were coded into the following seven broad groups. Spiritual Heads:

Apply theology – used when the responses called for the Spiritual Head to act, to apply their theological knowledge to their setting and in their leadership role.

Drive the culture – used when the respondents wrote of the vision of the school and the principals' role in promoting and enacting that vision. Here the respondents described the Spiritual Head as one who directs and/or plays a leading role in influencing the culture of the school.

Model – used when the descriptions of the Spiritual Head focussed on modelling the faith, being a Christian witness in words and actions, and modelling spiritual and community leadership.

Nurture – used to describe the Spiritual Head of the school as one who nurtures his/her own faith and the faith of others.

Oversee – used when the respondents wrote of the Spiritual Head in terms of leadership and activities that encompass the breadth of principalship.

Outreach – used for the descriptions of Spiritual Headship in furthering the Gospel through evangelism, through the proactive proclamation of God's Word.

Serve – applied to those descriptions of the Spiritual Head as one who serves the school and church community in actions.

Out of 35 responses to the statement about the principal as Spiritual Head of the school, 23 responses mentioned an oversight role. The oversight role of the Spiritual Head was a clear theme, followed by equal emphasis on the application of theological understanding; being a driver of the school culture; and the more passive description of being a role model in the community. Only six responses suggested outreach or evangelisation and six responses suggested that being the Spiritual Head means having a service or serving role.

The respondents' comfort level regarding the notion of principals as spiritual heads (Bartsch, 2006) of schools was explored in the survey (Table 5.14).

Table 5.14. Principals' and Pastors' Comfort Level with the Notion of Spiritual Headship

Table 5.14

Principal and Pastor Comfort Level with Considering the Principal as Spiritual Head of the School

Answer Options	1: Not comfortable	2: Somewhat uncomfortable	3: Neutral	4: Comfortable	5: Very comfortable	Rating Mean	Response Count
	1	2	7	13	17	4.08	40
						answered question	**40**
						Total cohort	**40**

Seventy-five percent of all respondents replied that they were comfortable with the idea of the principal as the Spiritual Head of the school. Despite the majority of respondents expressing the positive responses of "comfortable" or "very comfortable", a number were "neutral" (17.5%) or "uncomfortable" (7.5%).

In summary, the principals and pastors perceived that they valued and were committed to their shared ministry. They valued the importance of their unity and shared vision in furthering the mission of their school. Table 5.15 presents the findings from the interview and survey data corresponding to the research question.

Table 5.15. Principals' and Pastors' Perceptions of the Other's Contributions

Table 5.15

Principal's and Pastors' Perceptions of Each Other's Contribution to the Mission

Research question	Findings
How do **principals and pastors perceive each other's contribution** to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?	Principals and pastors perceived each other's contribution: as committed to a shared ministry, valuing the importance of their unity and common vision.

5.8.1 Principal perspectives on the pastor's contributions to the mission.

In this section data are presented on principal perceptions about the pastor's contribution to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school. The respondents were invited to rate the pastor's fit in the school setting. Principal perceptions of the pastor's fit were more varied and less positive than the pastors' self-perceptions. This difference from the pastor cohort is discussed in the following chapter.

The principals were invited to comment on their pastor, and the pastor to comment on the principal, in regards to what the other promotes to further the mission of the school.

Table 5.16. Principal Perceptions of the Pastor's Actions in the School

Table 5.16

Principal Cohort: Perceptions of the Pastor's Actions to Further the Mission of the School

Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Students participate in congregational Sunday worship regularly	42.9%	9
Child and youth programs	38.1%	8
Active parental involvement	19.0%	4
Programs for pre-schoolers	4.8%	1
Offering counselling and/or support from ministry personnel	38.1%	8
Joint school/church activities	28.6%	6
Other (please specify)	28.6%	6
	answered question	**21**
	Total cohort	**21**

According to the principal respondents, the pastor mainly promotes (a) student participation in Sunday worship; and equally (b) child and youth programs; and (c) counselling and support from ministry personnel (see Table 5.16). The principals' responses were varied, with the exception to the "programs for pre-schoolers" response, which was selected by only one principal. Of the six responses in the "other" category, three claimed that worship was promoted and one principal responded, "None of the above are actively promoted, youth programme does not exist other than confirmation lessons."

Eighty-six percent of the principals were comfortable with considering the principal as the Spiritual Head of the school (see Table 5.17).

Table 5.17. Principal Comfort Level with the Notion of the Principal's Spiritual Headship

Table 5.17

Principal Cohort: Comfort Level with Considering Themselves as Spiritual Head of the School

Answer Options	1: Not comfortable	2: Somewhat uncomfortable	3: Neutral	4: Comfortable	5: Very comfortable	Rating Mean	Response Count
	0	1	2	9	9	4.24	21
					answered question		**21**
					Total cohort		**21**

Principals viewed the pastors' contributions to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school in terms of promoting participation in Sunday worship, child and youth programs, and counselling and other support. Principals were generally comfortable with considering themselves as the spiritual head of the school. However, there seemed to be some concern regarding the pastors' fit in the school, as evidenced by the greater spread of responses within the principal cohort as compared to the pastor cohort. This suggested that the pastors had a more positive view of themselves in the school setting than principals did of the pastors. More research is needed to explore the perceptions of pastors in the school.

In summary, the principals valued the active involvement of the pastor in the school and perceived the pastor's involvement as contributing to a united and caring community. They perceived the pastor as promoting student participation in Sunday worship and both child/youth programs and the offering of counselling and support to further the mission of

their school. In Table 5.18 the findings from the interview and survey data corresponding to the research question is presented.

Table 5.18. Principal's Perceptions of the Pastor's Contributions

Table 5.18

Perceptions of the Pastor's Contribution to the Mission: Principal Cohort

Research question	Findings
How do **principals perceive the pastor's contribution** to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?	Principals perceived the pastor's contribution: as enhancing a united and caring community. as promoting student participation in Sunday worship and both child/youth programs and the offering of counselling and support.

5.8.2 Pastor perspectives on the principal's contributions to the mission.

In this section data are presented and analysed on pastor perspectives about the principal's contribution to the mission of the primary school. Pastors perceived the principals as promoting firstly active parental involvement, and secondly joint school and church activities (see Table 5.19).

Table 5.19. Pastor Perceptions of the Principal's Actions

Table 5.19

Pastor Cohort: Perceptions of the Principal's Actions to Further the Mission of the School

Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Students participate in congregational Sunday worship regularly	15.8%	3
Child and youth programs	26.3%	5
Active parental involvement	52.6%	10
Programs for pre-schoolers	5.3%	1
Offering counselling and/or support from ministry personnel	26.3%	5
Joint school/church activities	47.4%	9
Other (please specify)	26.3%	5
	answered question	**19**
	Total cohort	**19**

Of the five pastors who selected "other", two indicated that the principal promotes school worship for both students and parents, one complimented the principal with "Has a great understanding of the two kingdoms and how it works in the school setting" while another lamented "The principal does not actively promote the mission of the school (I only added another response because I had to)."

Respondents were invited to indicate the importance of the leadership of the principal in furthering the mission of the local Lutheran congregation. It is interesting to note that the pastor cohort rated the importance of the principals' leadership in the local congregation

higher than did the principals rated their own involvement. This difference in the data, between the principal and pastor cohorts, is discussed in the following chapter.

The pastors were less comfortable, than the principals, with considering the principal as spiritual head of the school. The data from the pastor cohort (see Table 5.20) indicated that 26.3% were neutral. Two pastors (10.6%) responded that they were either "not comfortable" or only "somewhat uncomfortable" with considering the principal as spiritual head of the school.

Table 5.20. Pastor Comfort Level with the Notion of the Principals' Spiritual Headship

Table 5.20

Pastor Cohort: Comfort Level with Considering the Principal as Spiritual Head of the School

Answer Options	1: Not comfortable	2: Somewhat uncomfortable	3: Neutral	4: Comfortable	5: Very comfortable	Rating Mean	Response Count
	1	1	5	4	8	3.89	19
						answered question	**19**
						Total cohort	**19**

Pastors perceived the principals' contribution to the mission of the primary school community in terms of promoting active parental involvement, and joint school and church activities. Though the majority of the pastors were comfortable with viewing the principal as the spiritual head, there were a number of neutral and negative responses. Pastors valued the principals' leadership in the congregation.

In summary, the pastors valued the active involvement of the principal in the congregation and perceived the involvement as having a significant impact on the mission of

the school. They perceived the principal as promoting, firstly, parental involvement and secondly, joint school/church activities to further the mission of the school. In Table 5.21 the findings from the interview and survey data corresponding to the research question is presented.

Table 5.21. Pastor's Perceptions of the Principal's Contributions

Table 5.21

Perceptions of the Principal's Contribution to the Mission: Pastor Cohort

Research question	Findings
How do **pastors perceive the principal's contribution** to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?	Pastors perceived the principal's contribution: as impacting on the mission of the congregation. as promoting parental involvement and joint school/church activities.

5.9 Promoting the Mission

Two survey questions explored how principals and pastors promoted the mission of their school. These questions asked how the principals and pastors enhanced the school culture of the school and furthered the mission of the school. The questions arose from the interview data and the categories within the questions were elements that were discussed in the interviews. The questions contributed to data on the extent to which principals and pastors promoted the mission.

In Figure 5.6 the perceptions of principals and pastors of how they enhance the school culture is presented. The categories listed in the table emerged from the unstructured interviews with pastors and principals.

Figure 5.6. Enhancing Their School Culture

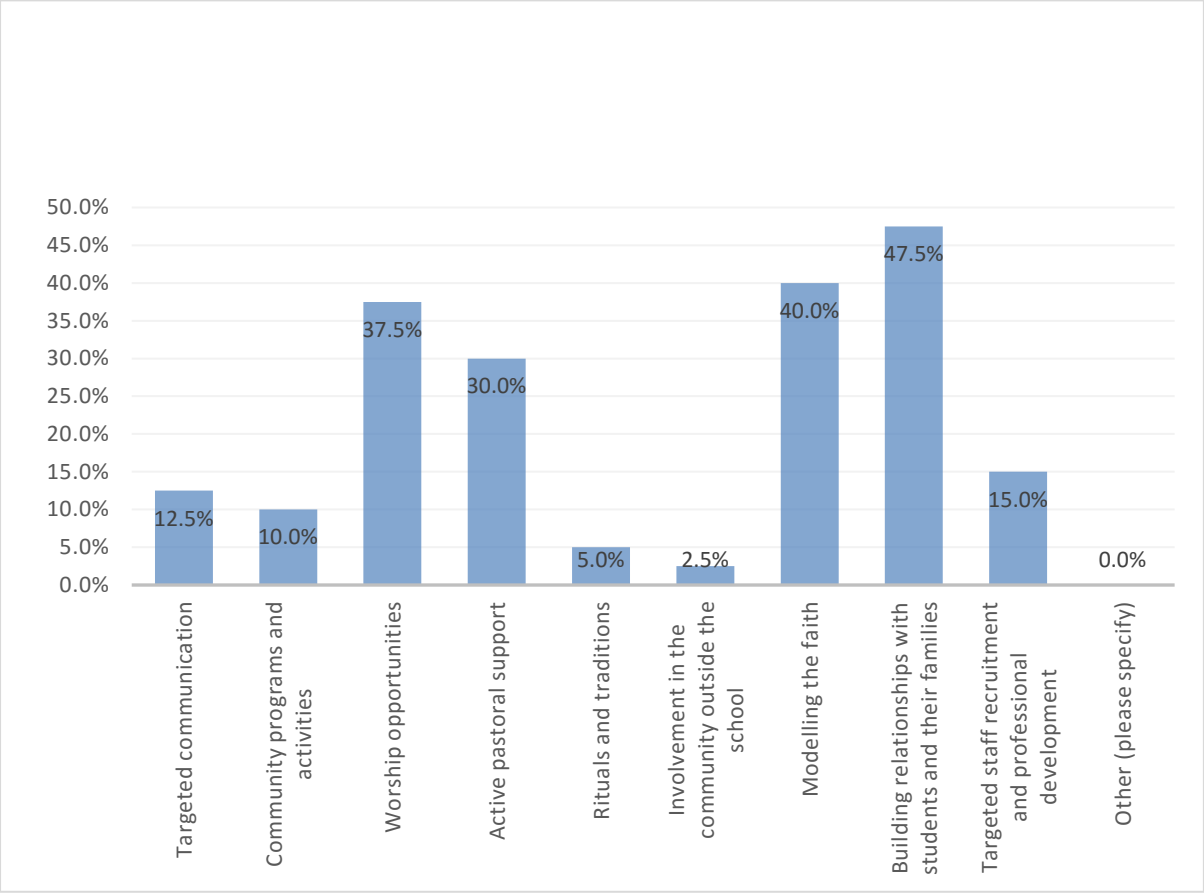


Figure 5.6. Principal and pastor perceptions of how they grow and enhance their school culture.

Nineteen respondents indicated that "building relationships with students and their families" was one way that school culture is grown and enhanced. This concern for relationships with key stakeholders complemented the principals' and pastors' descriptions of their school culture as a "caring community". "Modelling the faith", followed by "worship opportunities" and "active pastoral support" were regarded as other ways of growing and enhancing the local school culture.

Respondents were invited to reflect on their own practice in furthering the mission of the school (see Figure 5.7) and also to reflect on the practice of their principal or pastor colleague.

Figure 5.7. Furthering the Mission of the School

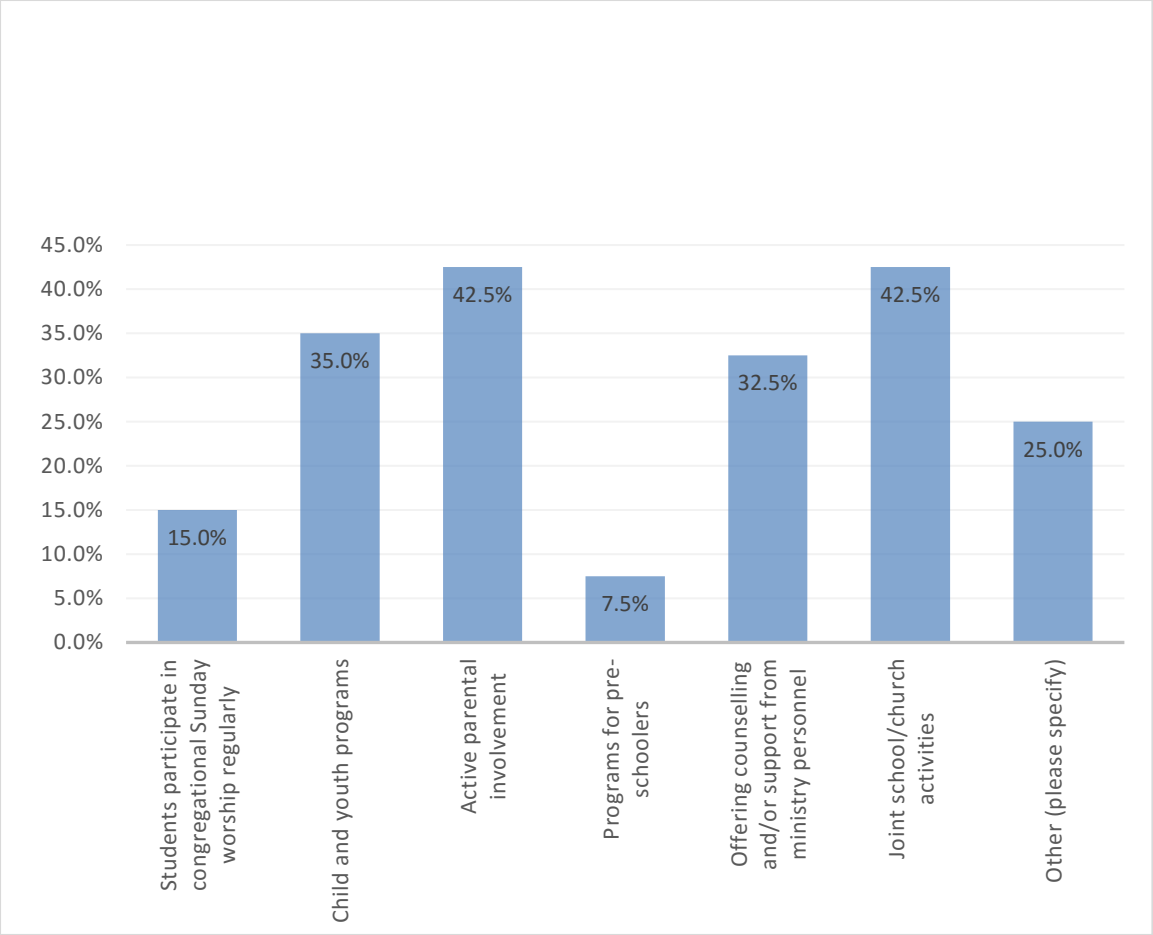


Figure 5.7. Principal and pastor perceptions of their promotional role in furthering the mission of the school.

Principals and pastors promote "active parental involvement" (17 responses) and "joint school/church activities" (17 responses) as two of the main ways to further the mission of the school. The emphasis on parental involvement and joint activities was repeated by the pastors, though the principals had a broader spread of responses across the categories.

In summary, principals and pastors valued students and their families as co-contributors to, and beneficiaries of, the mission of the school. They placed worship as central to the life of the school. They valued the culture of care and community that is integral to their school. They recognised and acknowledged the importance of staff recruitment and development and they viewed the staff as front-line promoters of the mission of the school. In Table 5.22 the findings from the interview and survey data corresponding to the research question is presented.

Table 5.22. Principals' and Pastors' Promotion of the Mission

Table 5.22

Principals' and Pastors' Promotion of the Mission of the School

Research question	Findings
To what extent do **principals and pastors promote the mission** of the primary school community?	Principals and pastors promoted the mission: by valuing students and families as co-contributors to, and beneficiaries of, the mission. by placing worship as central to the life of the school. by valuing the culture of care and community. by recognising the importance of staff recruitment and development. They value staff as front-line promoters of the mission.

5.9.1 Principal perceptions regarding their promotion of the mission.

In this section data are presented and analysed on the extent to which principals promote the mission of the school community. Principals chose "building relationships with students and their families" (62%), followed by "modelling the faith" (38%) and "targeted staff recruitment and professional development" (29%), as the means by which they grow and enhance their school culture.

When asked to select the two options that best describe how they mainly promote the mission of the school, the principals selected “active parental involvement” (52%), with a number of “other” responses (38%). Of the seven substantive comments emerging from the “other (please specify)” category, four principals focussed on the promotion of worship programs and opportunities, two referred to the promotion of the Christ-centredness of the school and one stated “We are in a unique and difficult period.”

Principals perceived that they promoted the mission of the school community through relationship building with students and their families, through modelling and through their staff. They were active in promoting and encouraging parental involvement and valued the central place of worship in their community.

In summary, principals perceived their promotion of the mission of the school as integrated in all their actions. They devoted significant time to encouraging parental involvement and ensuring that worship remained central to the school. In Table 5.23 the findings from the interview and survey data corresponding to the research question are presented.

Table 5.23. Principals' Promotion of the Mission

Table 5.23

Promotion of the Mission of the School: Principal Cohort

Research question	Findings
To what extent do **principals promote the mission** of the primary school community?	Principals promoted the mission: in all their actions, devoting significant time to encouraging parental involvement and ensuring the centrality of worship within the school.

5.9.2 Pastor perceptions regarding their promotion of the mission.

In this section data are presented and analysed on the extent to which pastors believe they promote the mission of the local Lutheran primary school. When invited to select the two options that best indicate how they grow and enhance their school culture, pastors selected "worship opportunities" (68%), followed by "modelling the faith" (42%) and "active pastoral support" (37%). In the related question, where respondents described how they further the mission of the school, the pastors chose "joint school/church activities" (58%), followed by "child and youth programs" (47%) and "offering counselling and/or support from ministry personnel" (37%). One pastor viewed his promoting role in terms of equipping teachers. He commented:

> Teaching, equipping and nurturing teachers in the Gospel and in living a life of reconciliation at home, with students and parents, and in the church and wider community. The second option would be equipping teachers in applying the Law so that they get to proclaim the Gospel. This equips them to work with students in conflicted situations, and the conflicts they might have with other staff. This is not a program, rather it involves equipping people to live the Christian life. With this

focus, students have learnt and experienced the power of the Gospel in their own relationships. [pastor: SM]

Pastors were keen to further the mission of the local Lutheran primary school and did this through providing worship opportunities, through their presence in the school community and their active support within the community. They promoted joint school/church programs and programs focussed on children and youth and offered their time and the support of other ministry personnel to the school community.

In summary, the pastors perceived their promotion of the mission of the school in terms of their involvement in the school. They devoted their time in the school to involvement in, and promotion of, joint school/church activities and child and youth programs. In Table 5.24 the findings from the interview and survey data corresponding to the research question are presented.

Table 5.24. Pastors' Promotion of the Mission

Table 5.24

Promotion of the Mission of the School: Pastor Cohort

Research question	**Findings**
To what extent do **pastors promote the mission** of the primary school community?	Pastors promoted the mission: in terms of their involvement in the school, devoting their time in the school to involvement in, and promotion of, child and youth programs and joint school/church activities.

5.10 Contributions to the Mission

To explore how principals and pastors contribute to the mission of their schools, the participants were invited to respond to: individual contributions to school/church community; actions as a community leader; and actions as a spiritual leader.

Respondents were asked how they contribute to the partnership between the church and school in their local setting. Principals and pastors contributed to the church/school partnership through regular meetings. Thirteen respondents specifically stated that the principal and pastor have a planned and regular meeting time (other respondents implied that the pastor and principal held unscheduled informal meetings) with some specifying that the meeting occurred weekly or fortnightly. At all six interviews conducted prior to the survey, the principals and pastors emphasised the importance of meeting regularly to improve communication and enhance their professional relationship and the relationship between the school and congregation.

Respondents were invited to describe their actions and activities in their local community leadership role. Typical of the terms used to describe their community leadership role were: “visible”, “involved”, “lead”, “meet regularly”, “serve”, “attend”, “encourage”, “promote”, “care” and “support”. The following three responses are of particular interest as they reflect, respectively, a passion for unity of community; staff development; and discipleship:

> …Promote school and church as ONE community. United front with Pastor. [principal: SM]

> …I believe it is of the utmost importance that we foster the development of our staff so then we can carry the mission of the school as a team. [principal: SM]

> …We work as followers of Jesus together in our respective positions as School and Church Leaders. [principal: SM]

These comments are further discussed in the next chapter.

After rating their comfort level in regards to the principal as the spiritual head of the school, respondents described their actions and activity in regards to their role as spiritual leaders. The actions and activities of pastor and principal as they enact their spiritual leadership role were described using the terms listed below. Table 5.25 shows the most frequently used terms.

Table 5.25. Spiritual Leadership Terminology

Table 5.25

Pastor and Principal Descriptions of Their Spiritual Leadership Actions

Key Descriptions	Instances of use
Worshipping, Leading, Praying, Encouraging	11 - 13
Attending, Ensuring, Promoting	6 - 10
Assisting, Providing, Serving, Coordinating, Supporting	5 or less

Pastors and principals most frequently described their actions in terms of worship (including leading, promoting and participation in worship); leading the school; their involvement in prayer (both private and public); and their role in encouraging others. One principal summarised this as:

> Seek to act with integrity and authenticity in reflecting God's grace in all I do. Lead support and promote worship, prayer and faith development activities. Filter the activities and decisions of the school from a grace perspective. [principal: SM]

In the final survey question respondents were invited to add any other comments in regards to the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools. This final question generated only 15 responses. Five respondents indicated local difficulties including: time pressure from serving a large parish; the need for principals to view pastors as equals and listen to them; concern over potential harm from students attending Sunday worship; the risk associated with the pastor overstepping his role in the school; and a leadership vacancy and recent community troubles. Nine respondents, however, agreed about the primary importance of the pastor and principal relationship and also the importance of a shared partnership, equality in the relationship and a shared understanding. One pastor, referring to the local principal, commented:

> Pastors and principals both provide an amazing contribution to the mission of Lutheran Primary Schools. I am thankful to work with a principal who sees working in a Lutheran school as a calling from God rather than only a job. [pastor: SM]

The following response from a pastor constituted another reason for the existence of Lutheran schools:

> Lutheran schools exist to provide a quality education in a Christian environment according to the ethos of the Lutheran Church. Principals and pastors need to understand this and work together in caring for those of the faith, reaching out to those not of the faith, caring for those inquiring and ensuring that a great education is given to all. [pastor: SM]

In summary, the principals and pastors perceived themselves as school missional leaders and valued staff as partners in mission. They worked to unite the community for mission and they prioritised the spiritual dimension of the school. In Table 5.26 the findings from the interview and survey data corresponding to the research question are presented.

Table 5.26. Principal and Pastor Contributions to the Mission

Table 5.26

Principal and Pastor Contributions to the Mission of the School

Research question	**Findings**
*How do **principals and pastors contribute to the mission** of Lutheran primary schools?*	Principals and pastors contributed to the mission: in their role as school missional leaders. alongside staff as valued partners. by uniting the community for mission. by prioritising the spiritual dimension of the school.

5.10.1 Principal perceptions regarding their contributions to the mission.

In the following section data are presented and analysed on principals' perceptions about their contributions to the mission of schools. Principals contributed to the local partnership between church and school through regular meetings with the pastor. They also contributed through providing opportunities for the school to participate in worship at the church; promotion of church activities to the school community; attending worship at the local Lutheran church; membership on church council and other committee involvement; and shared church/school events. Typical key descriptors used by the principals were "involved" (also described by the stronger phrase "actively involved"), "attend", "worship" and "promote." One response from a principal was different from the other comments in so far as

the language was more inclusive and the emphasis was on the joint partnership in ministry, and promoting the pastor's talents. This principal's response highlighted meeting and praying weekly with the pastor, being present in the church community, and meeting and greeting students and parents each morning with the pastor. This principal also commented that both pastor and principal are involved in the school worship and ministry team, in church youth group, staff devotions, recess and lunch breaks with the staff, staff retreats and involvement in the classroom.

Principals contributed to the mission of Lutheran primary schools through their community and spiritual leadership roles. They valued the pastor and principal relationship and the relationship between church and school and actively promoted and oversaw programs and opportunities to draw the community together and enhance the Christ-centred ethos of the community. Worship was pivotal to the way the principals contributed to the mission of the school.

In summary, principals actively involved themselves across the school community. They contributed to the mission of the school by their spiritual oversight of the school. In Table 5.27 the findings from the interview and survey data corresponding to the research question are presented.

Table 5.27. Principal Contributions to the Mission

Table 5.27

Contributions to the Mission of the School: Principal Cohort

Research question	Findings
*How do **principals contribute to the mission** of Lutheran primary schools?*	Principals contributed to the mission: by involving themselves across the breadth of the school community, and by their spiritual oversight of the school.

5.10.2 Pastor perceptions regarding their contributions to the mission.

In this section pastors' perceptions about their contributions to the mission of Lutheran primary schools are presented and analysed. Pastors perceived that they contributed to the local partnership between church and school through regular meetings with the principal. They also contributed through attending and leading weekly chapel services, involvement in school council, leading and attending staff bible studies/staff retreat, promotion and attendance at school functions, upholding the school in prayer, providing pastoral care to families and staff, and the development and promotion of joint programs and activities. Key phrases, typical of the way the pastors described their contributions, were "being visible", "walk closely with…", "encourage", "supporting", "lead", "active", "serve" and "connect".

A number of pastors described their spiritual leadership role in terms of their relationship with the principal. The following response, from a pastor, demonstrates his perception of the place of service in his relationship with the principal:

> In summary… my leadership actions and activities begin by serving the principal, providing biblical understanding and nurturing him/her in living a lifestyle of reconciliation. From this every other facet of my spiritual leadership in action and activity with staff, students, school families and daily involvement in the school will realise its rightful place. The opportunities are enormous! [pastor: SM]

Another pastor clarified his perception of the principal as the spiritual head:

> As a parish pastor, my role is to assist the principal as Spiritual Head of the School to set a positive spiritual life for the school in accordance with our Lutheran teaching and theology. This includes regularly taking staff Bible Studies and other training as deemed fit by the principal. [pastor: SM]

When asked to add any other comments to the survey, only two pastors added qualifying or negative comments. One response focussed on a lack of time to devote to the school because of other pastoral demands. The other cautioned that "principals need to be committed to a Lutheran philosophy of education and not a secular-humanist philosophy with a Christian veneer." This pastor was one who was concerned over the title *Spiritual Head*, sharing that "headship" held different connotations in education as compared to biblical usage.

Pastors saw their contributions to the mission of Lutheran primary schools in terms of their community and spiritual leadership roles. They valued the principal and pastor relationship and the relationship between the school and the church and they sought to support the principal and serve the school community. They viewed themselves as "encouragers" in the community and a means of connection between school and church.

In summary, pastors involved themselves across the school and church community. They perceived their contribution to the mission of the school as serving the school. In Table 5.28 the findings from the interview and survey data corresponding to the research question are presented.

Table 5.28. Pastor Contributions to the Mission

Table 5.28

Contributions to the Mission of the School: Pastor Cohort

Research question	Findings
*How do **pastors contribute to the mission** of Lutheran primary schools?*	Pastors contributed to the mission: by involving themselves across the school and church community, and by serving the school.

5.11 Conclusion

In this chapter the interview data from six school sites, and an online survey of principals and pastors, was presented and analysed. The data illustrated the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools. A number of findings emerged from analysis of the data. In Table 5.29 the findings from the data corresponding to the research questions is collated. These findings will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Table 5.29. Summary of Findings

Table 5.29

Summary of Findings: Separated Into Principal, Pastor, and Principal and Pastor Findings

Research questions	**Findings**
How do **principals and pastors perceive the mission** of the Lutheran primary school?	Principals and pastors perceived the mission: as intrinsically connected to culture. They are deeply aware of the culture and needs of the school community and their role in meeting needs. as strengthened through staff and parent partnerships. They value and invest in those relationships. as multi-faceted – including the education of the whole child for life; nurturing staff, students and parents in the faith; reaching out to all with the faith; and serving the community and beyond. primarily as witnessing the faith. as a 'calling' or having a deep moral purpose. They are committed to their school and to Lutheran schooling.
How do **principals perceive the mission** of the Lutheran primary school?	Principals perceived the mission: as part of the broader reason for the existence of Lutheran schools believing that Lutheran schools exist to prepare students for their vocation and for life and to reach out to those that don't know Jesus as their Saviour.
How do **pastors perceive the mission** of the Lutheran primary school?	Pastors perceived the mission: as part of the broader reason for the existence of Lutheran schools believing that Lutheran schools exist to prepare students for their vocation and for life and to nurture the students and their families.
How do **principals and pastors perceive each other's contribution** to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?	Principals and pastors perceived each other's contribution: as committed to a shared ministry, valuing the importance of their unity and common vision.
How do **principals perceive the pastor's contribution** to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?	Principals perceived the pastor's contribution: as enhancing a united and caring community. as promoting student participation in Sunday worship and both child/youth programs and the offering of counselling and support.

How do **pastors perceive the principal's contribution** to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?	Pastors perceived the principal's contribution: as impacting on the mission of the congregation. as promoting parental involvement and joint school/church activities.
To what extent do **principals and pastors promote the mission** of the primary school community?	Principals and pastors promoted the mission: by valuing students and families as co-contributors to, and beneficiaries of, the mission. by placing worship as central to the life of the school. by valuing the culture of care and community. by recognising the importance of staff recruitment and development. They value staff as front-line promoters of the mission.
To what extent do **principals promote the mission** of the primary school community?	Principals promoted the mission: in all their actions, devoting significant time to encouraging parental involvement and ensuring the centrality of worship within the school.
To what extent do **pastors promote the mission** of the primary school community?	Pastors promoted the mission: in terms of their involvement in the school, devoting their time in the school to involvement in, and promotion of, child and youth programs and joint school/church activities.
*How do **principals and pastors contribute to the mission** of Lutheran primary schools?*	Principals and pastors contributed to the mission: in their role as school missional leaders. alongside staff as valued partners. by uniting the community for mission. by prioritising the spiritual dimension of the school.
*How do **principals contribute to the mission** of Lutheran primary schools?*	Principals contributed to the mission: by involving themselves across the breadth of the school community, and by their spiritual oversight of the school.
*How do **pastors contribute to the mission** of Lutheran primary schools?*	Pastors contributed to the mission: by involving themselves across the school and church community, and by serving the school.

Chapter Six – Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this research was to explore the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools. It addressed the question of how the Lutheran Church of Australia can best respond to the mission opportunities that are present in schools. In Chapter 5 the key findings were identified. In the current chapter the findings emerging from the interviews and the survey are discussed. The interviewees were theoretically or purposefully selected to help the researcher construct the theory in accordance with Liamputtong's (2013) definition of theoretical sampling outlined in *Chapter 4.5 Participants.* The selected principals and pastors were regarded by the District Bishops and Executive Directors as demonstrating a positive working partnership in the school; contributing to the growth of the congregation attached to a school; and contributing to innovative practices between the school and congregation. The divergences between the interview and survey data are also discussed and the differences that are evident between the principal and pastor cohorts are explored. In Table 6.1 the synthesised findings are linked to the research questions and the chapter sections. In exploring the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of their schools, eight categories emerged from the interview themes. The categories - witness, vocation, calling, unity, relationships, care, service and Christ-centredness - form the chapter sections. The table below shows how principals and pastors contribute to the mission of their school and Lutheran education.

Table 6.1. Linking Findings and Chapter Sections

Table 6.1

Synthesised Findings Linked to Research Questions and Chapter Sections

Research questions	**Synthesised findings**	**Chapter sections**
How do **principals and pastors perceive the mission** of the Lutheran primary school?	They perceived the mission:	
	as witness	6.1 Witness
	and perceived the purpose of Lutheran education in terms of vocation	6.2 Vocation
	as a calling	6.3 Calling
How do **principals and pastors perceive each other's contribution** to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?	They perceived each other's contribution:	
	as uniting the community	6.4 Unity
To what extent do **principals and pastors promote the mission** of the primary school community?	They promoted the mission by:	
	valuing relationships	6.5 Relationships
	valuing the culture of care	6.6 Care
*How do **principals and pastors contribute to the mission** of Lutheran primary schools?*	They contributed to the mission by:	
	leading with an attitude of service	6.7 Service
	prioritising the spiritual dimension	6.8 Christ-centredness

6.1 Witness

Findings regarding the principals' and pastors' perceptions of the mission of Lutheran primary schools are discussed in this section. Sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3, in particular, contribute to answering the question:

How do principals and pastors perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school?

Principals and pastors perceived the mission as intrinsically connected to the culture of their school. They viewed their school's mission in terms of nurturing students and families in the faith, witnessing to students and families with the Gospel, serving students and families, and preparing students and families for work in the church and the world. Principals and pastors viewed the mission primarily in evangelistic (or outreach) terms, using the language of witnessing.

The principals and pastors were conscious of their role in influencing the culture and community of their school. The data revealed the ways that they grow and enhance a healthy school culture. The interviewees reported on the local school in inclusive terms using the language of community and family (see sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 for interview data on principal and pastor perceptions). Their view of the school community supports Sergiovanni's (2007) construct of a covenantal community where shared core values, mission and vision lie at the centre of the community. The pastors and principals described their schools as places where Christian values, mission and vision are core to the community and the way it functions. Characteristics that typify a healthy school culture – collegiality, experimentation and exploration, high expectations and the celebration of successes, care, trust and engagement in professional development (Laubli, 2010, May) – were identified by the principals as elements that helped to ensure that the education program at their school was successful. The principals and pastors viewed their school culture primarily as a caring

community. They shared examples of how their community responds to needs and cares for the students and families. Their perceptions were supported by the survey data (see sections 5.7.1 and 5.7.2 for survey data). The culture of the school and the values that were promoted were perceived as intrinsically connected to the mission of the school. The interviewees in the current research perceived that they were able to read the culture of the school community, promote and enhance the positive elements of the culture and meet the needs within the community.

The principals and pastors saw the mission of the school as complex and multi-faceted and viewed it in terms of nurturing Christians in their faith, reaching out in mission (or witness) to those that do not know Christ as their personal Saviour, serving the staff, students and parents of the school, and preparing the students, and assisting parents, to be effective and responsible citizens (see section 5.2.1 for data regarding these perceptions of the school's mission). The emphasis on nurture, outreach and service by the principals and pastors provided empirical data that supports Jennings' (2009) contention that these are the key metaphors for Lutheran schooling and how principals and pastors view their role in the mission of their school. The theology of vocation (Nuske, 2001) was put forward as a way to view the mission of Lutheran schools in Australia. The purpose of a Lutheran school, according to the concept of vocation, is to educate the student "to become the person God has created them to be in order that God's purposes for creation may be accomplished" (Altmann & Nuske, 2009, p. 47). The principals and pastors perceived their role in preparing the student - in the physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual dimensions - for life in the world beyond the school. They regarded their vocation role as extending beyond the student to supporting and caring for parents in their roles as caregivers.

In relation to the mission role of the school, the principals and pastors primarily viewed the mission as witnessing the faith (see Table 5.5 in section 5.7 for the pastors' and principals' ranking of the mission role of the school). Witnessing included sharing the faith with those that do not know Christ as their Saviour and to those that are seeking to understand the Christian faith. Here the role of "mission" was interpreted in evangelistic or outreach terms. The Lutheran Church of Australia, in their document *A Statement on Mission* acknowledges that the word mission can be used in a variety of contexts and with different meanings (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001c). The statement provides the following summary of the term mission:

> The church's task is to preach God's word to all people everywhere, to administer the sacraments, to nurture the faith, to help the needy, and to reach out to the unbelievers and to those who have not heard the call of the gospel. Wherever, in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ's followers fulfil this commission, there the church is in God's mission in the full sense of the term (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001c, p. 2).

The Church's mission role includes nurturing, helping and outreach. Pastors and principals saw the school's task, as a ministry of the church, primarily as outreach or witness. Their views concur with the church's statement that "every person in the Christian church is a witness for Christ in their life. All Christians, individually and collectively in congregations and other church structures, are to be 'letters of recommendation ...' from Christ, 'known and read by everybody' (2 Corinthians 3:2,3)" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001c, p. 2). Pastors and principals spent time within the interviews describing the mission of the school and nuancing the role of being a witness within a school where many families were not members of faith communities. The principals and pastors in the current research understood and were able to articulate the mission of their school, in particular, and Lutheran schools in

general. They viewed the mission role of the school as witnessing the faith to the school community. Viewing the mission as witness is a key characteristic of a missional leader.

Varied perceptions of the mission of Lutheran primary schools were gleaned from the survey data (see section 5.7 for survey data on the mission of the Lutheran primary school). The lack of consistency in leadership preparation received by the principals and pastors may in part explain the varied perceptions on the mission of their school and Lutheran education across this cohort. Preparation for both principal and pastoral leadership in the school was explored via the survey, as the interview data revealed that the preparation of some leaders was minimal and unstructured. Preparation for pastoral leadership has also been criticised by members of the Lutheran Church of Australia for its seeming removal from present day realities (Kempe, 2006), that is for its emphasis on theological understanding to the detriment of practical or pastoral ministry studies and leadership preparation. Preparation for leadership in Catholic schools has been criticised for its emphasis on managerial aspects to the detriment of the religious dimension (Belmonte, 2007, March). Research has highlighted the difficulty experienced by principals in the linkage between school mission and practice (Boerema, 2011). Half of the surveyed principals and pastors in the current research were negative towards their leadership preparation.

The surveyed pastors' comments on preparation for leadership were varied. Some pastors reported that they were well prepared, while others questioned whether preparation for school ministry was necessary and claimed that on the job experience was "the best training". Half of the pastor comments, however, were negative. The high number of negative responses from both the pastor and principal cohorts suggests that the training and preparation for leadership is an area of concern. The negative responses from pastors suggested minimal preparation was received for school ministry, either from the seminary or

from the school system. Many of these pastors however couched their negative views by adding that they sought training themselves, they developed over time and by immersing themselves in the community, and they received training as part of a team. Certainly, more needs to be done in the area of pre-service and in-service training and preparation for pastors and principals. The area of training and preparation for leadership is discussed in Chapter seven.

6.2 Vocation

Principals and pastors perceived the mission of the school as part of the broader reason for the existence of Lutheran schools. According to the data the principals perceived that Lutheran schools exist to prepare students for their vocation and for life, and to reach out to those that don't know Jesus as their Saviour (see Table 5.8 *Principal Cohort: Reasons Why Lutheran Schools Exist*). The data also indicated that the pastors perceived Lutheran schools as existing to prepare students for their vocation and for life, and that a further reason was to nurture the students and their families in the faith (see section 5.7.2 for survey data on the pastor perceptions). The principals' and pastors' notion of vocation was broader than a common view of vocation as career. The theology of vocation holds that "all human beings have been given places in this world and roles to fulfil [and] all people belong to God-ordained and blessed structures or social formations" (Strelan, 2003, p. 3). It portrays "secular" work to be just as valuable in God's sight as "religious" work (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2009a). The theology of vocation holds that God is continuously at work in creation, and people as one of the means through which God works. Therefore the notion of vocation means:

> it is important that Christians work faithfully and well in their individual callings, as parents, children, plumbers, doctors, nurses, teachers, mechanics, employers, employees, and so on, knowing that they are God's masks and that God is working through them to help care and provide for others. (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2009a, p. 2)

According to the principals and pastors, Lutheran schools exist to prepare students for their vocation, that is, for their calling now - to be children and students, brothers and sisters - and for their future calling as adults, as God's agents in the world.

Both principal and pastor cohorts regarded the existence of Lutheran schools primarily in terms of vocation. The cohorts differed, however, in what they considered to be secondary reasons. The principals rated evangelism or outreach, defined as the preaching and teaching of the Gospel, as the second reason, while the pastors viewed the further purpose as nurturing Christians in the faith. In comparison the Vatican document *Educating Together* emphasises the primary purpose of Catholic education as nurturing the humanity of its students (McLaughlin, 2008), and *An Introduction to Catholic Education* emphasises the formation of Catholic believers, fostering Catholic principles, and witnessing Catholic educational values (Buchanan & Rymarz, 2008) – again emphasising nurture. The difference between the principal and pastor cohorts in the current research may reflect the pastor's perceived role in the school as nurturing those that seek out their services or it may reflect sensitivity in evangelising in a diverse faith community. More research is needed to understand the different emphases of the pastors and principals.

According to the interview data both principals and pastors viewed the mission of the school as distinct from the reason for the existence of Lutheran schools. They perceived the reason for the existence of Lutheran schools as all-encompassing, and viewed the mission

role of the school as one of its functions (see section 5.2 for the data on the mission, and purpose, of the school). The distinction between the reason for existence and the mission role is an important one as it provides a possible answer to the debate as to how Lutheran schools are viewed in relation to their work in the world. In researching the contributions of pastors and principals to the mission of Lutheran schools, the current research clarified the distinction. The mission role of the school was perceived as one function, or task, that the school performs. Other functions include care, service, educative and community building functions. These combine to provide reasons for the existence of the school, embodied in the Lutheran understanding of vocation.

The principals and pastors perceived Lutheran schools as education facilities that play a welfare role in society. They saw the educative role of the school - to provide a Christian education - as a part of the wider Australian education system, as a given. There has been contention, however, regarding the mission role of Lutheran schools. Concern has been expressed that schools should not evangelise, as this represents a lack of respect for students' heritage and faith traditions (Altmann & Nuske, 2009; Nuske, 2001). The current research indicated that this concern over "evangelism" within the Lutheran school confuses the reason for the existence of Lutheran schools with the mission role of these schools. Concern over evangelism within the school may also indicate definitional disagreement over the term evangelism and its perceived connotations of overt and covert indoctrination. One pastor shared that the mission role of the school is "to give witness" [pastor: interview A]. Here he described the Lutheran school as simply "being", that is, its presence in the community means that the school is providing a Christian witness to the community. In going about its daily routines of classes and timetables, worship and care, the school is giving witness. It is shining a Christian light into the world. The pastor indicated that in viewing the outreach or evangelistic mission role of the school as "being a witness", respect was shown for the

various faith traditions within the school and people of no faith, and was not overt evangelisation. In being a witness, the school also does not intend a covert agenda for evangelising the students and their parents, as parents are clearly and repeatedly informed that they, in enrolling their children in a Lutheran school, are agreeing to abide by the ethos of the school – a school that provides a Christian education informed by Lutheran theology. The pastors and principals articulated the mission of their school as witnessing, and the reason for the existence of Lutheran schools is to provide a Christian education – from a Lutheran theological perspective - for members of the Australian community who choose Lutheran education for their children. Understanding Lutheran education's place in vocation is a key characteristic of a missional leader in a Lutheran school.

6.3 Calling

Principals and pastors perceived the mission, and their role in advancing the mission, as a "calling" (see sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 for data on principal and pastor perceptions regarding their contributions to the mission). Here the term calling was not referring to calling a pastor, that is "the invitation extended to a pastor by a congregation, parish or other authorised body which has chosen and elected him to be their pastor" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2000a). Rather it was referring to a conviction of fulfilling God's purposes in the vocation to which one has been called. Calling was used interchangeably with *vocation* and *purpose* and views "every legitimate kind of work or social function [as] a distinct 'calling' from God, requiring unique God-given gifts, skills, and talents" (Veith, 1999, p. 77). The principals and pastors also shared about their work in furthering the mission of the school in terms of having a moral purpose. They believed that their moral "compass" (Branson uses the term moral consciousness) was enhanced by self-reflection and reflection with each other.

This perception supports Branson's research, which found that moral consciousness was enhanced by principals' experience of structured self-reflection (Branson, 2007b). Fullan (2001, 2011) suggests that moral purpose is a characteristic of transformational leadership and change leadership that is directed towards improved performance. He equates moral purpose and high moral value and articulates that the essence of a change leader is to use their passion and vision "to generate energy and passion in others through action" (Fullan, 2011, p. 23). The principals and pastors in the current research reported on moral purpose as springing from their faith and not simply from their desire for transforming the learning program, or from managing change. Fullan's definition of a leader with moral purpose is inadequate to describe the principals and pastors in the current research as it does not sufficiently describe their motivation, their vision and their energy. Fullan (2011), however, does not elaborate on the foundation of moral purpose. In the current research, discussion on the notion of a calling or moral purpose encompassed the spiritual dimension, and was based on the motivating force of a faith position.

The principals and pastors articulated their role in the mission of the school as providing more than transformational or change leadership. Though they valued improvements in school performance –all interview transcripts included examples of improvements which were perceived by the principals and pastors as enhancing school performance - they articulated their motivation in leadership as arising from their faith. They perceived that the motivation of their faith led to the desire to share their faith with others and the valuing of the faith community that exists in the school. They were committed to their school and to Lutheran schooling. All demonstrated passion and enthusiasm in describing their roles in the school. Discussions on the mission of the school, and the reason for its existence, revealed a joy of service and a deep sense of the moral purpose involved in leading a faith based school. This was evidenced by the enthusiasm for sharing the mission and

ministry story of the school and the passionate language used to convey the importance of their mission and ministry role. The passion and enthusiasm evidenced in the interview cohort must be weighed, however, by the knowledge that this cohort was purposefully sampled as a group of respondents selected for their exemplary practice.

The principals' and pastors' insights on mission were not confined to the school context but also spoke into the broader Lutheran education system and philosophy of schooling. They viewed their commitment as being evidenced through serving the students and their parents in the programs and activities of the school and through their desire to make a difference in the lives of the students, parents and staff through Lutheran education. The principals and pastors in the current research perceived the mission, and their role in the school to fulfil the mission, as a calling, or vocation, and were committed to their school and to Lutheran education. Understanding and acceptance of being called is a key characteristic of a missional leader.

6.4 Unity

Findings about the principals' and pastors' perceptions of each other's contributions to the mission of their school are discussed in this section. The discussion contributes to answering the research question:

> *How do principals and pastors perceive each other's contribution to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?*

The principals and pastors valued each other's contributions in the school as evidenced by their eagerness to share the actions and achievements of the other's work within the school setting. They perceived each other's contribution as making a commitment to a

shared ministry, and they valued their unity and shared vision (see section 5.3 for interview data on *Leadership Perspectives*). As the principals and pastors described their ministry, they revealed roles and activities that were perceived as complementary rather than as competitive. They articulated that their shared vision for their ministries were developed through intentional consultation, and collaboration. The ministry in the school was not seen as a task that needed to be divided up, nor an activity that required equal input from both pastor and principal; rather ministry was integral to their spiritual leadership roles. They conceptualised the school community as including a community of faith, which supports the call for new models of school/church partnerships (Greenthaner, 2011). The principals and pastors articulated that providing opportunities for connecting people in small groups (that is, the building of close relationships) was more important than ensuring congregational association. The importance of connecting people in small groups was also found in the 2006 National Church Life Survey research (Powell & Jacka, 2008). A repeated theme, across the data, was the importance of the principal and pastor relationship for the development of a common vision.

The principal/pastor relationship was perceived as pivotal for providing good leadership to the school community, for furthering the mission of the school, and for developing clarity and unity of vision (see section 5.8 for data in regards to the significance of the principal/pastor relationship). The principals and pastors shared how they worked at their relationship – including setting aside time and prioritising regular meeting times as well as seeking each other's opinions on difficult decisions. A high level of mutual trust and respect was demonstrated within the interviews. Descriptions of the principal/pastor relationship which contributes to good leadership included prioritising the relationship, openness and trust within the relationship, mutual respect, understanding of strengths and weaknesses of the other and the willingness to support each other. These descriptions of the

principal/pastor relationship support Marks' research on the importance of Christian relationships and interactions, and Christian leadership in Lutheran schools (2000). The principals and pastors valued their relationship – a relationship where each perceived the other as a mentor - and found strength from the support of the other leader through difficult decisions. They spoke positively of each other's contributions to the mission of the school community. The unity generated through mutual respect and support between pastor and principal was a key element in their description of missional leadership.

The principals and pastors described their roles within the school community and indicated that they were comfortable in working together in areas where their community and spiritual leadership roles overlapped (see section 5.3.1 for interview data from the principals and section 5.3.2 for interview data from the pastors). Their level of comfort in collaborating was articulated in the interviews and was also evidenced by a camaraderie within the conversations that arises from familiarity and mutual respect. In all of the interviews, the pastor saw the principal as not only the educative and organisational leader of the school, but also as the spiritual leader of the school and its community. The pastor saw his role as auxiliary to the spiritual headship of the principal, supporting the principal where and when needed and mentoring the principal as required. The data showed that the principals also saw themselves as community and spiritual leaders (see section 5.8 for survey data on community and spiritual leadership).

Community and spiritual leadership dimensions have been identified by Lutheran Education Australia (2005a) in the *Leadership Framework for Lutheran Schools*. While Lutheran Education Australia uses a broad definition of spiritual leadership in the leadership framework, Buchanan (2013) explores the various elements of spiritual leadership and describes these as religious leadership, faith leadership, spiritual leadership and ministerial

leadership. Religious leadership is defined as leadership that is "open to continuous growth in the knowledge of the religious tradition with which the school is associated" (Buchanan, 2013, p. 128). Faith leaders are described as those leaders who are in tune with their faith and the faith dimension of leadership and whose faith, management and leadership skills influence how they exercise their daily leadership. Spiritual leadership is described in terms of nurturing the spiritual dimension of the school community (Buchanan, 2013) and ministerial leadership – a leadership that promotes the faith-based ethos of the school and nurtures relationships so that people can growth in faith and life - speaks of the ministry in which lay faithful participate (Buchanan, 2011).

The principals highly regarded their role as religious, faith, spiritual and ministerial leaders of the school, perceiving their leadership as uniting the community under the values and faith traditions of the church (see Table 5.25 for survey data on descriptions of spiritual leadership actions). They shared that they valued the encouragement, support and advice received from their pastor. The principals emphasised the mutuality of the principal and pastor roles and the language used was that of "equals". The principals and pastors in the current research worked together as co-workers in mission and collaboratively promoted and enhanced the mission of the school community.

The principals perceived the pastors as caring for and uniting the community, and valued the pastors' role in school worship. Specifically, principals perceived the pastors as promoting student participation in Sunday worship and as offering both child and youth programs and counselling and support (see Table 5.16 *Principal Perceptions of the Pastor's Actions in the School*). According to the interview data the principals perceived the pastor as highly active in the school. They valued the actions of pastors and viewed them as contributing positively to the community that exists at the school. They also perceived the

pastor's actions as contributing positively in caring for the community and in building a caring community within the school (see section 5.3 for interview data on *Leadership Perspectives*). Shapiro has explored the ethic of caring and the ethic of care (Kropiewnicki & Shapiro, 2001; Shapiro & Gross, 2013).

Shapiro views educational leaders who embrace the ethic of care as those leaders who ask "that individuals consider the consequence of their decision and actions" (Shapiro & Gross, 2013, p. 6). The principals in the current research viewed the pastors' ethic of care as extending beyond ethical decision making and solving moral dilemmas to embracing the school community by their caring actions and creating a culture of care within the community (see Figure 5.2 *Descriptions of School Culture*). The pastors' caring actions were reported as demonstrated by the amount of time they devoted to the school, by their leadership in programs and activities that promoted parental and staff involvement in caring ministries and by their proactive service in the school.

The principals valued worship, and the pastor's involvement in worship (see Table 5.16 *Principal Perceptions of the Pastor's Actions in the School*), and acknowledged that the pastors' involvement in worship has a strong influence on the culture of their school and in contributing to uniting the community. Research on the culture of Lutheran schools in Queensland found that worship as celebration is a dimension of culture that is important to Lutheran schools (Marks, 2000). The principals in the current research valued worship as celebration. They also valued the part that the pastor played in ensuring the centrality of worship within the school. The principals emphasised the importance of the principal/pastor relationship as the fundamental relationship that ensured a united, caring and worshipping school community.

The importance of the principal/pastor relationship was confirmed by the survey data. There were, however, a number of qualifying comments that indicated that, according to a few respondents, all was not ideal in their local setting (four comments are listed in section 5.8). A complaint, from a few principals, was the lack of common vision for the school and church community. Starratt (2003) claims that leaders can continue to administer a school without a unifying vision or core – describing this core as myth built upon assumptions and beliefs and held together with goals and purposes (see *Figure 3.5. Model of Schools* in Chapter Three), however, such schools lack direction and the motivating force of deeply held convictions and purpose. The survey data supported the view that schools without a common vision between the pastor and principal can continue to function in their educative role, however the principals reported the lack of support from the pastor was at best frustrating and at worst counter-productive to creating a united vision for mission. One principal emphasised the importance "of a pastor who understands the challenges faced by schools today" [principal: survey data]. This principal's comment may infer his awareness of circumstances in which the pastor/s possibly does/do not appreciate the challenges faced by schools today. A number of pastors acknowledged the paradigm shift required when they moved into school ministry – due, in part, to the intrinsic structure of the school in contrast to the self-regulation required of congregational ministry. This volunteering of information in regards to the shift required to work as a school pastor raises the question of how other pastors manage the move into school ministry and its associated demands. The interview data showed that pastors welcomed and worked with the structure of the school setting. As the survey data indicated a number of instances of local difficulties, more research is need to ascertain whether pastors generally are willing and able to work within school structures.

The survey data suggested that role clarity was an issue for some pastors and principals (see Table 5.3 *Relationship Between Principal and Pastor*, Table 5.11 *Pastor's Fit*

Into the School and survey data in section 5.8). The issue was expressed in terms of frustration in the case of the pastor who was perceived to have stepped over the boundary of his role and frustration in the case of the principal who was perceived to have ignored the viewpoint of the pastor. Similar dissonances, between the practices of principals and pastors, were reported in Bartel's (2004) research. This issue is not confined to Lutheran schools. In Catholic schools, lay principals are challenged by the tensions surrounding the principal-parish priest relationship (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007). Role clarity, including clarity in regards to spiritual leadership roles, is an issue that impacts on shared understandings for the local context.

Most principals rated the person-environment fit of the pastors in the school as positive – that is, the majority were positive in regards to the "fit" of the pastor in the local school setting - and this rating may indicate a good pastor/principal relationship or the perception of the pastor who contributes positively to the school community. Person-environment fit is defined as the compatibility that occurs when individual and work environment characteristics are well matched (Caplan, 1987; Zedeck, 2011). There were, however, a broad range of responses with 8 of 21 principals either neutral or negative regarding the pastor's fit. It can be concluded that in a number of instances the pastor either does not fit well in the school, or the fit is considered merely neutral. The neutral responses may be viewed as the pastor has neutral impact/influence through little or no involvement or the pastor is involved in the school, though his actions have little or neutral impact/influence. Both explanations, together with the negative responses to pastor fit, are a cause for concern when pastor and principal leadership impacts on the mission of the school. The pastors did not view their fit in the school in the same way as the principals (see section 5.8.1 *Principal perspectives on the pastor's contributions to the mission* and section 5.8.2 *Pastor perspectives on the principal's contributions to the mission*). Possible interpretations

regarding this difference between pastor and principal cohorts are: principals expecting more from the pastors than pastors of themselves; pastors are not as aware of their neutral or negative impact within the schools, as are the principals; and pastors have a more positive perception of their fit than the principals. These neutral and negative responses to the fit of the pastor in the school may indicate local relationship difficulties between the principal and the pastor or the need for greater understanding, or acceptance, of the differing roles that principals and pastors play in their contributions to the mission of the school. The neutral and negative responses also serve to highlight the difference between the positive relationship that exists between the interviewed pastors and principals and the varied relationships that exists amongst the broader surveyed cohort. The survey provided an opportunity for principals, and pastors, to express their perceptions about the relationships in the school and a number of principals took the opportunity to express frustrations regarding the work and roles of the pastor, or to speak of local difficulties. This may also indicate that these principals were not satisfied with the fit of the pastor in the school. These issues – lack of common vision, the changing dynamic of schooling, role clarity and awareness of person-environment fit - highlight the need for the provision of in-service leadership training for pastors whose ministry includes a school.

Principals and pastors contributed to the mission by working with staff to unite the community for mission (see section 5.3 for interview data on *Leadership Perspectives*). Community leadership is one of the attributes described in Lutheran Education Australia's leadership framework (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005a). The principals and pastors saw themselves as community leaders (see section 5.10 for survey data on community leadership) highlighting the importance of this leadership attribute. They recognised that there was much to do in their community and shared their community leadership role with the school staff. They also emphasised the importance of presence – of being seen at events, in the school

yard, at church and in the wider community. They viewed their presence, not as a self-promotion activity, but rather as supporting the school and church community, as a means of encouragement and as modelling community-mindedness. They perceived that they served their communities and worked with staff and parent teams. The principals devoted time to creating opportunities for staff to interact as a team with the aim of working towards a common vision and mission of the school. One principal reported: "I believe it is of the utmost importance that we foster the development of our staff so that we can carry the mission of the school as a team" [survey monkey]. They did this through professional development which enhanced team building, through empowering staff to be leaders and through a focus on nurturing staff.

The pastors appreciated the school staff and supported the staff pastorally and spiritually. They perceived that they spent time with the staff, were available at call to them and shared anecdotes of encouraging and affirming school staff (see section 5.10.2 *Pastor perceptions regarding their contributions to the mission*). A key theme throughout the interviews, was the valuing of staff and the importance of staff who work towards a united vision and mission for the school and community. Valuing of a united community - leaders, staff and families – was a recurring theme when discussing the mission of their community. The view of the school's mission in terms of unity supports Sergiovanni's (2009, p. 108) construct of schools as moral communities and communities of responsibility where "principal, teachers, and students feel morally obliged to embody shared commitments and agreed-upon ways of doing things as part of their roles in the school". The interviewed principals and pastors in the current research perceived that they worked in partnership with the members of the community for the mission of the school. They unified the community in and for mission.

The pastors perceived the principal's contribution as impacting on the mission of the congregation. Specifically, they viewed the principals' contribution as promoting parental involvement and joint school and church activities (see Table 5.19 *Pastor Perceptions of the Principal's Actions*). The pastors viewed the pastor/principal relationship as crucial for the mission of the school community. A few pastors nuanced their comments by expressing that time constraints – both their own availability and the availability of the principal – negatively impact the relationship. Some pastors shared about the relationship in terms of supporting the principal spiritually and professionally and saw their role as being the pastor for the principal, that is, providing a personal pastoral service to the principal (see 5.3.2 for interview data). The emphasis on these relationship dynamics – importance of the pastor/principal relationship for mission; time required for developing the relationship; support within the relationship - was confirmed by the survey data (see 5.8.2. *Pastor perspectives on the principal's contributions to the mission* for survey data). Both principals and pastors acknowledged each other's time and work demands and prioritised making time for the relationship.

6.5 Relationships

In this section the findings regarding the extent to which principals and pastors promote the mission of the school are discussed. Sections 6.5 and 6.6, in particular, contribute to answering the research question:

> To what extent do principals and pastors promote the mission of the primary school community?

The interviewed pastors and principals did not attempt to quantify their role in promoting the mission of the school. They saw their mission role as integral to all that they do. The extent to which the leaders promoted the mission was demonstrated through their actions, through their prioritising of time and resources and through their sharing of what they valued.

The interview data showed that the pastors and principals perceived their actions as demonstrating a high level of commitment to working with and for the parents of the school (see Chapter 5.4 *Promoting the Mission*). It also revealed their perceptions of demonstrating a high level of respect for the school staff and investing in staff in order to prioritise contributions to the mission of the school. Research highlights the importance of developing a community of trust, support and integrity (Burford, 2005, June). The principals and pastors perceived that they build this community through valuing relationships. Embracing the staff, the students and the community of the school as well as understanding the mission of the school are characteristics of a faith leader (Wallace et al., 1999). The principals and pastors valued staff, students and the community of the school and understood the mission of their school and Lutheran schooling and the importance of the school/church relationship. Though Neidhart and Lamb recognised that there is not a clear understanding of what faith leadership is and how to go about faith leadership (2009), the principals and pastors in the current research expressed their faith leadership through their commitment to the mission, vision and purpose of their school and their desire to work closely with both staff and families for the benefit of the school community.

The principals and pastors perceived that they demonstrated authentic, or ethical, leadership as they understood their purpose within the community, and led with the conviction of their faith, establishing and valuing relationships. This supports George's (2003) view of authentic leaders as those who understand their purpose; practice solid values;

lead with heart; establish connected relationships; and demonstrate self-discipline. The principals and pastors reported on investing in relationships, particularly with staff and parents, through presence, time and resourcing. Typical of the responses to the question regarding the promoting of mission was a pastor who recorded "equipping teachers [to] equip them to work with students [and] equipping people to live the Christian life" [survey monkey].

The principals and pastors described their leadership in servant leadership terms (see Table 5.25 *Spiritual Leadership Terminology*). Servant leaders are those who view themselves as servant first, rather than leader first, and this manifested itself "in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 13). The principals and pastors reported that they served the community by ensuring that the community's needs were being met. The principals and pastors in the current research developed, valued and invested in relationships to benefit the mission of the school community.

Principals and pastors promoted the mission by valuing students and families as co-contributors to, and beneficiaries of, the mission. The principals and pastors reported that they highly value their relationships with the students and their families. This valuing extended beyond a service-provider to a customer relationship (see Chapter 5.4 for presentation of interview data on *Promoting the Mission*). The passion and enthusiasm that was conveyed at the interviews showed joy in service and a deep sense of moral purpose, as identified by Fullan (2001, 2011). The pastors offered examples of being present in the school yard and the staff room and simply enjoying the relationships that were developed. They explained that their ministry of presence enabled them to become a pastor for the school community as individual needs arose. The principals reported on the programs and activities

that enabled students and their families to connect with the broader school community outside of the classroom. Building relationships within the school community is widely cited as a key element in healthy school cultures (Sergiovanni, 2009; Starratt, 2003). Building relationships with students and parents was one way that the pastors and principals enhanced their school culture and promoted the mission. The principals and pastors in the current research valued students and their families as mission contributors and mission beneficiaries.

Principals and pastors promoted the mission by recognising the importance of staff recruitment and development and distributed leadership. One principal shared that "everything that we do is about promoting the mission of the school…it comes down to the people you employ, the programs that you run…" [interview E]. Another shared that "one of the things that I appreciate that [the principal] has managed to do is appoint excellent staff and to manage and encourage…" [pastor: interview F]. They reported that an important consideration in staff recruitment was the proactive seeking of Christian staff as the principals and pastors valued all staff as front-line promoters of the mission.

A significant theme across the interviews was the importance of recruiting the right staff, and providing ongoing development because they valued them highly. The principals reported targeting teachers for employment. They valued Christian staff (teachers and ancillary staff) and shared the importance of staff "fit" with the ethos of the school. One rural principal acknowledged the challenges of recruiting Christian staff, but still valued highly the employment of Christian staff. The principals and pastors emphasised the importance of induction, and on-going staff development to foster a common vision for the school. School capacity is built by growing a collaborative school culture which fosters teacher development and commitment (Bezzina & Wilson, 1999) and this collaboration with, and fostering of, staff was reported across the interviews. The principals valued the staff's role in promoting the

mission of the school, and recognised the role played by non-teaching staff. They reported on the importance of staff commitment to the vision and mission of the school and the staff's role in being the first contact with parents and promoters of the mission to families. The principals and pastors aimed to share (Bezzina, 2007) and distribute (Harris, 2008) leadership. In acknowledging that staff were front-line promoters of the mission, the principals and pastors prioritised the spiritual development of staff. In the discussion paper *The 4 pillars of highly effective spiritual leaders* (Grieger, 2010a) the spiritual development of staff was listed as a priority task for authentic Lutheran school spiritual leaders. The principals and pastors in the current research prioritised the spiritual development of staff by valuing staff and focussing on activities and programs that nurture staff in the faith journey. They aimed to develop staff for the benefit of the mission of the school community.

Principals promoted the mission as integral to all their actions within the school community. They prioritised parental involvement through encouragement of parental input in the school and programing activities to maximise that input. The principals promoted the mission by building relationships with students and their families, modelling the faith, and by targeted staff recruitment and professional development. They perceived that they promoted the mission as integral to all their leadership actions. They viewed their promotion of the mission as incorporated in the minutiae of their daily actions, as well as in their planning and in the prioritising of their time. The importance of building relationships with students and families, and the area of staff development, has been explored above. The principals saw themselves as role models (see Figure 5.6 *Enhancing Their School Culture* and sections 5.9.1 and 5.9.2 for survey data on promotion of the mission). The Catholic school principal plays an important role in modelling the desired qualities and values of the community (Coughlan, 2009). The principals in the current research viewed modelling as encompassing the values of the community and as being present and available for the programs and activities of the

school – in Chapel, at devotions, at Sunday worship, in the classroom and the yard, at after school-hours events, and in congregational activities. Their presence demonstrated to the community the importance of the activity and created opportunities to share the faith and provide service and care. The principals perceived they promoted the mission in their actions and through their presence.

In order to enhance the mission of the school, principals reported that they mainly promoted active parental involvement, support from ministry personnel, joint school/church activities and worship (see section 5.9.1 *Principal perceptions regarding their promotion of the mission*). In regards to the principals' provision and promotion of support from ministry personnel, four of the six schools employed staff to provide support to students and families in counselling, pastoral care, and chaplaincy services. The two small rural schools did not employ ministry personnel but provided these services through the pastor, or through other staff and programs. Provision of these services and the promotion of parental involvement, joint school and church activities and the centring of worship for the community demonstrated more than a commitment to care of the community. It demonstrated that the principals were endeavouring to make ethical decisions that are caring, just, professional and take into account inequalities. Shapiro and Gross have proposed multiple ethical paradigms - care, critique, justice and the profession - as a means of helping educational leaders solve ethical dilemmas (Shapiro & Gross, 2013). They define the ethic of justice as a paradigm that "focuses on concepts that include fairness, equality, and individual freedom" (2013, p. 6). The ethic of critique asks educational leaders to deal with questions of class, gender, race and other areas of perceived or actual inequality. The ethic of care is concerned with moral decision making and considers the consequences of decisions in terms of loyalty, trust and empowerment. The ethic of the profession places the student at the centre of the decision-making process, and takes into account the personal and professional codes of the leader and

the organisation (Shapiro & Gross, 2013). The principals in the current research articulated that they strived to uphold what can be regarded as a professional ethical code in regards to their spiritual leadership responsibility. This was revealed variously, though particularly through the high percentage of survey comments on their spiritual headship as 'oversight'.

> That I have the privilege to serve the school community ensuring that the values, standards and ethos of the school are the context within which we provide excellence in education. That I care for and encourage all within our community to know the love of God through the care given to them as we teach and learn together. My goal is to encourage all to serve one another using their gifts and talents and become a blessing to all those they meet. [principal: SM]

Comments, like the one recorded above, demonstrated that the principals were guided by, and committed to, their spiritual headship responsibility (see Appendix F for the further comments and coding, and 5.8 *Leadership Perspectives* for analysis of the survey data). The principals also perceived that they demonstrated ethical educational leadership through promotion of parental involvement, provision of support services, promotion of school and church activities and through centring worship. They perceived that these actions benefitted the mission of the school by enhancing relationships.

Pastors promoted the mission of the school by their involvement in the school and the development of relationships within the school community (see section 5.9.2 *Pastor perceptions regarding their promotion of the mission*). They devoted their time to involvement in, and promotion of, joint school/church activities and child and youth programs. The pastors highlighted the youth groups and programs that connect upper primary students with the congregational youth. They demonstrated a desire to stay connected with the students beyond the primary school. The pastors reported that, to grow and enhance the

school culture, they provided worship opportunities, modelled the faith and provided pastoral support. The interview data showed that the pastors also valued the opportunities that the school provided for worship and involved themselves in preparing and leading worship. When elaborating on their roles, the pastors discussed their provision of pastoral care to the school community. This supports the research of Jennings (2007) and Marks (2000) who both argued that the Lutheran school is recognised for its pastoral care. The pastors' presence in the school enabled them to become known in the community. The familiarity of the pastor meant that the pastor was called on in times of need, that is, the pastor became the community's pastor and not just the congregational pastor. The pastors reported that they also promoted the support provided by other ministry personnel. The pastors acknowledged that they were unable to meet the needs of the entire community and valued the support of other ministry personnel. The pastors in the current research prioritised their involvement in the school and promoted joint school and church programs and activities, the provision of pastoral care and the development of relationships.

6.6 Care

Principals and pastors promoted the mission of the Lutheran school by valuing the culture of care and community (see Figure 5.2 *Descriptions of School Culture).* They provided examples of the extra-curricular activities and programs that they valued that furthered the mission of the community and enhanced the culture of care (see Chapter 5.10 for survey data on *Contributions to the Mission*). They described promoting joint church-school activities and of promoting church events in the school and school events in the church. They reported that the motivation for these extra-curricular programs and cross-

promotion of activities was to care for the students and their families and draw them into a nurturing community.

There has been a call for the reordering of priorities in schools from an emphasis on academics and organisation around traditional disciplines to an emphasis on care (Noddings, 1995). “Although there is no consistent agreement in the literature on the components on school climate, the majority of researchers emphasize caring as a core element” (Mizelle, 2010, p. 26). Valuing the care that is provided within the school community is an indicator of a healthy school culture (Laubli, 2010, May; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001) and the notion of care was a repeated theme across the interviews. The pastors and principals prioritised the caring dimension of the school through resourcing and promotion. Many programs and activities were designed to care for students and their families and to build bridges from the community of the congregation to the community of the school and vice-versa. The pastors and principals were aware of using language that promoted unity, aiming to present the church and school as one community. They all acknowledged that there was more to do to link the school and church communities, supporting Frijo’s research which recognised the need for the proactive collaboration of priests and principals (2009). The principals and pastors in the current research consistently focused on promoting and resourcing a caring community.

6.7 Service

The findings regarding principals’ and pastors’ contributions to the mission of the Lutheran primary school are discussed in this section. Sections 6.7 and 6.8, in particular, contribute to answering the research question:

How do principals and pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?

Principals and pastors contributed to the mission as missional leaders who aim to serve the members of the school community.

The principals and pastors contributed to the mission in their role as school missional leaders. They shared how they endeavour to contribute to the partnership between the local church and school (see Chapter 5.5 and 5.10 for interview and survey data respectively). They described their leadership role in terms of community leadership, rather than simply school leadership. They also discussed their spiritual leadership role and described what they did as spiritual leaders in their community. Principals and pastors saw themselves as missional leaders, who viewed their school as a mission field.

The principals and pastors valued the partnership between the school and church (see sections 5.5.1 for principal contributions and 5.5.2 for pastor contributions to the church/school partnership). They aimed to grow the partnership through a common vision for the school and church community. Their vision was developed over time, and enhanced through regular focussed meetings between pastor and principal. They prioritised regular mutual communication and communication with the community. They also valued the active involvement of the pastor in the school and the principal in the congregation. This contributed to their vision for a single school and church community and enabled them to share their faith, and lead the community. Sharkey (2011) has called for a new way of viewing the school and church relationship as a "single ecclesial community that builds Church out of the school community by creating strong and multi-layered bonds to other parts of the local Church" and which is "organic" and "recognisably much more than a school" (Sharkey, 2011, p. 7). The interviewed principals and pastors were already aware of the potential of a united church and school community for mission and were working towards building up a single faith community out of the school community. They sought to build

bridges from the school to involvement in the faith community within the school and with the congregation. They recognised the importance of a welcoming community (Kitson, 2008). The actions of the pastors and principals in the school and church were broad and varied (see *Chapter 5.10 Contributions to the Mission* for analysis of the pastors' and principals' contributions) and demonstrated an attitude of service to the community. The notion of service supported Mitchell's view that service is "a pivotal values focus" [for] Lutheran schools" (Mitchell in Macqueen, 2011, p. 18).

A key finding from the interviews was the importance of the involvement of pastor and principal in the school/church community (see Table 5.12 *Leadership of the Pastor in the School* and Table 5.13 *Leadership of the Principal in the Congregation*) and the high expectations they placed on themselves as leaders. This finding is significant as it highlights the importance that the principals and pastors placed on the pastor who serves the school community and the principal who serves the church community. They viewed service across the school and church community as crucial for the mission of the school and perceived their contributions in bridging any real or perceived school and church divide as vital for bringing people into the faith community and providing a place where people feel welcome to remain after the students have left the school. The principals and pastors in the current research viewed themselves as missional leaders.

6.8 Christ-centredness

Principals and pastors contributed to the mission of the school by being spiritual leaders of the school community (see Chapters 5.5 and 5.10 for data on spiritual leadership). They endeavoured to position the school as a Christ-centred community, that is, they strived to place the school community as centred on Christ, with this core permeating the values and

culture, the activities and emphases of the school. They articulated their spiritual leadership in terms of the personal, connection, self-reflection, and oversight. This complements research on the expression of contemporary spirituality (Habel, 2004, September). They contributed to the Christocentric nature of the school by ensuring that worship was central to the program and activities of the school. They prioritised their spiritual leadership actions in the school and provided spiritual oversight of the community. The principals and pastors perceived their role as focusing the school community as a Christ-centred community.

The principals were comfortable with the idea of being "spiritual heads" (see Table 5.17. *Principal Comfort Level with the Notion of the Principal's Spiritual Headship*) with only one surveyed principal reporting that he or she was "somewhat uncomfortable" and only two principals indicating that they were "neutral". This overall positive response complements the interview data (see section 5.5.1 for principals' interview data). More research is needed to explore whether this high level of acceptance of the principal as spiritual head would be replicated in a cohort of Lutheran secondary principals, and whether a secondary principal cohort would describe their spiritual leadership actions and activities in similar terms as their primary counterparts. This and other recommendations for further research is expanded in Chapter 7. One factor in the high level of acceptance of spiritual headship could be attributed to the size of the community. Research in Queensland Lutheran schools showed that the size of the school and the percentage of Lutheran teachers and Lutheran students has an effect on the culture of the school (Marks, 2000) and spiritual headship may impact on school culture. The smaller the school the more opportunity may be available to the principal to take on spiritual leadership tasks rather than needing to delegate those functions to a team (of which the pastor may simply be one member). Conversely the larger the school the greater the necessity for the principal to act as a Chief Executive Officer and distribute functions – functions that may include spiritual oversight tasks – to those who

are employed to provide the service. Lutheran schools would benefit from broader research into the spiritual headship of all principals (see Chapter 7).

The pastors were generally comfortable with the notion of the spiritual headship role of the principal (see Table 5.20. *Pastor Comfort Level with the Notion of Principal's Spiritual Headship*). There was, however, a spread of responses in the survey data with seven (out of 19) pastors rating their comfort level as "neutral", "somewhat uncomfortable" or "not comfortable". One pastor commented that "in reality many pastors and principals are confused by the term and what [spiritual headship] looks like" and another explained that "unfortunately the term 'Spiritual Head of the school' for the principal is awkward and open to misinterpretation and misuse". The spread of survey responses to the notion of spiritual headship of the principal shows that more discussion is needed about the spiritual leadership role of the principal and how that role relates to the local supporting pastor. The spread of responses may indicate a lack of confidence on the part of the pastor or a lack of clarity in the spiritual leadership role of the principal and pastor.

Research on faith leadership indicates that specific and ongoing spiritual formation is needed as principals and pastors struggle with the increasing expectations placed on them to undertake faith leadership roles in the school and wider community (Neidhart & Lamb, 2013). The current research confirms the need for specific and ongoing spiritual formation. In contrast, the interviewed pastors were all comfortable with the notion of the spiritual headship of the principal. They saw their role in the school as supporting the principal specifically and the school in general. They valued the leadership of the principal, respected the principal's spiritual leadership and spoke glowingly of the principals' contributions to the mission of the school. The interview data showed that the principals and pastors were active

in both congregation and school, and valued each other's distinctive contributions in promoting and enhancing the mission of the school community.

The principals and pastors contributed to the mission by placing worship at the centre of school life. The principals and pastors reported on the importance of worship to their communities and valued the centrality of worship in the life of the school (see Chapter 5.5 for interview data and Chapter 5.10 for survey data). Here they were not only referring to whole school worship (often referred to as "Chapel" in Lutheran schools) but also daily staff devotions, worship within staff retreats, classroom worship times, and sub-school or cluster worship. In calling school leaders to be architects of catholic culture, Cook places *Connect to Gospel and Religious Mission* as central (1998). The current research has shown that missional leaders in Lutheran schools connect to the Gospel and the mission of the school by placing worship (Christ) as central. The interview data showed that most pastors were involved in staff devotions and all pastors and principals led whole school worship regularly. They enjoyed and valued the attendance of parents and friends of the school at weekly Chapel services. Marks (2000) speaks of the role of worship as celebration in Lutheran schools and this was evident in the interview data by the enthusiasm and joy that was conveyed on the topic of worship. Pastors and principals were active in promoting worship and gave priority to worship in time and resourcing. The principals and pastors placed worship at the centre of the life of the school and its community.

The principals and pastors contributed to the mission by prioritising the spiritual dimension of the school. They perceived their professional practice as grounded in their beliefs and values, which supported Albinger's (2002) call for leaders in Lutheran schools to reflect regularly on values and beliefs. They saw themselves as spiritual leaders of their school and community (see Table 5.25 *Spiritual Leadership Terminology* and Appendix F:

Survey Descriptions of Principal As Spiritual Head). They reflected on their spiritual leadership practice and strived to nurture the spirituality of others in meaningful ways. This supports the recommendations from Hughes' research which calls for "a more deliberate formation of pathways so that the exploration of faith can be developed in meaningful steps" (2007, p. 197).

Spiritual leadership is described as leadership that develops a community of life and worship (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005a). A number of commentators in educational leadership have highlighted the spiritual dimension of leadership in schools (Bartsch, 2006; Grieger, 2010a; Houston et al., 2008) and the current research provides evidence of how Lutheran pastors and principals value their spiritual leadership. The interview data indicated that the principals and pastors perceived their spiritual leadership as more than developing a worshipping community. They perceived that their leadership had a spiritual oversight dimension that was shaped by their faith. A study of leadership practice in faith-based schools found that "perspectives on leadership are ultimately shaped by the leaders' personal philosophy or spirituality and are enhanced by the ethos of the school's affiliated faith" (Striepe et al., 2014, p. 90). The current research contributes evidence that Lutheran pastors and principals valued and prioritised their role as spiritual leaders in their school and community. The rhetoric of Christ-centred education was a perceived reality in the descriptions of spiritual leadership actions and activities from the principals and the pastors (see Appendix F: *Survey Descriptions of Principal As Spiritual Head*).

The principals and pastors reported on the centrality of worship and prioritised time and resources for the school's worship and devotional activities. They were concerned for the spiritual development of school staff and prioritised staff retreats, devotional life, prayer and pastoral support. They acknowledged their own spiritual journeys and prioritised personal

nurturing in the faith so that they were able to nurture the faith of others. Grieger (2010a) advocates that school leaders endeavour to take time out for personal spiritual renewal. Principals and pastors in the current research valued the practice of personal spiritual renewal. This was evidenced by their reporting of personal devotional time, incorporating prayer and reflection time into their schedules and attendance at, and advocacy for, spiritual retreats. They demonstrated an attitude of service in their leadership. This was shown through the prioritising of their workload and their encouragement, support, and availability for the activities which furthered the mission of the school. They saw themselves as active in carrying out the church's mission to the Australian community where "each school will carry out its educational charter to the best of its ability" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2006b, p. 1) and viewed their spiritual leadership as contributing to the mission of the school community.

The principals contributed to the mission by involving themselves across the school community, and by their spiritual oversight of the school. The majority of principals and pastors regarded the principal as having an oversight role as the spiritual head of the school (see the instances of the code category "oversee" in Appendix F). They contributed to the partnership between the church and school in their individual settings through involvement, encouragement, promotion, regular communication, worship and prayer. The descriptions of their actions and activities in the wider school and church community, showed that the principals prioritised activities that advanced the school and church as one community. They saw themselves as school community leaders. The interview data showed that the principals also prioritised their involvement in the church community. They viewed their involvement in the local congregation as helping to unite the church/school community and contributing to the school's mission in terms of reaching out with the Gospel.

The principals identified their spiritual leadership actions as leading bible studies, prayer and worship, promoting a worshipping culture and nurturing staff spiritual development (see section 5.10.1 *Principal perceptions regarding their contributions to the mission*). These aspects of spiritual leadership were complementary to the interviewees' responses (see section 5.5.1 for interview data on principal perceptions of their leadership contributions). The interview data showed that the principals welcomed their spiritual leadership role and saw this role primarily as spiritual oversight. The principals in the current research were active across the school community and provided spiritual oversight of the community.

In comparing the survey and interview data, there were a number of instances where the surveyed principals recorded complaints and local concerns regarding the pastor (see the comments in regards to local difficulties in Chapter 5.10). The small number of these comments suggested that in the majority of cases the principal and pastor were working well together and generally understood their respective roles in the school.

Pastors contributed to the mission by involving themselves across the school and church community, and by serving the school (see section 5.10.2 *Pastor perceptions regarding their contributions to the mission).* They reported on the importance of active involvement, regular worship, focussed communication and shared vision. The pastors saw themselves as leaders in the school community, though many emphasised that this leadership was by invitation from the principal rather than imposed on the school. As Hebart (2009) suggested, the pastors were most reluctant to use their position to impose on the school community but rather came to the school with an attitude of service. The pastors highly valued their spiritual leadership role and welcomed the part they played in the school. Assisting the principal and praying for the school were important emphases. The pastors in

the current research demonstrated an attitude of service to the school and involved themselves across the school and church community.

6.9 Theory Generation

The current research was based on the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism. The foundation or tenets of symbolic interactionism are described as: humans act towards things on the basis of the meanings they hold for the individual; the meaning of things is derived from, or arises out of, social interaction with others; meanings are modified through an interpretive process used by individuals as they interact with each other and the phenomenon (Reynolds & Herman-Kinney, 2003). Symbolic interactionism informed the theory generation process as the theory arose from the actions of principals and pastors towards the mission of their school, the interactions of principals and pastors with each other and with the community, and the meaning that the principals and pastors ascribed to their actions.

A constructivist grounded theory methodology was drawn upon to categorise the data. The methodology enabled theory to be emerge from the data. The constructivist approach focuses on "subjective meanings by participants, explicit researcher values and beliefs, and suggestive or tentative conclusions" (Creswell, 2008, p. 454). Unstructured interviews were conducted to ensure that the pastors and principals set the direction of the interviews and shared their perceptions about their contributions to the mission of their school without the imposition of the researcher's agenda, though the researcher's values and beliefs are implicit in the discussion of the findings. Coding of the interview data led to the generation of themes and the development of a tentative theoretical framework. The emerging themes were presented to all Lutheran Primary School principals and their local congregational Pastor for

further clarification and verification through an electronic survey. A summary of the contributions of principals and pastors in terms of the mission of the school is provided in Table 6.2. The statements form a proposed theory, which has emerged from analysis of the findings, on what constitutes principals' and pastors' contributions to the mission of the school. They portray a set of characteristics of missional leaders in Lutheran schools. The term "missional leaders" is a new construct to Lutheran schools leaders. The church's mission task "is to preach God's word to all people everywhere, to administer the sacraments, to nurture the faith, to help the needy, and to reach out to the unbelievers and to those who have not heard the call of the gospel" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001c, p. 2). Missional leadership expresses the missional attributes or characteristics of the pastors and principals which emerged from the interview data. The interview participants were purposefully sampled to represent leaders who demonstrate a positive working relationship; are perceived to contribute to the growth of the congregation attached to a school; and contribute to innovative practices that exist in the school and congregation. They were sampled to represent leaders who were in tune with the mission of the school as an agency of the Lutheran Church of Australia. The characteristics of missional principals and pastors (see Table 6.2) have emerged from the categories and themes of the interview data and have been validated through the survey data sent to all Lutheran primary principals and their local pastor.

Table 6.2. Characteristics of Missional Principals and Pastors

Table 6.2

Towards a Theory: Characteristics of Missional Principals and Pastors in Lutheran Primary Schools

Lutheran primary principals and pastors:
○ read the culture of the school community, enhance its positive elements and meet needs within the community.
○ understand and articulate the mission of their school and Lutheran education. They view the mission as witnessing the faith.
○ understand the distinction between the reason for the existence of Lutheran schools and the mission. They view the purpose of Lutheran education is to prepare students for life in vocation.
○ perceive the mission, and their role in the mission, as a calling and are committed to their school and to Lutheran education.
○ work together collaboratively to promote and enhance the mission.
○ unite the community in and for mission.
○ are active in both congregation and school, and value each other's distinctive contributions to the mission.
○ develop, value and invest in relationships to benefit the mission.
○ value students and their families as mission contributors and beneficiaries.
○ focus on promoting and resourcing a caring community.
○ focus on developing, nurturing and valuing staff for the benefit of the mission.
○ serve the school as missional leaders.
○ place Christ at the centre of the life of the school community.
○ are spiritual leaders of the school community.

The contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of their schools was conceptualised according to eight categories. The categories - witness, vocation, calling,

unity, relationships, care, service and Christ-centredness (refer to chapter sections in Table 6.1) - formed the structure of this chapter and are the elements of the theory as illustrated in the visual representation below (see Figure 6.1). The image of *Luther's Rose* has been used to convey the essential elements that principals and pastors bring to the mission of the school. Missional principals and pastors ensure the school is Christ-centred, as depicted by the cross of Christ, and that Christ is at the heart of the school community (Schumacher, 2014; Wegener, 2006). This Christ-centredness impacts and radiates from the school's core to all elements of the school community. Principals and pastors enhance, promote and strive to build a unified community as shown through the gold ring that envelopes the rose. Gold, a precious metal, represents the preciousness of a united community under Christ. Principals and pastors build and enhance a culture of care, and bring an attitude of service to their leadership. They perceive their leadership role as a calling and having a deep moral purpose. They value relationships - with staff, students and families - for the benefit of the mission of the school. Their actions and activities aim to ensure that the school is a witness for Christ to the community. Caring, serving, viewing their role as calling, valuing relationships, and witnessing are the petals of the rose. These elements sit under the principals' and pastors' view of Lutheran education as vocation, that is principals and pastors view their actions and the actions of others around them as participating in God's continuous creative work in the world.

Figure 6.1. Visual Representation of the Characteristics of Missional Principals and Pastors

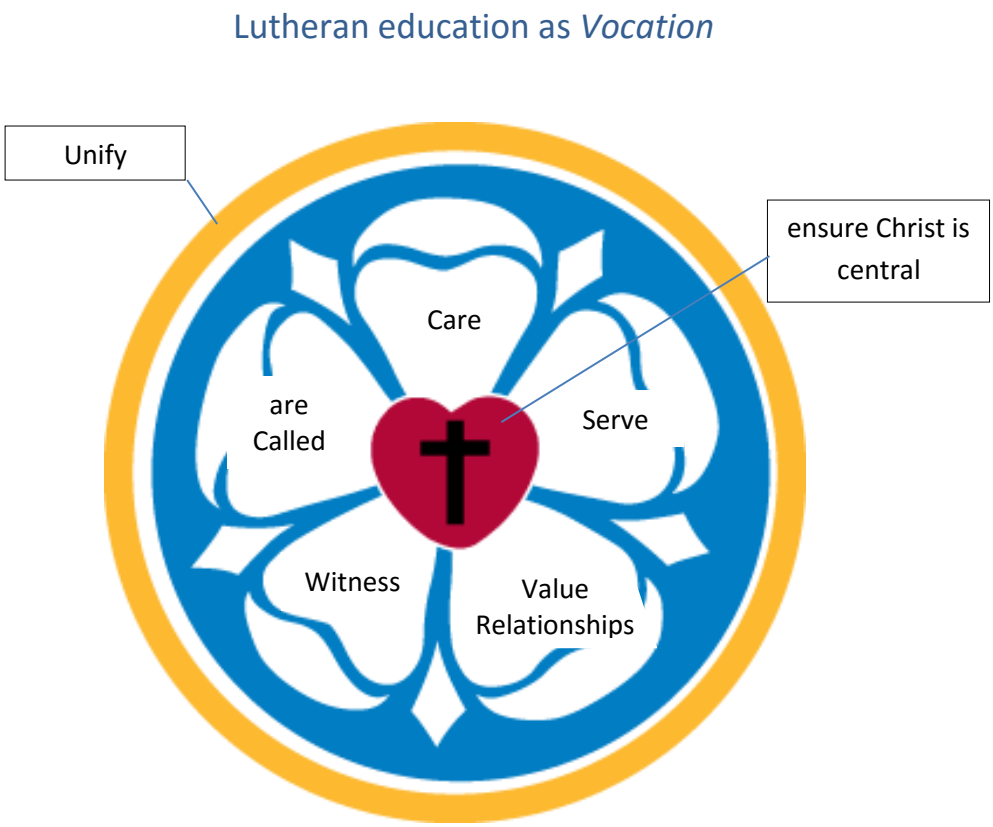


Figure 6.1. Elements that principals and pastors bring to the mission of the Lutheran primary school.

6.10 Characteristics of Missional Leaders

The focus of this research is on the ways principals and pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools. In exploring their particular contributions, a set of characteristics of these missional leaders has emerged. A self-reflection tool has been developed (see Appendix G: *Self-reflection Tool*) which may assist leaders to reflect on their values, beliefs and local circumstances. The elements within the self-reflection tool are merely a suggested list. They provide a means for reflection that explores leadership

characteristics relating to the mission of the school. The tool is not a checklist where individuals can mark their competencies. Rather, the statements are intentionally open-ended and the concepts recurring. This enables leaders to reflect deeply on missional characteristics and explore the dimensions of their missional leadership.

6.11 Conclusion

In this chapter the findings from the six interviews and the survey have been discussed to explore the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools. Theory, arising from the findings, and a visual representation of the theory, have been proposed, and a self-evaluation tool for missional school leadership has been developed. In Chapter Seven areas suggested for further research are elaborated on and recommendations are made. These recommendations are particularly relevant to the Lutheran Church of Australia, to Lutheran Education Australia, to those involved in pre-service and in-service training, to the education and pastoral professions, and also to principals and pastors who strive to be missional leaders in their school community.

Chapter Seven – Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of the current research was to explore the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools. In this chapter a summary of the research is provided and recommendations made. A synopsis of the context, purpose and design of the research, as well as the findings in relation to the research questions, are presented in Section 7.1. In Section 7.2 recommendations are made that are designed to assist school and congregational leaders to respond *hand-in-hand* to mission opportunities in schools (see Appendix D*: LCA Synodical Resolution July 2000*). In Section 7.3 areas for further research are suggested.

7.1 Overview

In Chapter One of this research the researcher's position within the context of the research problem was explained. The problem was that many school and congregational leaders do not appear to know how best to respond to the mission opportunities that are present in schools. This research sought to reveal the contributions of principals and pastors as they enacted the mission of Lutheran primary schools. The research responds to the LCA Synodical Resolution (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2000b, p. 1) which encourages congregations and schools to respond to mission opportunities in schools. The research attempted to answer the question: "How can the LCA best respond to the mission opportunities that are present in schools (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2000b, p. 1)?" The researcher's motivation behind this research lay in exploring the potential of the vision expressed above and the desire to see the enacting of the vision in practical ways in local

contexts. In Chapter One the researcher was placed within the research problem and acknowledged as a research participant.

In Chapter Two the research problem was defined. This chapter positioned the research problem within the context of the Lutheran school and its place as an agency of the Lutheran Church of Australia. The research problem was also explored within the context of Lutheran schools as faith communities. Possible barriers from school community to church community were suggested. In the chapter the overarching research questions were posed:

How do principals contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?

How do pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?

In Chapter Two the research problem was positioned within the Lutheran primary school setting.

In Chapter Three selected scholarly literature on the nexus between leadership, values and culture was reviewed. This included literature on school leadership preparation, approaches, dimensions, and challenges, focusing on community and spiritual leadership. The literature on school values was explored in terms of Lutheran schools as places that are informed by Lutheran theology and as places of nurture, mission, service and vocation. Nurture, mission, service and vocation were the prevailing metaphors arising from the literature on Australian Lutheran education (see sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3 for a discussion on these values). The literature on school culture was discussed with a focus on schools as spiritual, worshipping and caring communities. In reviewing the scholarly literature on leadership, values and culture, the significance of the research questions was shown and the original contribution of the thesis was evidenced.

The research was positioned within a social constructionist epistemology as explained in Chapter Four. An interpretivist research paradigm was used to explore the contributions of

the principals and pastors and, using a constructivist grounded theory methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), themes were generated and a theoretical framework was developed. Unstructured interviews were conducted at six purposefully sampled sites across the three Lutheran Education regions. Finally, through an electronic survey, the emerging themes were presented to all Lutheran primary school principals and their local congregational pastor for further clarification and verification. In Chapter Four the research design was justified.

In Chapter Five the interview and survey data was presented and analysed, and the findings were offered. Table 7.1 below presents the synthesised findings in relation to the research questions. Finally, in Chapter Six, the findings were discussed within the categories of witness, vocation, calling, unity, relationships, care, service and Christ-centredness. The categories – witness, vocation, calling, unity, relationships, care, service and Christ-centredness – emerged from the data as the distinctive themes of the research. In Chapters Five and Six the research data was presented and analysed, and discussed.

Table 7.1. Synthesised Findings

Table 7.1

Synthesised Findings Arising From the Data

Research questions	Findings
How do **principals and pastors perceive the mission** of the Lutheran primary school?	They perceived the mission: as witness and perceived the purpose of Lutheran education in terms of vocation as a calling
How do **principals and pastors perceive each other's contribution** to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?	They perceived each other's contribution: as uniting the community
To what extent do **principals and pastors promote the mission** of the primary school community?	They promoted the mission by: valuing relationships valuing the culture of care
*How do **principals and pastors contribute to the mission** of Lutheran primary schools?*	They contributed to the mission by: leading with an attitude of service prioritising the spiritual dimension

7.2 Recommendations

In the current research characteristics of missional principals and pastors were proposed. Below, recommendations have been suggested which may assist leaders to contribute to missional leadership in their school. The need for pre-service preparation and ongoing in-service training for pastors whose ministry includes a Lutheran school and for

principals has been highlighted, and recommendations for training are offered. A lacuna was shown to exist between some pastors' understanding and acceptance of the spiritual headship of the principal, and the principals' understanding and acceptance. This highlighted the need for preparation and training where the notion of spiritual headship could be explored. The need for specific and ongoing spiritual formation, and further exploration of the characteristics of missional leaders is highlighted and, again, some recommendations are made.

7.2.1 Contributing to the mission of the school.

Missional principals and pastors in Lutheran schools viewed Lutheran education as preparing students for life in vocation. They aimed to ensure that the core of the community was Christ-centred (see section 3.5.3 for an explanation of Christ-centredness). They endeavoured to unite the community by valuing relationships for the mission of the school. The principals and pastors prioritised service, care and witnessing to the school community and endeavoured to ensure that service, care and a Christian witness are hallmarks of their school community. They viewed their role as a calling and perceived that reflection on personal values, and on the values of the school, is important (Begley, 2001). A self-reflection tool was developed based on the emergent characteristics of missional leaders (see Appendix G: *Self-reflection Tool*) which may assist leaders to reflect on their individual characteristics and local circumstances. Leaders of faith-based schools, who perceive the mission of their school as a witness to the grace of God, are encouraged to reflect on their leadership and explore the dimensions of missional leadership.

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that structures be put in place to enable principals and pastors to regularly reflect on the mission of their school, and their contributions to the mission. In considering how they promote and enhance the mission of their school, principals and pastors may reflect on their contributions by considering dimensions of missional leadership as articulated in the Self-reflection Tool (see Appendix G).

The principals and pastors who participated in the interviews articulated some common actions in regard to the mission of their school. They perceived that these actions promoted and enhanced the witness of the school to the saving grace of God (that is, the witness of the school to the core doctrine of the Lutheran Church) for the students, staff and parents. These included prioritising regular meeting times (weekly or fortnightly) between principal and pastor, working with staff and parents in activities that contributed to the caring culture of the school, and articulating a vision for the mission of the school. These actions also included ensuring that the spiritual dimensions of the school – worship, pastoral care – were positioned at the core of the community, and they involved themselves in both school and congregational settings. However, the survey data indicated that the relationship between church and school leadership was not always positive. Research from the Lutheran Schools Association found that while Lutheran schools and congregations generally reflected healthy relationships, communication between congregation and school needed improving and congregation leaders were not confident of congregational hospitality to unchurched families from the school (Obst, 2004, September). The following recommendation suggests that leaders of faith-based schools consider adopting the following actions for the benefit of the mission of their schools.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended that principals and pastors ensure that the witness of the school remains at the forefront of their consciousness. In considering their actions to promote and enhance the Christian witness of the school, it is further suggested that leaders:

meet regularly to discuss the mission of the school and develop and promote a common vision for the mission;

collaborate with staff and parents in furthering the mission;

prioritise spiritual leadership of the community; and

involve themselves across the school and local faith community.

7.2.2 In-service training of principals and pastors.

The need for in-service training for principals and for pastors who minister in a school was evidenced in the current research. While the principals and pastors agreed that the leadership of both pastor and principal is extremely important in furthering the mission of the school (see Chapter 5.5. and 5.10 *Contributions to the Mission*) a majority of principals and pastors perceived that they had received little or no preparation for school leadership. Some indicated that the preparation they had received did not reflect the demands placed on them today as leaders of the school community. Issues uncovered in the research were a lack of a common vision held by some principals and pastors regarding the mission of the school, differences in perceptions regarding principals' and pastors' ministry for the benefit of the mission of the school, and differing perceptions of the pastor's fit within the school. Addressing these issues requires open dialogue between principals and school pastors. It also calls for leaders to continuously reflect on their practice and encourage reflection in others

(Blase & Blase, 2004). Discussion could explore what working together for the mission of the school means, and how bridges can be built locally between school and church communities. It is recommended that, through intentional dialogue, the congregation's ministry to the school and the school's ministry to the congregation is explored. Other areas for focus are possible barriers between school and church communities and ways to reduce these barriers and bridge the communities.

Recommendation 3: It is recommended that the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) district offices and Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) regional offices prioritise facilitating regular principal/pastor seminars where reflection and dialogue can occur on issues such as mission of the school, ministry roles, school/church community leadership and leadership of the pastor within the school. The aim of such seminars would be to build bridges, and remove barriers, between the school community and community of the local congregation or faith community.

7.2.3 Pre-service preparation and in-service training of pastors.

Lutheran Education Australia recognises the importance of principal preparation as demonstrated by the development and offering of the *Leadership Development Program* (the sixth iteration of the Leadership Development Program began in 2016). However pastors viewed that insufficient preparation for school ministry was received from the pre-service pastoral theology program offered at Australian Lutheran College and no coordinated training or formation was available for pastors upon entering ministry that included a school. Duignan called for leadership formation programs which challenge principals "to make judgements

about significance... when faced with dilemmas and paradoxes that have ethical and moral implications" (Duignan, 2002, pp. 172-173). This current research indicates that formation in leadership be provided to the pastor. The current minimal pastor pre-service preparation and ongoing support for school ministry requires addressing by Australian Lutheran College, the College of Bishops and Lutheran Education Australia. The need for professional development of pastors in the area of school ministry supports the resolution of the 2009 General Convention of Synod of the Lutheran Church of Australia which encouraged the College of Bishops to create "programs of professional development for pastors" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2009b, p. 20). This is clearly still an issue. Suitability of pastoral candidates for school ministry, irrespective of training, is also a consideration. Therefore the following recommendations are made:

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the LCA - through the College of Bishops and Australian Lutheran College – develop a criterion for identifying suitable pastoral candidates for school ministry roles and provide intentional pre-service training for school ministry with input from serving principals and school pastors.

Recommendation 5: It is also recommended that the College of Bishops, together with LEA and Australian Lutheran College, develop a program for school pastor preparation and support. The pre-service component of the program would aim to provide graduate pastors with knowledge and skills to minister within the school setting. The in-service training component would aim to support pastors transitioning from congregational ministry to school, or school and congregational, ministry. Additionally such a program would aim to provide pastors with leadership training to equip them to serve in the school under the

oversight of the principal. The in-service component may benefit from the learnings gained through the development of Lutheran Education Australia's *Leadership Development Program* for aspiring principals and leaders.

7.2.4 In-service training for leadership.

The current research suggests that the principals conceptualised their motivation for leadership as emerging from their faith. The principals articulated that their leadership practices flowed from their vocation, that is, from the view of their distinct *calling* from God. *Calling* in this context aligns with Veith's view of vocation and calling (1999). The faith position of school leaders, and its importance in fulfilling the mission of the school, has been recognised by Lutheran education in its *Staffing Policy for Lutheran Schools* (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2006c). Concern has been expressed, however, that the increased complexity of principalship (Dempster et al., 2004) and the difficulty of attracting suitable leaders for principal positions (Cranston & Ehrich, 2009) is resulting in a diminishing pool of suitable aspirant leaders (Neidhart & Lamb, 2013). To ensure a training pathway for teachers and leaders, Lutheran Education Australia has developed accreditation procedures (Lutheran Education Australia, 2009) which set guidelines and standards for accreditation for teachers, for Christian studies teachers and for leaders. The current research supports a rigorous training pathway to assist Lutheran education in its provision of leaders. The following recommendation urges in-service training for staff in faith-based schools that develops understanding of the values and beliefs that underpin leadership actions and engages in the dialogue between education and theology.

Recommendation 6: It is recommended that Lutheran Education Australia review the standards for the training of Christian Studies teachers and for leaders. The redeveloped standards should be oriented towards enabling participants to explore motivations/personal values and the dialogue between education and theology. The training would assist participants to embed reflective practice and ongoing dialogue between theology and education into their leadership action.

7.2.5 Dialogue on spiritual headship and spiritual leadership.

The spiritual headship of the principal and the spiritual leadership of the pastor and principal are areas that require further exploration for both pastors and principals in Lutheran schools. There has been a call for a paradigm shift in regard to leadership's view of contemporary spirituality in schools (Rossiter, 2010). Research on Christian Parent Controlled Schools in Australia recommended that principals are given appropriate professional development that prioritises spiritual leadership in a schooling context (Justins, 2002). The current research has shown that this priority is also needed in the Lutheran primary school context. The principals valued their role as spiritual heads of their schools and were able to articulate their actions as spiritual leaders. While the pastors generally reported their acceptance of the principal as the spiritual head of the school, a minority of pastoral participants felt that the notion of spiritual headship required exploration, particularly in regard to their supporting role. Furthermore some principals perceived that the pastors' spiritual leadership required clarification. Further exploration is needed by Lutheran Education Australia to define spiritual headship, explore spiritual leadership dimensions and facilitate a collaborative process for visioning spiritual leadership as shared ministry.

Recommendation 7: It is recommended that LEA, in consultation with the LCA, develop a program to provide opportunities for dialogue on the spiritual headship of the principal and the spiritual leadership role of the pastor. It is further recommended that a discussion paper is developed to assist future pastors and principals to define and enact their spiritual leadership roles within the school. The dialogue and discussion paper would assist in defining ministry and spiritual leadership roles and in the provision of missional leadership.

7.2.6 Provision of spiritual formation opportunities for leaders.

The need for ongoing spiritual formation of principals and pastors for their mission roles in the school was highlighted. The majority of pastors and principals were negative about the preparation and training they received for their spiritual leadership role which highlighted the need for ongoing spiritual formation as a focus of in-service training. This supports Grieger's (2010b) contention that the spiritual leader needs to ensure that they take time out for personal spiritual renewal; connect the school meaningfully with the church and Lutheran heritage; look to and lean on the Gospel; and build a Christian community. Lutheran education regional offices provide opportunities for spiritual retreats and other formation activities for principals and teachers. This offering of opportunities for spiritual formation could be extended beyond education staff. Targeted and repeated opportunities provided for pastors, principals and other school leaders would help to connect and renew them spiritually and assist them to "stay close" to the Gospel (McCutcheon, 2008, October). An important aspect of formation, for principals and pastors new to their roles, is mentoring. The interviewed pastors indicated their appreciation of the informal mentoring that was provided by the principal in their setting. The interviewed principals and pastors suggested that an intentional mentoring program would be beneficial to colleagues that were new to

their leadership roles. The current research indicated that mentoring - in the area of spiritual and community leadership, and in collaborative practices that lead to a common vision for mission - is vital for the development of missional leaders. Provision of a mentoring program coordinated by district and regional offices would encourage pastors and principals to connect meaningfully to enhance their shared leadership.

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that the LCA district offices and LEA regional offices provide opportunities for spiritual formation of principals, school pastors and other key missional leaders in order to connect the leaders, offer them opportunities for spiritual renewal and prepare them to serve their communities. The provision of spiritual formation opportunities for all in leadership prioritises personal spiritual renewal, creates connections and develops missional leaders who are prepared for service.

Recommendation 9: It is also recommended that the district and regional offices collaborate to establish a program of intentional mentoring for new school pastors, principals and other key leaders to assist them to define and promote a common vision for the mission of their school, and a shared understanding of their roles in contributing to the mission.

7.2.7 Exploring missional leadership in faith-based schools.

Varied views on the mission of the local school and of Lutheran education, as well the need for further exploration of missional leadership, have led to the recommendation below. A lacuna was identified between the interviewed pastors and principals - who articulated the

purpose of their school and Lutheran education and expressed a common vision for the mission of their school – and the surveyed pastors and principals. This gap highlights the need for dialogue. The current research also revealed that local difficulties between pastor and principal meant that the partnership between the congregation and the school was impacted. Opportunities for further dialogue facilitated by district and regional offices - with a focus on the practicalities of mission and missional leadership in the local setting – would help pastors, principals and other stakeholders to develop a common vision for mission in schools. Exploration of the notion of missional leadership would assist leaders in faith-based schools to build bridges from the school community to the local church and the wider community. Principals and pastors would benefit from the development of a missional leadership Charter. A Charter could assist leaders and aspiring leaders in the development of the skills and

Recommendation 10: It is recommended that regular opportunities for local dialogues be facilitated by regional and district offices to encourage pastors, principals and key stakeholders to explore the characteristics of missional leadership. These dialogues would aim to assist schools and congregations to walk *hand in hand* in mission and ministry (see Appendix D). The dialogue could lead to the development of a missional leadership Charter. The Charter would serve to assist leaders, and aspiring leaders, develop the skills and confidence to enact their missional leadership role.

7.3 Recommendations for Further Research

In this section recommendations are made for further research. These recommendations emerged from the varied perceptions of the principal and pastor cohorts, and the divergences between the interview and survey data, which were discussed in Chapter 6. Suggestions are also made for further research in secondary school settings where principals and pastors may hold different perceptions about spiritual headship, and possibly demonstrate different leadership actions, from their primary school counterparts.

The principals and pastors perceived the mission of the Lutheran school as part of the broader reason for the existence, or purpose, of Lutheran schools. Principals and pastors agreed that the purpose of Lutheran education was to prepare students for their vocation and for life. This was the primary emphasis. There were, however, divergent views about the secondary explanations given as to the purpose of Lutheran education. The principals perceived that a secondary reason for the purpose of Lutheran schools was evangelism. They viewed that, beyond the primary emphasis of vocation, Lutheran schools are to reach out to those that don't know Jesus as their Saviour. In contrast, the pastors perceived that the secondary reason for the purpose of Lutheran schools was nurture. They believed that, beyond the primary emphasis of vocation, Lutheran schools are to nurture the students and their families. It is recommended that further research explores the variance in views on the purpose or reason for existence of Lutheran schools. Greater clarity in this area is important as agreement on the purpose of Lutheran education provides a framework and starting point for policies and documentation.

The person-environment fit of the pastor in the Lutheran school was explored in the current research. The data from the interviews suggested a high level of acceptance of the

pastor's fit in the school. The principals rated highly the fit of the pastor in the school, and the pastors indicated that they were comfortable in the school setting. The data from the survey, however, showed a broad range of responses to the question on "the extent to which the pastor fits into the school in your setting" (see Appendix E: Survey Questions). The issue of person-environment fit, and the related notion of role clarity, has been discussed in Chapter 6 (see 6.4 *Unity*). Further research is recommended to ascertain the skills and training required for pastors who work within the school setting. Research in this area could explore: the elements and skill development of pastoral ministry training with a focus on collaboration and distributed leadership; the characteristics of pastoral ministry in the school setting; and the preparedness of pastors to work within the structure of the school environment.

The current research revealed a high level of acceptance of the principal as the spiritual head. As discussed in Chapter 6 (see 6.8 *Christ-centredness*) the data suggested that the principals and pastors prioritised their spiritual leadership actions, and valued their personal spiritual formation and the spiritual formation of others. The principals were comfortable with the notion of their spiritual headship and readily articulated the practical application of spiritual headship in the day to day running of the school. The pastors were generally comfortable with the notion of the spiritual headship of the principal, though there was a spread of responses indicating that a minority were neutral or uncomfortable with the notion (see Table 5.20. *Pastor Comfort Level with the Notion of the Principal's Spiritual Headship*).

The current research was limited to school principals and their local supporting pastors and limited to exploration at six sites across Australia. The research was delimited to primary school settings as Lutheran primary schools do not generally employ the pastor (unlike Lutheran secondary schools and F-12 schools). The research was also delimited to

principal and pastor contributions to the mission of Lutheran primary schools, and delimited to the mission of the school in terms of its connection to the community and its spirituality. (See section 4.9 for a discussion on limitations and delimitations.) Further research is recommended to explore whether the high level of acceptance of spiritual headship would be supported in a cohort of Lutheran secondary principals, F-12 principals, and pastors employed as chaplains in schools. The notion of the spiritual headship of the principal is a relatively recent construct. Even as recently as the 2009 General Convention of Synod, the Lutheran Church of Australia could not reach agreement on this matter and "resolved that…motions be referred to General Church Council" (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2009b, p. 19). Subsequently the General Church Council acknowledged the principal as the spiritual head of the school. Research into attitudes and understandings of spiritual leadership and spiritual headship will help to assist leaders as they enact their spiritual leadership roles in Lutheran schools. Another important area for further research is the spiritual leadership actions of all principals and pastors involved in Lutheran schools. In developing pre-service and in-service training for school pastors and principals it will be beneficial to understand how principals of secondary schools and F-12 schools, and pastors employed by schools, enact their spiritual leadership.

7.4 Conclusion

In the current research the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools was explored. Principal and pastor perceptions of the purpose of Lutheran education - to prepare students for their vocation and for life – and their perceptions of the mission of Lutheran schools, was explored. They perceived the mission of the school

was to witness to the saving power of Christ. The actions of the principals and the pastors were discussed and characteristics of missional leadership were identified.

Recommendations were made to assist principals and pastors to enact the mission of their schools. Recommendations were also made to assist Lutheran Education Australia and its regional offices as they support schools in their mission and ministry. The Lutheran Church of Australia may also benefit from the recommendations for the training and support of school pastors. Recommendations have focussed on collaboration between District offices of the Lutheran Church and Lutheran school regional offices as they support both pastors and principals in the school setting, that is, as they *do* mission.

In the research principals' and pastors' contributions to the mission of Lutheran primary schools were identified and analysed. Principals and pastors both contributed in their role as school missional leaders; alongside staff as valued partners; by uniting the community for mission; and by prioritising the spiritual dimension of the school. The principals contributed by involving themselves across the school community, and by their spiritual oversight of the school. It showed that pastors contributed to the mission by involving themselves across the school and church community, and by serving the school. The investigation of contributions to mission provides insights into positive and exemplary school and church partnerships and suggests a framework for missional leadership highlighting the importance of the spiritual leadership of the principal and the pastor for the benefit of the school and church community. It is essential that leaders of faith-based schools and congregations are conscious of the need to be mission-focussed bridge builders, who together proactively build bridges between the school and the local faith community.

Appendices

A Ethics Approval

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Dr Helga Neidhart

Co-Investigators:

Student Researcher: : Tania Nelson

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
Building bridges: exploring the contributions of Principals and Pastors to the mission of Lutheran Primary Schools

for the period: 31/12/2013

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: 2012 291V

Special Condition/s of Approval

Prior to commencement of your research, the following permissions are required to be submitted to the ACU HREC:

The data collection of your project has received ethical clearance but the decision and authority to commence may be dependent on factors beyond the remit of the ethics review process and approval is subject to ratification at the next available Committee meeting. The Chief Investigator is responsible for ensuring that outstanding permission letters are obtained, interview/survey questions, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to ACU HREC before any data collection can occur. Failure to provide outstanding documents to the ACU HREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Further, this approval is only valid as long as approved procedures are followed.

Clinical Trials: You are required to register it in a publicly accessible trials registry prior to enrolment of the first participant (e.g. Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry http://www.anzctr.org.au/) as a condition of ethics approval.

It is the Principal Investigators / Supervisors responsibility to ensure that:

1. All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC with 72 hours.
2. Any changes to the protocol must be reviewed by the HREC by submitting a Modification/Change to Protocol Form prior to the research commencing or continuing. http://research.acu.edu.au/researcher- support/integrity-and-ethics/
3. Progress reports are to be submitted on an annual basis. http://research.acu.edu.au/researcher- support/integrity-and-ethics/
4. All research participants are to be provided with a Participant Information Letter and consent form, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee.
5. Protocols can be extended for a maximum of five (5) years after which a new application must be submitted. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

Researchers must immediately report to HREC any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol eg: changes to protocols or unforeseen circumstances or adverse effects on participants.



Signed: .... Date: .... 24/05/2016.....

(Research Services Officer, Australian Catholic University, Tel: 02 9739 2646)

B Participant Information Letter

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LETTER

PROJECT TITLE: Building Bridges: Exploring the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools
STUDENT RESEARCHER: Tania Nelson
STUDENT'S DEGREE: Doctor of Education

Dear [name],

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

What is the project about?
The research project explores the mission of the Lutheran primary school and the contributions of principals and pastors to that mission. It seeks to address the concern that students and families are not connecting with their local Lutheran congregation. The research asks:

How do principals contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?
How do pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?

Research in this area aims to investigate how principals and pastors perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school and their contributions to the mission of the school. It will endeavour to assist the Lutheran Church of Australia in advancing professional development programmes and initiatives for school leadership.

Who is undertaking the project?
This project is being conducted by Mrs Tania Nelson and will form the basis for the degree of Doctor of Education at Australian Catholic University under the supervision of Dr Helga Neidhart.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?
The researcher will ensure that the research participants and the school sites are respected and any risks are minimized by employing a number of protocols in regards to consent, confidentiality, and the collection and storage of data. The following protocols will be employed to protect the rights of the participants:

1. Appropriate permissions are received by the researcher before entering the school site.
2. Interview participants are given a written description of the research problem, purpose and questions, the processes involved in the data collection and what is expected of their involvement.
3. Interview participants are informed that they have the right to refuse participation at any time, and the right to withdraw from the process without penalty and without giving a reason for withdrawal.
4. Interview participants are asked to sign a consent form indicating that they received sufficient information prior to their participation.
5. Principals are requested to inform their staff of the presence of the researcher on the school site and the purpose of the research.

6. Interview participants receive a copy of the interview transcript and have the opportunity to add to, alter or withdraw any comments or statements, in part or in entirety.
7. Participants are not identified in the research writing by name and the site is not identified other than being a school of the Lutheran Church of Australia.
8. Interview participants are consulted throughout the data analysis process and may request a copy of the research findings prior to publication.
9. Survey participants are not identified by name or site.
10. Data is stored and secured according to the Australian Catholic University's guidelines.

The research study has been planned and conducted to avoid ethical dilemmas.

What will I be asked to do?

The researcher will conduct an unstructured interview at the school site with the principal and pastor both present. An audio of the interview will be recorded and the interview transcript will be presented to the participants who have the opportunity to add to, alter or withdraw any comments or statements.

The research questions and the guiding questions will form the basis of the interview. These questions are:

How do principals contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?
How do pastors contribute to the mission of Lutheran primary schools?

Guiding Questions:

- How do principals perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school?
- How do pastors perceive the mission of the Lutheran primary school?
- To what extent do pastors promote the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?
- How do principals perceive the pastor's contribution to the mission of the local Lutheran primary school?
- To what extent do principals promote the mission of the primary school community?
- How do pastors perceive the principal's contribution to the mission of the primary school community?

After the researcher has visited six school sites (two in each of the Lutheran Education regions) an electronic survey will be sent to all Lutheran primary principals and their local Lutheran pastor. The survey questions will build upon the findings from the interview data.

How much time will the project take?

The researcher will visit the school site over two consecutive days. The interview will be scheduled on the first day of the visit and will take approximately 90 minutes. The researcher, in her time at the school, will transcribe the interview. She will request to view various publically available schools documents which may include the school prospectus, any school publications (Yearbook/magazine), publicity brochures, and the website. The researcher will also request to participate in the life of the school in her visit, which may include attending Worship, visiting classrooms and spending break times in the staff room and in the school yard. The researcher's observations and viewing of documents add to the interview data ensuring that the uniqueness of the school, and the principal and pastor participants, is understood.

What are the benefits of the research project?

The research may lead to discussion on the role of the Lutheran Pastor in regards to his relationship to and responsibilities for the Lutheran school within his community. The research also may lead to the development of professional learning opportunities for school leadership and pastors. It is important that leaders and future leaders of schools and congregations have an understanding of the

role of the Lutheran school as it relates to the Lutheran church, and the role of the church as it relates to the school in its midst.

Can I withdraw from the study?
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are not under any obligation to participate. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time without adverse consequences.

Will anyone else know the results of the project?
The study will be published as a doctoral thesis and will be available through the Australian Catholic University Library and the Australian Lutheran College Library. The interview participants will receive a copy of the thesis.

The data from school observations, the viewing of documents and the interviews will be non-identifiable other than originating from participants and primary schools of the Lutheran Church of Australia. Names of interviews participants will be removed by the researcher and the participants will be identified by the title Pastor A, Principal A, Pastor B etc. The data will be only used to form the basis of the researcher's writing on the contributions of pastors and principals to the mission of Lutheran primary schools and will not be reproduced. The data will stored securely by the researcher.

The results from the study may be summarised and appear in publications or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify the participants in any way.

Will I be able to find out the results of the project?
The participants can communicate with the researcher throughout the research project and the participants will receive a copy of the thesis.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?
You can contact Tania Nelson on her mobile [mobile no.] or during works hours on [work no.].

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?
The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University (approval number 2012 291V). If you have any complaints or concerns about the conduct of the project, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

Chair, HREC
c/o Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)
Australian Catholic University
Melbourne Campus
Locked Bag 4115
FITZROY, VIC, 3065
Ph: 03 9953 3150
Fax: 03 9953 3315
Email: res.ethics@acu.edu.au

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

I want to participate! How do I sign up?
Simply fill out both copies of the consent form, retain one copy for yourself, and send the researcher's copy to:

Tania Nelson
C/O Australian Lutheran College
104 Jeffcott Street
North Adelaide
SA 5006

Yours sincerely,

Tania Nelson

C Participant Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Copy for Researcher / Copy for Participant to Keep

TITLE OF PROJECT: **Building bridges: Exploring the contributions of principals and pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools**

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER: **Tania Nelson**

I ..... *(the participant)* have read and understood the information provided in the Participant Information Letter. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the audio taped interview and to allow the researcher to be on the school site for a period of two school days, realising that I can withdraw my consent at any time without adverse consequences. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT .....

SIGNATURE ..... DATE .....

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER .....

DATE ……

D LCA Synodical Resolution July 2000

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

GENERAL SYNOD

JULY 2000

HAND-IN-HAND – SCHOOLS AND MISSION VISION STATEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED that the following Vision Statement be adopted.

The mission of the LCA is to share the love of God in Christ with the world. Lutheran schools provide the church with many opportunities to make contact with the people of local communities and to respond to their physical and spiritual need, and so to both demonstrate and declare the gracious love of God. Congregations and schools are encouraged to be more intentional, diligent, sensitive and flexible in responding to these mission opportunities.

Reasons for the proposal

There have been ongoing discussions between College of Presidents, school directors and principals, mission directors, and others during this synodical year in relation to the emerging role of the LCA's schools in its mission. How can the LCA best respond to the mission opportunities that are present in schools? This proposal represents agreement on the desire and need to be intentional and then to seek ways for effective response.

E Survey Questions

Exploring the contributions of Pastors and Principals to the mission of Lutheran Primary Schools

1. Please indicate your role in a Lutheran school:
   - ☐ Pastor
   - ☐ Principal

2. From the list below please select the **two** options that best describe your school culture.

- ☐ Strong sense of history
- ☐ Creative and innovative
- ☐ Leaders in quality education
- ☐ Caring community
- ☐ Multicultural
- ☐ Other (please specify)

3. From the list below please select the **two** options that best indicate how <u>you</u> grow and enhance your school culture.

- ☐ Targeted communication
- ☐ Community programs and activities
- ☐ Worship opportunities
- ☐ Active pastoral support
- ☐ Rituals and traditions
- ☐ Involvement in the community outside the school
- ☐ Modelling the faith
- ☐ Building relationships with students and their families
- ☐ Targeted staff recruitment and professional development
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4. From the list below please select the **two** options that best indicate how <u>you</u> grow and enhance the partnership between your school and church.

- ☐ Joint fellowship/community programs
- ☐ Promotion of programs/activities to church and school
- ☐ Shared Worship opportunities
- ☐ Pastor is active in both settings
- ☐ Principal is active in both settings
- ☐ Build relationships across school and church
- ☐ Other (please specify)

5. Please explain how you contribute to the partnership between church and school in your setting.

6. On a scale of 1 – 5 please indicate how you perceive the working relationship between the church and the school in your setting.

No relationship	Limited relationship	Neutral relationship	Good relationship	Excellent relationship
1	2	3	4	5

7. On a scale of 1 – 5 please indicate how you perceive the professional relationship between Pastor and the Principal in your setting.

No relationship	Limited relationship	Neutral relationship	Good relationship	Excellent relationship
1	2	3	4	5

8. Please comment on the significance of the principal/pastor relationship in terms of growing and enhancing the school community.

9. From the list below please rank, in order of significance, the reasons for the existence of Lutheran schools. (with number 1 as the most important reason)

- ☐ To nurture the students and their families
- ☐ To reach out to those that don't know Jesus as their Saviour
- ☐ To serve the Christian community and the general community
- ☐ To prepare students for their vocation and for life

10. From the list below please rank, in order of significance, the options which best describe the mission role of the school. (with number 1 as the most important reason)

- ☐ Stepping stone/transition from school life to congregational life
- ☐ To build the faith
- ☐ To witness the faith
- ☐ To serve the school community and the wider community
- ☐ To prepare students for work in the church and the world

11. On a scale of 1 – 5 please indicate the extent to which the pastor fits into the school in your setting.

No fit	Poor fit	Neutral fit	Good fit	Integral member of school staff
1	2	3	4	5

12. Please describe the role of congregational pastor who ministers in a school.

13. Please comment on whether the training and preparation you received for your Community Leadership role in the school reflects the demands placed on you in this area.

14. From the list below please identify the **two** options which best express the way in which the mission of the school is lived out – what is working well in <u>your</u> setting?

- ☐ Students participate in congregational Sunday worship regularly
- ☐ Child and youth programs
- ☐ Active parental involvement
- ☐ Programs for pre-schoolers
- ☐ Offering counselling and/or support from ministry personnel
- ☐ Joint school/church activities
- ☐ Other (please specify)

15. From the list below please select the **two** options that best describe what <u>you</u> mainly promote to further the mission of the school.

- ☐ Students participate in congregational Sunday worship regularly
- ☐ Child and youth programs
- ☐ Active parental involvement
- ☐ Programs for pre-schoolers
- ☐ Offering counselling and/or support from ministry personnel
- ☐ Joint school/church activities
- ☐ Other (please specify)

16. If you are the Principal: From the list below please select the **two** options that best describe what the pastor mainly promotes to further the mission of the school.

    If you are the Pastor: From the list below please select the **two** options that best describe what the principal mainly promotes to further the mission of the school.

- ☐ Students participate in congregational Sunday worship regularly
- ☐ Child and youth programs
- ☐ Active parental involvement
- ☐ Programs for pre-schoolers
- ☐ Offering counselling and/or support from ministry personnel
- ☐ Joint school/church activities
- ☐ Other (please specify)

17. From the list below please rank the following options in terms of their relevance to building the relationship between the school and church community. (with number 1 as the most important reason)

- ☐ Strong pastor/principal relationship
- ☐ Strong parental support for church/school community
- ☐ Committed staff
- ☐ Christian staff
- ☐ High proportion of Lutheran staff
- ☐ Active involvement of pastor in school
- ☐ Active involvement of principal in congregation

18. On a scale of 1-5 please indicate how important the leadership of the pastor is in furthering the mission of the Lutheran school in your setting.

Not important	Of little importance	Neutral importance	Some importance	Extremely important
1	2	3	4	5

19. On a scale of 1-5 please indicate how important the leadership of the principal is in furthering the mission of the local Lutheran congregation.

Not important	Of little importance	Neutral importance	Some importance	Extremely important
1	2	3	4	5

20. Please describe some of the actions and activities you undertake in your school/church Community Leadership role.

21. Please describe your understanding of what it means for the principal to be the Spiritual Head of the school.

22. On a scale of 1 – 5 please indicate how comfortable you are with considering the principal as the Spiritual Head of the school.

Not comfortable	Somewhat uncomfortable	Neutral	Comfortable	Very comfortable
1	2	3	4	5

23. Please describe your leadership actions/activity in regards to your Spiritual Leadership role.

24. Feel free to add any other comments in regards to the contributions of Principals and Pastors to the mission of Lutheran primary schools not covered in the survey.

F Survey Descriptions of Principal As Spiritual Head

	Description of Principal as Spiritual Head	Code
1	That they are openly explicit about their own personal faith and support all endeavours to see faith as an integral part of life.	Model Apply theology
2	The principal is the head of the school. He/she sets the tempo of the school, including the spiritual tempo of the school. This means that the principal must be a model of Christ to staff, students and parents and have oversight of the overall spiritual life of the school. Of course, this is done in partnership with the local parish pastor.	Oversee Drive the Culture Model Oversee
3	I am responsible for oversight of the spiritual welfare of our school community.	Oversee
4	To be an authentic reflection of God's grace. To actively promote and ensure the school operates and reflects grace.	Model Apply theology
5	Unfortunately the term 'Spiritual Head of the school' for the principal is awkward and open to misinterpretation and misuse. Rightly understood, the principal in a Lutheran School is called to lead by example, to be feeding his/her biblical understanding as articulated in the Lutheran Confessions, to faithfully teach and apply the truth of God's word, and to live a life of confession and forgiveness, to clearly speak the Gospel to give hope and comfort, and by going to God in the Word and in prayer, both publically and privately. It does not mean that the principal has authority over the pastor in spiritual matters, as though what he/she thinks and does in spiritual matters is above question by the pastor.	Model Nurture Apply theology Apply theology Outreach Nurture
6	To use every opportunity to promote the saving love of Jesus in sphere of influence. To build a community which reflects the love of God and the value he puts on his created people. To take care of my own faith to ensure I can lead from a solid base of understanding of and participation in faith life.	Outreach Drive the Culture Nurture Oversee
7	This person is responsible for the Spiritual life, a leader within a leadership team.	Oversee
8	That I have the privilege to serve the school community ensuring that the values, standards and ethos of the school are the context within which we provide excellence in education. That I care for and encourage all within our community to know the love of God through the care given to them as we teach and learn together. My goal is to encourage all to serve one another using their gifts and talents and become a blessing to all those they meet.	Serve Apply theology Nurture Apply theology Serve Drive the Culture
9	To lead by example spiritually at all times. Set high standards and expect all will meet them. Provide regular opportunities for spiritual growth	Model Drive the Culture Nurture

10	To be actively on a faith journey and living as a disciple, while accepting and tolerating all who come to the school community.	Nurture Model
11	AS the ultimate leader in a school community, the Principal has to take on the role of Spiritual head of the school. The principal is accountable for this development in this community and ensures it happens. The pastor cannot be this authority in the school however, the Pastor has the theological expertise, and the Principal defers to the Pastors knowledge where appropriate.	Oversee Drive the Culture
12	The spiritual tone of the school is often guided by the Principal, He/she is responsible for the spiritual life of a Lutheran School.	Drive the Culture Oversee
13	To 'live the gospel' in both my professional and personal life. To ensure that Christ is at the centre of the school and remains at the centre. To ensure regular worship and spiritual activities occur in the life of the school and are well organised and presented. To regularly challenge all staff to 'live the gospel' with our students and each other. To seek/provide opportunities for staff to pray/worship together.	Model Apply theology Drive the Culture Drive the Culture Drive the Culture Nurture
14	The Principal needs to set the expectations of the role of the pastor and the worship and pastoral care programs within the school.	Oversee
15	The Principal has overall oversight of every aspect of the school's mission. "Spirituality" is integral to the life of the school; it is not a component that can be separated from the rest of the school's core business.	Oversee Apply theology
16	Lead by example, promote and participate in worship, spiritual matters and events, reaching out to the school and wider communities.	Model, Drive the Culture Nurture, Outreach
17	Set, guide and nurture the tone of the school's attitude to spirituality, worship and importance of God's Word.	Oversee, Apply, theology Nurture, Drive the Culture
18	The head determines the direction in which the body goes. As spiritual head, the principal determines which direction the school goes - either towards Christ or away from Christ.	Drive the Culture
19	The principal serves in their capacity as a responsible and mature Christian (the priesthood of all believers, to put it theologically) to oversee the strategic direction and operational aspects of the school to ensure its compatibility with Scriptural principles of life. The same would be true of pastors in congregational settings, with the addition of being ordained.	Serve Oversee Apply
20	to model Christian leadership by words and actions	Model
21	A vital position indeed and very demanding. The principal needs to pray publicly be able to clearly articulate the spiritual vision of the school and act according to the Lutheran understanding of Grace. There are some principals who do the ritual stuff and espouse the gospel but it isn't followed through by the way they treat people. Parents see through that sort of behaviour very very	 Model Oversee Apply theology Outreach

	quickly. It's not worth much to say "In God we Trust" and leave it to others to witness to the Faith	
22	The principal takes leadership in all matters, including those spiritual, within the school context. The buck stops with him. The pastor 'proposes but not imposes' his ideas for school programs, chapel services etc.	Oversee Oversee
23	The head needs to be supportive and encourage a Lutheran ethos and Christian basis for school to operate under. The principle needs to guide the spiritual tone of the school within obvious parameters of availability of Lutheran/Christian staff.	Drive the Culture Drive the Culture
24	The principal needs to remember that he is head of a Lutheran School and therefore a spiritual head. The pastor comes as guest and support of local head.	Oversee
25	in all that I do and say I reflect the love of Christ striving for the outcome of all children and their families to come to know Christ as their personal savour and friend	Model Outreach
26	Responsible to ensure that all who teach and attend, including parents, know that Christ is the head of our lives. The Principal is the leader of the school and so must also be the leader in this. This in no way is in conflict with the pastor who understands the importance of this.	Oversee Outreach Oversee
27	That he understands the mission of the congregation(s) to which the schools serve, that he see himself like a father. Not in competition with the pastor or church, but to represent and support the ministry and mission of the church to the school community.	Apply theology Model Serve
28	To lead the community spiritually and have the wisdom to allow others to lead where appropriate or their gifts are greater	Oversee Model, Apply theology
29	The spiritual head of the school is the one who suggests how the pastor is to work in the school environment. The Pastor must SUBMIT to the principals vision for the school and then seek out ways of working towards the fulfilment of that vision. The pastor Must accept the leadership of the principal and help to defend and protect the principal when others question him. I can give advice and ideas to the principal but the principal makes the final decision that I must then work with. I am there to serve at the principal's discretion and sometimes that means my plans or dreams will need to be modified to fit.	Oversee Drive the Culture Serve
30	That the Principal sees his role as a vocation - a calling from God through his church to lead his/her school in faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.	Serve Oversee Apply theology
31	Have responsibility for spiritual care of students, staff and school community using the pastor as a potential resource in some instances.	Oversee
32	The principal is seen by the school community as the spiritual advisor to the school community. As this is some people's only contact with the Lutheran church, the principal is seen as the champion of spirituality in the	Model Apply theology

	school. This is why theological understanding needs to underpin a principal's leadership. Christ is our strength.	
33	Sets the tone. Promotes the spiritual themes. Important that staff/students/parents see that spiritual leadership is not just the Pastors role. Authentic spiritual leadership from Principal is so important in a community where people are not necessarily part of the Lutheran church community.	Drive the Culture Model
34	The Principal is not meant to assume the role of a Pastor, but is to ensure that the Christian ethos is upheld, that the "Lutheran" part of the Lutheran School's title is not compromised, and that students, parents and staff have access to pastoral counsel and input, and are supported when such input is needed.	Apply theology Nurture
35	Every family has a spiritual head. If a pastor visits the home the spiritual head would listen and appreciate the pastor's counsel and follow his guidance where appropriate and spiritual. A little like the role of principal as spiritual head. I get along well with the principal so we don't have issues. I'm not the principal and he's not the pastor. In reality many pastors and principals are confused by the term and what it looks like. If you both don't get along then there will be trouble. It is important for principals to see they are a spiritual head but also more than that. They are teachers, administrators, etc. It is but one facet of their role.	Oversee Oversee

G Self-reflection Tool

Promoting and Enhancing the Mission of the School: a self-reflection tool for leaders in Lutheran primary schools

	Comment
I am able to articulate the culture of the school.	
I recognise the positive and negative elements of the school's culture.	
I enhance the positive elements of the school's culture by…	
I minimise the negative elements of the school's culture by…	
I recognise the needs within the school community.	
I meet the needs within the school community by…	
I develop and value relationships with teaching staff by…	
I develop and value relationships with non-teaching staff by…	
I develop and value relationships with students by…	
I develop and value relationships with families by…	
I prioritise the development of relationships by…	
I am able to articulate the mission of the school.	
I am able to articulate the mission of Lutheran education.	
The school is a Christian witness to the community through…	
I am able to articulate my role in regard to the mission of the school.	
I participate in God's continuing creative work in preparing students for life in vocation by…	
I participate in God's continuing creative work within school families by…	
I participate in God's continuing creative work within school staff by…	
I am able to articulate the relationship between the Lutheran church and the school.	

I am able to articulate the reason for the existence of the school.	
I collaborate with fellow school leaders in promoting and enhancing the mission of the school by…	
I model collaboration in the school and church community by…	
I value the leadership of others in the school and church community by…	
I am active in the church community through…	
I value the contributions of students to the school community by…	
I value the contributions of families to the school community by…	
I value worship in the school by…	
I place worship at the centre of the life of the school community by…	
I promote the faith community within the school by…	
I enhance the caring nature of the school community by…	
I resource the school for its ministry of care by…	
I nurture school staff by…	
I encourage school staff in their mission role by…	
I view myself as a missional leader. This is demonstrated through…	
I provide a 'bridge' from the school community to a worshipping community by…	
I promote joint programs and activities of the school and local church/faith community.	
I prioritise joint programs and activities of the school and local church/faith community through…	
I am developing a mission focused school community by…	
I view myself as a servant leader of the school community. This is demonstrated through…	
I view myself as a spiritual leader of the school community. This is demonstrated through…	

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